

Reviews

THE ANGLO-SAXONS REVIEWED

Anglo-Saxon England. By Martin Welch. 19 × 25 cm. 144 pp., 91 figs., 9 colour pls. London: Batsford, 1992. ISBN 0-7134-6566-2. Price: £14.99 pb.

Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons. By Nicholas Higham. 16 × 24 cm. viii + 263 pp., 51 figs. London: Seaby, 1992. ISBN 1-85264-022-7. Price: £18.50 pb.

Batsford's English Heritage books have emerged as a prolific popular series. Writing for this market faces the specialist author with a particular challenge, and Martin Welch has done a good job after the manner of the airline passenger who makes the most of a limited luggage allowance by careful selection and arrangement in his packing. Welch was beaten to the shops by Julian Richards's book in the same series on *Viking Age England*, and Welch concentrates on the earlier Anglo-Saxon period, up to the 7th or early 8th century in particular. This is important evidence of a sort of 'mid Saxon gap' in Anglo-Saxon archaeology — not so much in existing evidence and knowledge as in the organization of research and teaching — that Anglo-Saxon specialists should be anxious not to see consolidated.

The book is divided into three major sections: 'Communities in life', dealing with settlement archaeology, 'Communities in death', on cemetery evidence, and 'The wider context', reporting on certain themes of research interest such as the transition from Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England and the history of craft and trade, including too a slightly odd chapter on late Anglo-Saxon England that offers a general comparison of the nature of the evidence and its problems between the early period and the late. Overall, Welch's practical experience as a teacher of the subject appears to pay off in his effective focus on representative sites. I found the steady pattern of movement from the more common and socially basic contexts to more specialized sites in the first two sections especially clear.

Welch generally succeeds in giving a fair impression of matters of dispute without holding back from making his own views clear. Inevitably there are points which other specialists would challenge or, more pertinently, could suggest that rather more clarification on would have been welcome in this book — in the discussion of the phasing and dating of the Cowdery's Down settlement, for instance; on the difference between a 'village' and a 'hamlet'; or on the Sutton Hoo whetstone interpreted as a 'private family totem rather than as a public symbol of office', etc. The undisguisably caustic criticism of 'the excavator's' interpretations of the West Stow settlement fails to do proper justice to the good example Stanley West set in getting material published and initiating an essential debate on the strength of interim reports. A few minor corrections are called for too. Welch's early introduction of religious factors and references to the Viking Valhalla to his discussion of burials at first looks a little over-imaginative; his subsequent identification of the runic pot-stamp from Spong Hill as the name of the pagan god *Tiw* is now several years out of date: the preferred (and certainly the better, though still not an unquestionable) runological reading is now *alu*. It is confused and confusing to refer to another god as Thor (the Old Norse form) on one occasion and as Thunor (the Old English form) on the next. The final error I noted gives me the opportunity to apologize publicly for having disseminated (though not originated) it. The fragment of a mould for a square-headed brooch from Mucking turns out

on detailed inspection to represent a group III brooch, not a group VII one (cf. Welch's Fig. 80). Happily this does not affect the point that Welch uses the diagram to make.

Welch has obviously not written this book for his peers, nor does it quite have the substance to make it a satisfactory textbook for serious students of early Anglo-Saxon archaeology though it stands far ahead of any current rival in that respect. As a preliminary introduction for a student contemplating a course on early Anglo-Saxon archaeology, however, or as a general guide for, say, a historian wanting an up-to-date overview of the nature and significance of archaeological evidence for this period, it should prove ideal.

It is regrettably impossible to be so complimentary about Nicholas Higham's more ambitious book, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons*. Higham seeks to advance the thesis that the deep cultural change from Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England in the course of the 5th and 6th centuries was the result of an 'elite takeover' rather than a 'mass migration'. These two alternatives might seem such familiar and straightforward models that they require no special definition; certainly both concepts have been discussed in relation to the *adventus Saxonum* for longer than Higham claims. It would still have been appropriate to discuss what specifically they involve in this context. 'Elite takeover' is a model that has appealed to the 'processual' school of thought because it represents cultural change as being negotiated within an essentially continuing system. In Higham's case, this means that an incoming Anglo-Saxon social elite was dependent on the survival of a subordinate native population to support it. An incompatible state of mass migration would have to involve numbers too large to be accommodated as an elite of this kind. Serious model building in respect of this problem ought to involve explicit discussion of plausible ratios between the elite and the subordinate, integrated with possible population levels in late- and immediately post-Roman Britain. These are not there, though towards the end of the book we suddenly get a practical definition of mass migration as involving 'tens or hundreds of thousands' (p. 225).

My objections to this book, however, are not rooted in any decided disagreement with this hypothesis. Thoughtful historians at least from Bede to the present day have faced up to the problem involved in trying to explain the cultural dominance that created England in the earlier Roman province(s) of Britain. Higham justifiably argues that no aspect of the process has yet been identified that indisputably required a great force of and superiority in numbers to affect the change. To adopt his own words, however, there is equally not a jot of direct and unambiguous evidence that the numbers of migrants involved were never more than small and that Germanicization was overwhelmingly a process of assimilation and acculturation. Higham's opinion therefore is not an objective deduction from evidence impartially reviewed. There is no doubt that large-scale migrations of socially differentiated, organic communities can take place. It remains a thoroughly reasonable proposition that force of numbers may have been a factor in what happened in post-Roman Britain. If we are to investigate this aspect of the relationship between natives and settlers, we need to get beyond mere assertions of opposing views on the numbers involved backed up by appeals to fragments of evidence and to examine, thoroughly, the problem of how (if at all) the alternatives might be tested.

Higham himself is inconsistent on the essential nature of the case he is presenting. His representations of this range from qualified and tentative claims only to be exploring a possibility, to be presenting a hypothesis as a hypothesis, to assertions that alternative reconstructions are 'inconsistent with the evidence' and that 'the evidence . . . points to' an interpretation of the Anglo-Saxon *adventus* as an elite takeover. But what is argued in detail is only that the sort of mass cultural and language change that separates Anglo-Saxon England from Roman Britain does not depend on a relatively high level of immigration. This principle is properly identified as essential to the validity of the elite takeover hypothesis. But to show simply that it was possible does not, of course, prove it to have been the case in fact.

The arguments are too lax and therefore confusing at other levels too. Higham's commitment to the notion of extensive continuity leads to a strong endorsement of arguments against the established view that Roman taxation was a stimulus to higher agricultural

production in Britain. But if agricultural produce was the ordinary farmer's bargaining counter in a dynamic system of patronage and clientage which Higham allows that taxation *did* stimulate, the reconstructed situation needs to be modelled with more care, and more explicitly, if it is not simply to look contradictory. The commitment to continuity at the other end of the Roman period leads to a playing-down of the case that has been made very substantially, not so long ago, for an agricultural decline caused by disastrous over-production in late Roman Britain. Without subscribing completely to such arguments, it is scarcely proper that, for instance, Shimon Applebaum's detailed studies are never even noted — and strange, for Higham does not seem afraid of tackling opposition head on.

The treatment of Christianity as a factor in late Romano-British culture appears not just inconsistent but crude. Christianity is superficially dismissed as a totalitarian religion, buttressing the pretensions of a totalitarian state. Its advances are on one page only 'apparent' (p. 64), and on the next page are dissolved into processes of 'religious syncretism and the growth of monotheism', which, if we can accept that *they* are not incompatible with one another, we can certainly accept are not incompatible with some real 'commitment' to Christianity, which is what Higham opposes them to. What seem virtually irreconcilable are the character and role assigned to Christianity by Higham and the facts of its survival in Britain and subsequent flourishing in areas where 'incipient Romanization' was reportedly sloughed off by the leaders of society in and around the 5th century. There may be some coherent case buried in these claims, but it has at the very least been disastrously scrambled.

There are dozens of serious points on which one can be left wondering whether Higham really meant to say what he has actually ended up suggesting. The first two sentences of the text had me puzzling over whether or not the implication that it was only after the writing of the *Historia Brittonum* that stories of Vortigern and Hengest were disseminated as basic facts was merely the product of a careless, clichéd style. So too did the indefensible proposition generated on the following page that History emerged as an intellectual discipline only in the mid 19th century. The insensitivity to historical sources that this book evinces is disturbing. It is belatedly reassuring when a nonsensical reference for a passage as famous as Bede's description of the *adventus Saxonum* (p. 6) turns out to be one of the book's vast number of uncorrected 'misprints' by being given correctly elsewhere. The same cannot be said of the misrepresentation of *Beowulf* as a source. *The Fight at Finn's Burg* [sic] is *not* part of *Beowulf*, though it does tell part of a story that is also summarized there. A specialist will naturally query the claim that timber-framed buildings identified by settlement archaeology 'corroborate the vision of the anonymous author of *Beowulf*, who described Heorot, the great hall of Hrothgar'. Heorot is hardly *described* in the poem. One can piece together a range of details of how the 'poet' conceived the hall, but archaeology confirms only a few rather banal aspects of this, and the most interesting details — how iron nails or cleats were used architecturally, or the presence of sumptuous gold and jewellery fittings and tapestries — remain hidden. Higham's statement looks like an incautious adaptation of Philip Rahtz's slightly more circumspect claim about Yeavering and Cheddar: 'the size and constructional details of their halls fulfil the expectations aroused by *Beowulf*' (in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. D. M. Wilson (1975), p. 65).

Indeed, the handling of Anglo-Saxon archaeology in this book is too frequently derivative, and selectively guided by the author's predispositions with little pertinent source-criticism. Two areas in particular deserve special note, early Anglo-Saxon settlements and chronology. The claim that an ard has actually been found at Sutton Hoo is seriously misleading. The determination to discover continuity from the Roman period in the form of the 'halls' found on early Anglo-Saxon settlements leads Higham straight into the trap that is supposed to be characteristic of 'traditional' Anglo-Saxonists: that of ignoring functional considerations and passing rapidly by way of cultural tradition to ethnic significance. The agricultural implications of the apparent abandonment of the longhouse with byre of Continental Germanic material culture — or the large byres of late Roman Britain — are not discussed. It is conceivable that there were byres in the early Anglo-Saxon period which have just never been found or identified. But we should have to see a number of

hitherto quite unparalleled discoveries before we could believe that they were characteristic of another type of contemporary settlement complementary to the ones we know. From the evidence of bone found on several sites, however, the pastoral farming of early Anglo-Saxon England shows a shift in proportions from cattle to sheep when compared with Continental sites like Feddersen Wierde. In itself this is plausible evidence of the persisting influence of the traditional British agrarian economy. A real absence of byres must in the first instance reflect a situation in which the investment required to raise and operate a byre was not generally practical or worthwhile, in fact, presumably, of two principal factors: (1) the net economic importance of cattle and (2) the exigencies of the British winter climate, which was more temperate than that on the Continent. The evidence thus does not support the simplistic conclusion that longhouses 'were scarce in Anglo-Saxon England because the Germanic immigrants were characteristically of a status to be supported by the labours of others and were not themselves farmers, so had no need of cattle stalls attached to their own houses' (p. 126). Does Higham mean to imply that now all the known 'halls' of the early Anglo-Saxon period represent a pedigree Germanic elite, exempt from normal agricultural requirements? The 'chieftains' attributed to the distinguished principal farmsteads of pre-Migration-period Hodde and Vorbasse (Jutland) did not stand on their dignity in this way. At Vorbasse too there is a marked reduction in the provision of stalling in the 5th century. And the problem of reconciling this proposition about the economic status or fortune of the Germanic settlers with the evidence for the early introduction to post-Roman Britain of Germanic craft techniques in both men's and women's domains (e.g. metalwork, pottery, textiles) ought at least to be recognized.

With both the Roman and the Anglo-Saxon periods, there is a tendency to blur chronological distinctions and thus to project the periods as static entities. Statements like 'the vast majority of Anglo-Saxon inhumations are orientated in a manner that would not be out of place in a Christian churchyard' (p. 179) need to be qualified chronologically. Higham attempts to base his history of Anglicization in Britain on a phasing of the archaeological material, but his substructure is weak. The mishmash of views on the contact phenomenon/phenomena represented by the Quoit-Brooch Style, penannular brooches and hanging bowls in Anglo-Saxon contexts, for instance, is second-hand and very out of date. *Pace* Barry Ager, cited in one place (p. 171), the case that the Quoit-Brooch Style first emerged on belt-fittings in post-Roman Britain, the category of finds on which its local Roman-period predecessors were so much at home, is a strong one. Since Higham none the less dates Quoit-Brooch-style belt fittings to the first half of the 5th century (p. 169), with no reference to the widely debated point that the majority — perhaps all — datable finds of Quoit-Brooch-style material come from 6th-century contexts, Ager's Jutlandic-inspired Quoit Brooches would have to be accommodated in an incredibly early phase.

The chapter on 'Language, place-names and ethnicity' merits special comment. The most lasting cultural change effected by the *adventus Saxonum* was the introduction of Germanic language into Britain as, eventually, the English language. Higham deserves credit for attempting to tackle the linguistic question more deeply than any other general history of this period has ever done, and for not assuming that language is so basic and familiar a phenomenon that intuition can retrieve linguistic history from historical linguistic evidence. But in practice Higham does little more than to replace the usually cited Norman Conquest analogue with a few more, chronologically and geographically proximate analogues that are more friendly to his thesis that this linguistic change was caused by an elite takeover. No recognition can be found here that language contact in particular, and to a lesser degree language shift and language death, have been widely studied by modern linguistic scientists, and that a substantial body of normal models is available as a result, many of which, unfortunately, are quite contrary to Higham's claims. The claim that place-name replacement is 'ongoing' is potentially very misleading if that is read as meaning 'continuous' in anything like the way that material culture, after relatively early prehistory, is persistently modulating, especially as it does not take appraisal of the observation that place- and personal names can be the most tenacious elements of otherwise disappearing language

systems. There may be no *single* simple correlation between language and ethnic identity but this does not mean that there is simply no direct one (p. 192): that language varieties are widely strategically used as 'acts of identity' is one of the most basic axioms of modern sociolinguistics. There is no space in Higham's reconstruction for the widely studied phenomena associated with creolization in contact situations: e.g. for the very real predictability of substrates being carried into adopted languages or for so-called 'recreolization' or other forms of linguistic resistance by the alienated or oppressed. It is nonsense to assert that we can only have recourse to 'clumsy mechanisms' to postulate a historically realistic level of Latin-derived vocabulary in the now perhaps totally invisible language of the Continental Angles of the early 5th century. To do that is certainly not half as gauche as to introduce an argument on the basis of the quantity of French items that did enter the Middle English vocabulary without recognizing that the majority of them seem to have come from Central French (Chaucer's 'Frenssh of Parys') into elevated 14th-century English, not from Anglo-Norman or Norman French at a significantly earlier date.

In sum, this book has been produced with far too little care. Symptomatic of this is the large number of uncorrected textual errors spread from beginning to end. Some of these look like straightforward spelling mistakes — *dependant* (adj.), *timerous*, *decentrallization* — and more still reinforce the question marks that hang over the mastery of the sources behind this book. Eilert Ekwall and Edward Thurlow Leeds's names are spelt out in full, wrongly; the Wentlooge Level is referred to three times, under two different names, neither of them correct; *Grubenhaus* (pl. *Grubenhäuser*) appears as *grubenhaüs* (sing.) and *grubenhäusen* (pl.). It is depressing to make such a thoroughly negative report on this book; it is even more depressing to discern in it the result of the preposterous level of overproduction in the current academic publishing business and an example of the falling standards there that Research Assessment Exercises and their like seem only to be encouraging. For the publisher's blurb, on the back cover, to tell us that this indeed illuminating book is 'an essential corrective to the vagueness and partiality of earlier interpretations' is an outright impertinence.

JOHN HINES

The Age of Sutton Hoo. Edited by Martin Carver. 18 × 25 cm. xviii + 406 pp., 32 pb., 72 figs. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1992. ISBN 0-85115-330-5. Price: £45.00 hb.

This book opens ominously with an image conjuring up the past. The frontispiece shows Martin Carver 'centre-stage' on a ladder above the mound 2 burial chamber at Sutton Hoo. It is an action shot designed to recall the excavations of 1939, when a host of bright young archaeologists displayed atrocious judgement in an over-hasty excavation of mound 1, following Basil Brown's properly cautious enquiries. The amateurs were professionals and vice versa. Fortunately, with this photograph the likeness to the earlier excavations ends. The recent campaign of excavations by Martin Carver, 'the first British excavation to follow a published research design' (p. 363), provided the impetus for this collection of essays as did the 50th anniversary of the original discovery. Carver in the final essay rightly describes Sutton Hoo as a 'constant temptation to the story teller' (p. 366). His story goes as follows: the cemetery is uniformly of high status and belongs to the late 6th to 8th centuries. It was the burial ground of 'kings', who can now be shown to have been dynastic (honouring children), militantly pagan and claiming the right over life and death. The burial rites find their parallels in Scandinavia, but there is strong reason to suppose that these are manifestations of a moment of crisis — signals from a people 'at once pagan, autonomous, maritime and concerned to conserve an ancestral allegiance . . . across the North Sea' (p. 365). The context of this crisis, so Carver believes, is Christianity and fealty to the Franks 'and their imperial echoes'. The spectacle is European in scope — a remarkable challenge to archaeologists and historians alike, as it has been since Basil Brown first discovered the ship.

Carver's book (containing 24 chapters) is a major reassessment of the political and economic context of this burial ground. I can only skim the richness of its content.

When Sutton Hoo was first discovered, its Scandinavian character, along with its implications for the great poem *Beowulf*, was taken to be of paramount importance. This is easy to explain. The imagery of *Beowulf* was omnipresent in the ship-burial in mound 1. But as significant was the well-developed character of Scandinavian archaeology in 1939 as opposed to the enigmatic nature of Merovingian archaeology. Since Bruce-Mitford published his volumes between 1975–83 on the discoveries largely made in 1939 there has been a paradigm shift. Fifty years later, the Frankish context of Sutton Hoo has gathered its proponents.

Ian Wood, in an elegant summary of Frankish hegemony in England, proceeds to illustrate the context for the strong Merovingian elements in the Sutton Hoo burials. His point is developed compellingly by James, Perin, Halsall and Hedeager, who describe a North Sea maritime zone dominated by the Franks. 'Merovingian hegemony involved vague and inconstant relationships', writes Wood, 'it depended on the internal politics of Francia as well as direct contacts with the outside world . . . It is not without relevance to the formation of England' (p. 241). From such conclusions it is a short step to a radical reappraisal of the age of Sutton Hoo. Hines, for example, sets out to demonstrate the Scandinavian character of the burial. The sub-text of his essay is an apologia, showing the limited part played by Scandinavians. Hedeager, in her chapter, reduces the context of Sutton Hoo to 'an ideological polarization . . . between the Catholic-Christian Germanic Franks and the pagan or Arian-Christian Germanic peoples whose mythical origins in many cases lay in Scandinavia' (p. 299). Her brief bid to explain the symbolic language of south Scandinavia — its animal ornamentation and runes — in terms of this polarization, while unsubstantiated, is a fascinating pointer towards future research. The framework for such an analysis exists. Heinrich Harke and J. D. Richards launch the search for the language of Anglo-Saxon material culture. None of this is inappropriate to the study of Anglo-Saxon poetry and *Beowulf*. The emphasis upon myth, probably emphasizing a shared ethnic past including heroic sea-journeys, is a prominent theme. It is also the context for an increasing polarization from 'the dark side of the moon', as Alcock describes western and northern Britain at this time.

However, there is a conspicuous flaw in this book. Sutton Hoo is studiously compared with other cemeteries (notably Asthall, Borre, King Clovis's burial and Snape); and its political and inter-regional characteristics are probed and illuminated. Yet there was more to it than this. The cemetery formed part of a regional settlement system. It was probably the sacred manifestation of the putative royal site at Rendlesham (discussed by Newman) — a settlement covering nearly fifteen hectares (p. 36). It was also surely dependent upon the emporium at Ipswich. Keith Wade has shown (in R. Hodges & B. Hobley, *The Rebirth of Towns in the West A.D. 700–1050* (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1988)) that Ipswich dates from the age of Sutton Hoo. Excavations over the past twenty years have served to identify that the emporium began as a small nucleus beside the river Gipping around A.D. 600. Imported potsherds from this site indicate connections with northern France (probably the hinterland of Quentovic) and, in particular, with the Rhineland. Ipswich clearly functioned as a controlled centre for limited exchange of prestige goods, such as those discussed throughout this book. As Ulf Näsman has shown (*Acta Archaeologica* 55 (1986), 66–116), with the rise of the Franks as a major political force, the North Sea became their trading zone. The zone reached from eastern England to Jutland, embracing communities who shared the common myths of a post-classical culture.

This omission notwithstanding, this is an important book. The original discovery of the Sutton Hoo ship burial might be likened to finding a new text. By putting this text in its context — which Carver's investigations have sought to do — drawing upon the growing development of medieval archaeology, the history of Anglo-Saxon England has begun to lose its innocence. No longer do its exponents seem like characters in Angus Wilson's *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* (cf. p. vii). These studies reveal a prospect of intelligent new hypotheses which must

in turn be tested by further campaigns of well-judged research excavations. This book alone justifies the controversial recent campaign of excavations directed by Martin Carver. He must be warmly congratulated.

RICHARD HODGES

The Anglian Helmet from 16-22 Coppergate (Archaeology of York, xvii/8). By Dominic Tweddle. ix + 351 pp., 242 figs. London: Council for British Archaeology for York Archaeological Trust, 1992. ISBN 1-872414-19-2. Price: £40.00 pb.

Helmets are among the rarest and most precious artefacts of early medieval Europe. Some 80 more or less complete helmets have been found spanning the six centuries from the end of the Western Roman Empire to the close of the Viking period. On account of their rarity and archaeological contexts, as well their formal typological links with crowns, archaeologists and historians have suggested for a long time a connection between helmets and royal, or aristocratic, status. If this is true anywhere, it is in Anglo-Saxon England, which could boast a mere two helmets (Sutton Hoo and Benty Grange), and possible fragments of another four, before the discovery of an 8th-century helmet in the course of mechanical excavation during development of the Coppergate site, York, in 1982. This helmet is, thus, an important addition to a very small group of high-status artefacts, and at the same time a crucial supplement to the meagre evidence for Anglian York. It is all the more welcome that the detailed publication of this find, a very complex artefact which required a great deal of care, conservation, reconstruction and scientific study, is now available just over ten years after discovery.

The monograph comes in two volumes: a substantial text volume which also includes most illustrations, and a slim folder for oversize line drawings on six unbound sheets. The attractively designed text volume incorporates contributions from some twenty-odd authors and specialists. The first two sections deal with the circumstances of the discovery, the archaeological context (a pit or well) and the associated finds (a weaving batten, a churn dasher, and various fragments). This is followed by extensive chapters on the helmet itself: conservation, reconstruction, description, discussion and dating. A catalogue, and French and German summaries supplement the text.

The waterlogged conditions of the site had led to an excellent preservation of the helmet, and conservation was further helped by the fact that specialist staff were present during the excavation. Conservation at York was followed by reconstruction in the British Museum labs, necessary because the mechanical digger had dented the helmet. The sections relating to these procedures, and the description of the object, are extremely detailed, and many readers will feel that some of the technical detail and measurements could have been put into the catalogue, some illustrations could have been omitted, and some of the repetition and overlap between various contributors and sections could have been cut out. The subsequent chapters ('Discussion' and 'Dating') are, without doubt, the strongest and most informative parts of a book with few weak points. The step-by-step analysis of the making of the helmet is of exemplary clarity, using schematic diagrams and exploded drawings to best effect. Sonia O'Connor's excellent contribution on the technology of the mail neck guard incorporates a report by Peter Gardner on experimental work to produce mail, and it highlights the point that this piece of mail, apart from being the best available evidence for post-Roman mail technology anywhere, was the most labour-intensive element of the entire helmet.

Tweddle's chapter on dating is much more than the title suggests: it includes a wide-ranging survey, from Pictland to Kiev, of post-Roman helmet types, their distributions and their dating. The York helmet, while clearly a crested helmet of Anglo-Scandinavian type, does not fit easily into the established typology for this group. The most reliable date arises from the detailed art-historical discussion of the decorative elements, suggesting a narrow bracket between A.D. 750 and 775 for the manufacture of the helmet. The extensive evidence for wear and tear (including abrasions from frequent polishing, a dent from a

projectile point, and repairs of the mail curtain) suggests that the helmet had been in use for two or more generations, placing the deposition in the first half of the 9th century, a date which is well compatible with the archaeological dating of the context.

This archaeological context and the regional, social and political background are discussed in the final sections. Tweddle has no doubt that the helmet, although its decoration is made of brass and its only precious metal consists of two silver rivets, had been made for a member of the Northumbrian royal household, or a greater nobleman, probably the Oshere mentioned in the 'emphatically Christian' (cf. p. 1095) inscription on the crest and the lateral bands. The reason why this exceptional piece of armour should end up, partially dismantled, in a pit or well cannot be ascertained beyond doubt, but Tweddle makes a persuasive case: a weapon smith who had been working on the helmet, may have been compelled by circumstances (possibly even the Viking conquest of York in 866) to hide the piece, and because he was unable to recover it, the helmet was later buried when the pit was refilled in the Anglo-Scandinavian period. Concluding the text, Tweddle emphasizes the implications of the helmet's presence in York: it demonstrates that patronage was still available in 8th-century Northumbria, in spite of political instability; and it underscores the likelihood of an aristocratic focus, or royal centre, in pre-Viking York.

Looking for faults in this publication, one might criticize the occasional tendency towards over-documentation and too intricate detail, the not infrequent repetitions (particularly in the first few chapters), the absence of clear, hierarchical numbering of chapters and sections, and the irritating numbering system for text (starting with page 851) and illustrations (starting with Fig. 359) which is a consequence of the York publication system and runs across fascicles. But these are minor quibbles which should not detract from the substantial achievement of this publication, which makes the Coppergate helmet the most closely studied and best-published helmet of the early Middle Ages in Europe (and probably well beyond).

HEINRICH HÄRKE

An Anglo-Saxon Watermill at Tamworth (CBA Research Report, 83). By Philip Rahtz and Robert Meeson. 21 × 29 cm. xiii + 167 pp., 106 figs., 7 tables, 5 microfiches. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1992. ISBN 0-906780-94-2. Price: £28.00 pb.

If the last twenty years have seen a greater awareness of medieval milling technology this has been attributable, in large measure, to the work of Philip Rahtz. Interim reports and interpretative articles have whetted the appetite of historians and molinologists, as well as archaeologists; now we have the long-awaited final report of this significant excavation. Students of every aspect of European milling will find something of importance amongst the quantity of information in this rewarding volume, which as its authors are careful to point out is a detailed excavation report and not a work of interpretation. Rahtz excavated the structure of the mill itself in 1971; seven years later Robert Meeson was able to excavate an adjoining site, and to investigate part of the leat that fed the mill. There were two successive mills on the site: the first was probably quickly abandoned, to be succeeded by a second mill, and both are likely to have dated from the mid 9th century. Timbers from the second mill — and which may have been reused from its predecessor — were dated by dendrochronology to around 855; after years, or decades, of use, the mill burnt down, some of its fittings were salvaged, and the site was abandoned. Subsequent layers dated from the 11th century, and the latest excavated phases were associated with the construction and later recutting of the medieval town ditch. This is a lucid presentation of archaeology at its best, meticulous and well-recorded; Meeson's summary of the relevant historical and archaeological evidence for Tamworth is a competent and thoughtful account that adds to our understanding of the social context of this mill, placed as it was in close proximity to an important Mercian palace.

The most notable feature of the Tamworth mill is its design. As a horizontal-wheeled mill, it belonged to a type that when it was excavated was held to be exotic in the English

Midlands. It had long been appreciated that such mills had until recently been common in the Mediterranean and in north-west Europe; but the names by which they were known — ‘Greek’ mills or ‘Norse’ mills — only served to emphasize the expectation that this was a machine with specific cultural associations. That the horizontal wheel had been used in many of the mills of medieval Ireland and the Scottish islands had penetrated, if dimly, the consciousness of some English archaeologists and historians, although it was easily explained away as a borrowing from Scandinavia. But the Tamworth excavation, and then dendrochronologically determined dates as early as 630 for the Irish mills, forced the conclusion (already inherent in the inclusion of mills in Irish lawcodes from the 6th century onwards) that the origins of this type of mill in the British Isles had nothing to do with the Vikings. Tamworth is not unique in England: there have been other tantalizing signs of similar mills, although whether Anglo-Saxon England was as full of horizontal mills as contemporary Ireland evidently was remains a question that only further excavation can answer. Certainly watermills of some sort were familiar to 9th-century England: the massive vertical-wheeled mill at Old Windsor was built in the late 7th century, whilst charter references to mills begin in the 8th century and then occur quite frequently. At Old Windsor the great triple-wheel mechanism reported by Hope-Taylor was in time replaced by a horizontal mill, which might suggest that a mid-Saxon tradition of constructing vertical mills — either inherited directly from Roman Britain or imported from Gaul — was rejected in favour of the simpler mechanism of the mill in use across the Irish Sea. Yet the truth will turn out to be more complicated than that, for the Irish themselves were building vertical-wheeled mills already in the 7th century; and it is Colin Rynne’s judgement that the horizontal mill was itself introduced into Ireland probably in the late 5th century. But not from Britain, it would seem; Roman mills excavated here have all used the vertical wheel. And if Orjan Wikander’s work has now corrected earlier misconceptions that the Roman world neglected waterpower, we still do not know how far the Anglo-Saxons inherited a native tradition of milling. So the question remains: how, and from where, might the technical expertise to build horizontal mills have reached the British Isles in the immediately post-Roman period?

Despite Rahtz’s praiseworthy attempts, therefore, both here and in earlier papers, to place the Tamworth mill into a British and a European context, it remains an enigma. Clearly the greater part of this report was completed well in advance of the publication date; nevertheless it is unfortunate that the authors were unable to profit from Rynne’s 1988 thesis, re-assessing not only the construction and operation of the horizontal mill in Ireland but also its chronology and distribution world-wide. We have already seen something of that research in print, and English archaeologists and historians must hope that in time it will all be readily available, to inform and amplify the discussion about Anglo-Saxon milling technology which will continue and presumably intensify as more Anglo-Saxon mills — of whatever design — are excavated. The replacement of a vertical mill by a horizontal one at West Cotton, not in the 7th century but at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, confirms that we shall have to know a great deal more before we can generalize with any confidence about the development and the construction of early English mills.

RICHARD HOLT

The Early Church in Wales and the West. Recent Work in Early Christian Archaeology, History and Place-Names (Oxbow Monograph 16). Edited by Nancy Edwards and Alan Lanc. 21 × 29 cm. 169 pp., 51 figs. and pls. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1992. ISBN 0-946897-37-9. Price: £20.00 pb.

This volume of fifteen papers derives from a conference held in Cardiff in 1989, though the printed versions of some contributions have been considerably refined in the process leading to publication. The result is a collection of views on a wide diversity of subjects relating to the church in Wales, the west of Britain, and Ireland. It is therefore difficult to

summarize the volume, though several major concerns run through the book, and the review will concentrate on these.

The most striking feature of the early Welsh church is its elusive quality. The volume editors, Nancy Edwards and Alan Lane, indicate the limitations of the various strands of archaeological data, pointing out the paucity of standing structures and of artefacts, and the various difficulties or limited researches yet undertaken regarding other categories of evidence. They do, however, make some positive suggestions for future research, and present some models for the development of ecclesiastical sites.

Wendy Davies once again emphasizes the diversity in the character of the church in various parts of the west. This is an important reminder bearing in mind the sparse information for Wales, and the easy temptation to assume similarities with Ireland or Cornwall which may only sometimes be appropriate. Huw Pryce provides a case study of such Welsh distinctiveness in a consideration of ecclesiastical wealth in Wales. He suggests that wealth was displayed in supporting large households, feasting, and the giving of alms rather than in the creation of imposing structures or portable artefacts; the situation in Ireland, for example, was clearly very different. The use of material goods, and the organization of ecclesiastical sites, should also reflect such differing patterns of behaviour and thus be archaeologically detectable.

One of the features found widely in the west are the inscribed stones, in Latin and/or ogam; the great majority of bilingual stones are from Wales. It is apposite therefore that Jeremy Knight considers one of the fundamental issues concerning the inscribed stones: was their inspiration derived from within Britain, or was it from the Continent? Nash-Williams considered that the *Hic iacet* formula came from Gaul, and after careful consideration so does Knight, who suggests that the context for transfer was either ecclesiastical links or via British migrants in Brittany. Ken Dark in contrast provides a critique of the classificatory principles applied by Nash-Williams to Class 1 stones, and reconsiders the evidence for their chronology.

Churchyards are proving to be an important source of information about the early Welsh church, though excavation is still rare. Terry James considers the evidence from aerial photography in Dyfed, and several repeated patterns can be seen to emerge. Enclosures concentric to curvilinear churchyards have been identified at several sites, though contemporaneity has yet to be demonstrated. The outer limits occasionally survive as earthworks, but it is detection by cropmarks which has been the major breakthrough. The problem of chronology is also a difficulty when considering pairs of sites, one presumably secular, the other now the churchyard. Do these represent prehistoric sites, one of which was reused as a churchyard? Was the other enclosure occupied also in the early medieval period? It is now a high priority to obtain a dated sequence on such site complexes. Brook considers curvilinear churchyards in southeastern Wales, and notes a range of sizes and some variations in distributions. Tentative interpretations are given but again the lack of chronological precision hampers analysis. Ann Preston-Jones provides a valuable summary of the Cornish evidence, and there are clear resonances with the work already described for Wales. The curvilinear nature of many churchyards is discussed, as is the possibility of the reuse of earlier settlement sites; the presence of outer enclosures is also demonstrated.

Burial forms the other major theme of the book, despite the limited excavations in churchyards. Burials have tended to be found in other locales and now have much greater variability than just the cist burials which have so long been known. An important survey article by Heather James reviews the evidence and suggests that association with earlier sites was common. In some cases interments are within or close by burial mounds, in other cases enclosed settlements are reused as burial grounds. Also of particular note are the enclosed graves, either within timber structures as at Plas Gogerddan, or under square barrows at Tandderwen. Some elements are thought to represent continuity of practise from earlier periods, though in others Christian beliefs can be more confidently inferred. Some of the themes in James's paper are also covered by Elizabeth O'Brien on Irish and Elizabeth Alcock on Scottish burials.

If anything unites the papers in this volume it is the sober recognition of difficulties and potential rather than results. Where a corpus has been assembled, as in the case of the inscribed stones, we await a reassessment and more detailed contextual study, including selective excavation. For most other categories of data we have insufficient material; the basic fieldwork has yet to be done. With the difficulty of locating suitable areas for excavation, and the paucity of finds (artefactual, ecological and skeletal) to be expected from many of these sites which are on acid soils, funding may prove difficult to obtain. Yet efforts must be directed into this field if progress is to be made. Interpretations, whether of the institutional, social, economic or ideological contexts, seem a long way off. But a carefully planned campaign of survey and selective excavation, complemented by documentary and place-name studies, could yet lead to spectacular advances in our understanding. The editors in their introductory paper, and Charles Thomas in his concluding remarks, point to some of the ways forward.

We have in this volume an important series of statements on our knowledge (or ignorance) at the beginning of the 1990s, and for that we should be grateful. The real success of both conference and proceedings, however, will be if sufficient research can now be initiated so that early in the next millennium we can usefully compare the early Welsh church with the equivalents in Cornwall and Ireland.

HAROLD MYTUM

Viking Treasures from the North West: the Cuerdale Hoard and its Context (National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside Occasional Papers, Liverpool Museum No. 5). Edited by James Graham-Campbell. 21 × 29 cm. 115 pp., 37 illus. Liverpool Museum, 1992. ISBN 0-906367-50-6. Price: £14.95 pb.

This attractively produced collection of papers results from a conference and exhibition held in 1990; its themes broaden out from concentration on the Cuerdale hoard itself to the North Sea littoral and Northumbria generally.

The hoard's discovery in 1840 is chronicled by the editor, who also sets out what survives from its contents or can be reconstructed from descriptions: it is no longer possible to be precise, but there seem to have been some 25 lbs of silver coin and 88 lbs of silver bullion, by far the biggest such treasure known in the British Isles or Ireland. The coins suggest that it was an eclectic amalgamation of smaller collections, acquired in south-west France, the Rhineland, England, Viking Northumbria, Ireland, Scandinavia and the Baltic. Marion Archibald argues that it was 'closed' c. 905; the previously favoured date of c. 903 remains possible, but recent work shows that there are a few coins in the hoard that post-date the earliest issues of Edward the Elder, and a little extra margin is needed to allow for their entry into it. This also allows a Baghdad coin of 895-96 to have made its long journey to north Lancashire at a less break-neck pace. Why the hoard was brought together is one of N.J. Higham's topics; he stresses the pivotal location of Preston and the fertile Ribble valley, with good communications to York, Dublin, the Isle of Man, Chester and Strathclyde, so that Cuerdale was in Danish-Viking Northumbria but close to Norse-Viking strongholds in Ireland and on Man, and open to expansionist threats from English Mercia and British Strathclyde. The Ribble is the southern edge of Amounderness, a district which Higham and Gillian Fellows-Jensen see as taking its name from Agmund 'the hold' killed in 910; but whereas the latter is prepared to see the Cuerdale hoard as deposited by him and his companions to finance their settlement in the area, on the assumption that he was one of those driven out of Dublin in 902, Higham hints at a preference for another probable 'exile', Ragnald. (In a later chapter, Graham-Campbell names no names, but prefers to see the hoard as a war-chest intended to finance an expedition to retake Dublin.)

Fellows-Jensen widens the volume's geographical range, by discussing Scandinavian names generally, from East Anglia to east Ireland, and from south Wales to south Scotland:

'Grimston (Scand. pers. name + OE *tun*) hybrids' are to Derby what Ballyfermot (Irish *baile* + Scand. pers. name) and others are to Dublin — evidence of a hinterland; *-by* names reflect sub-division and Viking leaders' loss of control over big estates (and some post-date 1066, in and around Cardiff and Carlisle), but Amounderness has none, since it remained undivided even at 1086. B.J.N. Edwards stays firmly in the north-west, with a useful catalogue of burials, hoards, objects and sculptures that may be evidence of Norse settlements (or losses). David Griffiths looks at the Irish Sea littoral to find a scatter of beach sites perhaps used for trading in the 8th and 9th centuries and, by stressing that Meols has evidence of renewed use in the 10th and 11th centuries when it must have served a Norse enclave in the Wirrall, makes the interesting point that such markets may have continued for some geopolitical units despite the royally supervised walled *ports* and *burhs* like Chester.

The alloys that constitute 'silver' coins, ingots and hack-silver are discussed by Susan Kruse, who uses her own unpublished results to show how difficult it is to make any easy assumptions. Ingots often have little trace of gold — considerably less than Anglo-Saxon coins have, but similar to the amounts in Arabic — but Arabic coins have noticeable amounts of bismuth, which the ingots lack. So the ingots are not like those in Sweden, largely composed of melted-down dirhems; but they are not made up from English and Viking pennies either. A more positive conclusion is that the Cuerdale ingots are quite like those from Dysart Island, a relatively recent Irish hoard find, closed c. 910. This evidence is particularly welcome to Graham-Campbell, who uses it as further evidence that the Norse remained actively involved in Irish affairs despite their loss of Dublin in 902, and before their return there in 914/17, an interest that he sees as the explanation of the Cuerdale hoard's contents. This is after a paper by D. M. Metcalf that is an admirably clear exposition of the coins of the 7th to 10th centuries found throughout Ireland and the territories bordering (or in) the North Sea, both single finds and hoards, how representative they are, and the contacts that they demonstrate. He throws his weight behind the argument that there was considerable use of coins in 10th-century Ireland, long before minting started in Dublin in c. 993.

The test of a volume like this one is whether it makes its readers wish that they had attended the conference at which the papers were delivered. On that score, it adds a big entry to the list of this reviewer's regrets.

DAVID A. HINTON

The Archaeology of the English Medieval Monarchy. By John Steane. 19 × 25 cm. 226 pp., 120 figs. and pls. London: Batsford, 1993. ISBN 0-7134-7246-4. Price: £35.00 hb.

Just as Shakespeare drew upon Holinshed's *Chronicles* for his history, so in the book under review the author has clearly been inspired by, and relied for much material upon, the first four volumes of the *The History of the King's Works*. The seven chapters are arranged not chronologically but by subject and a great deal of non-architectural, specifically museum, material is introduced. The period dealt with is almost exclusively post-Conquest and — perhaps happily(!) — castles, at least their defences, are excluded. Domestic accommodation in castles or elsewhere enters decisively into the story. Steane is master of the printed written sources and entirely at home with upstanding buildings and museum objects. It is indeed the ease with which he moves from buildings to objects and back again that constitutes one of the most attractive features of the book.

Some of the chapter titles have a 1990s ring: 'Symbols of power' (mainly about representations of the kings in effigies, on coins and so on), 'Burials of the medieval royal family' (Fontevrault, Westminster, Windsor, etc.), 'Royal accommodation', 'Palace and castle gardens', 'The peaceful activities of court life', 'Formalized violence: hunting, hawking, and jousting', and finally 'The monarchy: religion and education'. The subject is really the visible remains of the private life of the medieval sovereigns rather than the constitutional aspects of monarchy. In this very wide field Steane is on top of his subject and

has a concise and lucid style, so that it is very easy to understand his descriptions. The present reviewer certainly felt a much wiser man after reading the book.

The author uses the Harvard system of reference so there are no footnotes but a very comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography of ten pages in double columns; this not only reveals his extensive reading but is a valuable tool for the student. Much of this is art-historical but the author puts himself firmly in the historian/archaeologist's camp (p. 204: 'Albeit by an architectural historian')! One slip-up is the reference to 'Pringle, 1989' on Linlithgow palace (pp. 86, 89) since our Edinburgh colleague does not feature in the bibliography.

The illustrations, both photographic (largely by Steane himself) and line-drawings, are well-chosen, and the plans particularly are of great interest and often very recent. Some of course are drawn directly from *King's Works* but much more readily available in this context.

In a book of this kind, which is not a work of research on a confined area but rapid summaries extending over a very wide field, the reviewer can only comment on the limited part with which he is familiar. The hall at Pickering Castle (Fig. 49) was surely a normal ground-floor hall with service doors in the left-hand gable end. The roof built by the contract of 1347 at Kenilworth Castle, when the 12th-century aisle arcades may have been removed, may have been retained by John of Gaunt 40 years later; the London carpenter who put it up perhaps knew about hammer beams (p. 78) (see my article on Kenilworth Castle halls with contract on pp. 211–18 of M. R. Apted, *et al.*, *Ancient Monuments and their Interpretation* (1977)). I am by no means sure that the original Westminster Hall did not have a spinal arcade, especially since the Anglo-Norman poet, Gaimar, living in England in the first half of the 12th century describes in detail the guests at the opening feast being led by ushers up the stairs into it, implying an external stair to first-floor hall of the normal French style ('Cil cunduaient les barons/Pur les degrez, pur les garçons', lines 5985–86).

The creation of a central hearth on a first floor (p. 100) over a vault, or even more on a wooden floor created problems, but the real issue is surely why did the archaic, not to say absurd, features of central hearth, open roof and louver survive throughout the Middle Ages in English royal palaces when they had long since disappeared in royal palaces in France and Germany? Indeed my identification of an open hall built by Henry II near the end of his life at Saumur in Anjou (*The Rise of the Castle*, p. 44) may suggest a suspicion that an antiquarian or Arthurian element, then at its initial height especially with Henry's queen, had a part in it. Knights could ride into Arthur's hall, which was hardly feasible up the steep stairs of a French first-floor hall!

Another thought that comes to mind is that the long two-storey ranges of cellular lodgings that played such an important part in the creation of the courtyard plan of the later Middle Ages, as at Eltham (Fig. 45) or in the upper ward of Windsor Castle (Fig. 65), so conspicuously absent at Westminster or Clarendon (Fig. 62), perhaps deserve rather more attention than they are accorded here.

There are very few cases however where one would quarrel with the accuracy of the pithy and well-constructed descriptions. I like, in reference to Henry V's Celestine foundation: 'the monastery remained an expression of hope rather than actuality' (p. 155); or of Eton College (p. 203): 'What the documents indicate, archaeology demonstrates (fig. 19)'. One feels that this is a text for a sermon or even to put on a T-shirt! The short chapter on gardens is good, as also is the description of deer parks. Among the 'museum' objects the 'achievements' of the Black Prince at Canterbury are neatly described, particularly the usable *helm*. The slow approach to true portraiture in chapter 1 is particularly intriguing. I did not realize that Oxford had no real royal foundations and I am not heartbroken by the failure to build the great chapel at Christchurch, Cardinal, College! No doubt because of his teaching experience Steane has a way of grasping and communicating the essentials to the reader that is very impressive. This applies as much to the documentary evidence as the physical survivals.

What then, at the end of the day, do we learn from *The Archaeology of the English Medieval Monarchy*? We do not learn about military works like Offa's Dyke or castle fortifications, but

these have a huge literature dedicated to them already. We learn little about pre-Conquest monarchs, not about the coins nor even about Alfred! Basically it is an account of visible remains, or even well-documented but vanished structures, associated personally with the sovereigns from William I to Henry VIII. It is a sort of updated, severely paraphrased, re-oriented but extended in scope version of *King's Works* without the castles. As the first two volumes of the latter appeared 30 years ago and in any case few are likely to sit down and read the first four volumes, the book fills an obvious gap, not to say meets a crying need. For the dirt archaeologist pure and simple whose imagination breaks free from insecure moorings, this tonic of the tangible and the documented is a useful prescription before interpreting the exiguous traces of vanished features.

MICHAEL THOMPSON

Medieval European Jewellery. By Ronald W. Lightbown. 24 × 30 cm. vi + 582 pp., 307 black and white illus., 152 colour pls. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1992. ISBN 0-948107-87-1. Price: £80.00 hb.

This magisterial volume was written between 1985 and 1989 while its author was the Keeper of the Department of Metalwork in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It ends with a catalogue of the Department's collection of all its jewellery except the finger-rings, as most of them have already been published, albeit a good many years ago. The author deliberately says little about finger-rings generally, since more work has appeared on them recently than on other types of jewel. The subject matter of the book ranges in time from the 9th century to the 16th, and geographically throughout the whole of western Christendom, in an impressive display of knowledge and synthesis, both of the surviving objects and of the documentary information. Any 'Dark-Age' traditions of jewellery such as twisted arm-rings that continued beyond the 9th century are not considered, only the gem-studded and colour-enriched Byzantine influences which were the predecessors of European Gothic.

A major purpose of this book is that it should 'introduce the subject to historians, by whom it has been unaccountably neglected', and it certainly provides both a considerable data-bank and some important insights into medieval behaviour and belief, not least its 'magic' and 'superstition'. Some historians have indeed not fully appreciated jewellery's significance: as a traded item, 'precious stones' received only a single entry for the later Middle Ages in the Cambridge Economic History series, and none at all in J. L. Bolton's *Medieval English Economy*; recent biographies of Edward I and of Edward III ignored their subjects' expenditure on jewels, but W. L. Warren has a good account of King John's love for them. Kings used jewels in various ways, together with gold and silver plate in lavish display and as pledges for loans, and as presents; particularly in the 14th and 15th centuries, these might be as personal gifts distributed at the New Year. Totals of expenditure cited by Lightbown stand comparison with what was spent on building: in 1355, the Black Prince incurred a debt for jewels to a single merchant of £1,459 15s. 8d., while between 1351 and 1355, G. Dawson shows that he spent £1,575 5s. 5½d. on building Kennington Palace, with another £270 to be spent; The *King's Works* has Henry VII spending nearly £20,000 between 1502 and 1509 on his great Chapel at Westminster Abbey, but in 1501 he paid £14,000 to French jewellers when his heir's marriage was to be celebrated — he paid Lombards £2,560 for jewels in 1495. Compared to this, Henry II's £38 6s. od. paid to William Cade for gold for his daughter's crown in 1161–62, or his overall annual expenditure in 1186–87 of £108 13s. 8d. on 'rings, stones, clasps and other jewels', unfortunately also with furs, are fairly slight sums, but even so they stand some comparison with his castles' costs, cited by R. A. Brown as over £1,000 a year.

The little evidence that there is on Henry II's jewellery expenditure comes from the early Pipe Rolls, one of the very few published documentary sources that Lightbown has not quarried — many of them waywardly indexed, which makes such work no easy task. It is not

only the English records that he has used, for, good as they are, they are matched in later centuries by inventories, merchants' records and the like from many other countries, and Lightbown's skill in selecting and summarizing all this material is dazzling. Some of the points which he makes of which historians should take particular note concern the widespread sumptuary laws. D. O. Hughes has already shown that they were used in Italy to promote 'republican virtue' by limiting expenditure and preventing lavish display, particularly by seeking to ban the wearing of crowns and other head-gear, as these were symbols of aristocracy. In 'feudal' Europe outside Italy, such legislation had the different intention of preserving the aristocracy and the chivalric orders; only those who could 'help their liege lord in battle' could appropriately bedeck themselves and their families with the costliest materials. (Lightbown claims the earliest sumptuary legislation for Spain, in 1234; as Hughes shows, there are earlier Italian decrees, and precedents for them).

Jewels were therefore used as a social mechanism for maintaining rank. This probably helps to explain their later medieval importance as personal New Year gifts, since they would be recognized as the acknowledgement of their recipients' status by their donors. Furthermore, in a courtly world, it was important to be seen to be richly accoutred. Gift-giving emerges as being as important in the later Middle Ages as texts like *Beowulf* show it to have been in early medieval society. It operated in much the same way, because the gift incurred a debt, to be requited with service — appearing in the donor's retinue, even fighting in battle for his or her party. Allegiance could also of course be expressed through badges and other signs, mostly overt, sometimes with secret devices that intensified group solidarity even further. Mottoes and love tokens proclaimed ardours as artificial as the medium in which they were expressed, all, as Lightbown says, within the conventions of arranged marriages and chivalric romance.

Jewels of course had an advantage over furs and costly textiles, in being easily carried if their owner needed to flee from political trouble. Their 'incorruptibility' meant that they could also be hoarded, and buried if their owner was unsure of the immediate future. The Wars of the Roses seem to account for the Thame and Fishpool hoards, for instance. Lightbown does not directly address reasons for deposition, either of hoards or of single finds, so that he does not consider the extent to which survivals of jewellery are representative of what circulated. He takes it for granted, for instance, that 'so few pieces survive' from the 12th century because of 'a freak of time'. Yet there are brooches and rings from 11th-century England, including some from coin hoards of William I's reign. The 12th century also had its civil wars, and is not without coin hoards, but the only one which has jewellery with it is the rather poor-quality Worcester hoard of c. 1180. Similarly, it is only towards the end of the century that stray finds seem to reappear — the Folkingham gold brooch, and the Southampton garnet-set ring. It may be, therefore, that there was a period of about a hundred years when there really was relatively little precious-metal jewellery in secular use. Since this is the century when the 'feudalism' of vassalage was at its height, it might be fair to conclude that lavish display was not needed as a social transactor when personal ties were linked so directly to land-holding and status.

Lightbown is able to show that, from the beginning of the 13th century, possession of jewellery was fairly widespread, as the Curia Regis Rolls occasionally recount. (The gold cross stolen from Harry Poyntie in 1222 was valued at 2 *sol* [*idi*], i.e. 2 shillings, not 2*d.*). For archaeologists, it is sobering to reflect not only how little of this material survives, but even more poignantly, how little is recovered from systematic excavation. Too recent for Lightbown to consider have been the publications of large assemblages from two of the richest cities, London and Winchester. Yet the only gold objects of c. 1150 to c. 1450 from the former are five finger-rings, and from the latter only two; neither has produced a gold brooch. The implication is that the quantity of precious metal available in that period, whether in jewellery or in coins, is unlikely to be directly represented by excavated material. Lightbown uses wills, not archaeology, to discuss bourgeois jewellery in his final chapter, and does not therefore consider the copper-alloy and pewter copies of rings, brooches and belt-ends, which are not uncommon finds — and too cheap to be worth valuing in an inventory. They do get

occasional mention at earlier points, and there is a chapter on pewter badges, however. The extent to which petty bourgeois and artisan followed or eschewed higher-class fashions is a topic that could now usefully be re-opened — and not solely for recognition purposes (although I should acknowledge that what I described as drawer-handles from caskets or boxes in Winchester are in fact down-market equivalents of richly ornamented gold belt-fittings from which purses could be suspended). The spread of styles, and their different regional expressions, is another major theme. It should be noted, however, that *circa* dates have an appearance of precision belied by occasional inconsistencies, such as in the treatment of the Oxwich brooch, which is 'c. 1300' on page 23, 'early 14th century' on page 149, but 'c. 1320–40' with cameos of 'c. 1250' on page 421.

The huge expense involved in publishing this book means that it is really excellent value for £80. A very poor job has been done on the black and white photographs, however, which are nearly all far too dark, sometimes to the extent of loss of detail. The colour plates are generally a great deal better. The bibliography will be very valuable, especially for its 19th-century sources, which almost equal in number those of the 20th century. There is a very full index.

DAVID A. HINTON

Danmarks middelalderlige skattefunde, c. 1050–c. 1550: Denmark's mediaeval treasure hoards c. 1050–c. 1550. By Jorgen Steen Jensen, Kirsten Bendixen, Niels-Knud Liebgott and Fritze Lindahl. 21 × 29.5 cm. Volume 1, 316 pp., Volume 2, 310 pp., both inc. many line drawings, colour and black and white photographs. Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab, 1992. ISBN 87–87483–23–8. Price: D.Kr. 1,000 hb.

As its title shows, the text of this two-volume work is in both Danish and English, an example of the overall generosity of its publication, for which various foundations are to be thanked. It contains a discussion and catalogue of all the medieval hoards found within modern Denmark, and is principally the work of four members of the National Museum. Denmark's treasure trove law is different from Britain's several variations, in that all unclaimed gold and silver are deemed to belong to the Crown; in the past, some objects or coins might be returned to finders, and rewards may still be made. It is claimed that there is very little evidence of significant flouting of this law, an important point in relation to the arguments over the possibility of British reforms.

Because a 'hoard' is anything except a single coin, there are many individual objects considered in these volumes, so that they need to be known to students of jewellery and devotional objects, as well as to numismatists and to archaeologists interested in hoard containers or other associated objects, or in depositional practices. There are distribution maps as well as drawings of the objects. As the authors state, there is nothing comparable in Britain; J. D. A. Thompson's 1956 compilation 'can no longer be considered adequate'. Unfortunately, nor does Britain have anything comparable to the Novo Foundation, which 'offered to place a large round sum at our disposal for an archaeological research project of our choice'.

Hoardings are classified as 'sacrificial', 'savings', etc., though there does not seem to be a category for those purse-hoardings that appear to have been deliberately buried on the outskirts of towns by travellers who did not want to venture into them carrying all their capital, which P. H. Robinson has looked at in England. As would be expected, there are peaks in deposition during wars and epidemics, but other factors such as inflation also cause fluctuations — 66 of the 327 hoardings date to the 1280s–1330s, when internal problems led to the reduction of silver alloy in the coins to almost negligible amounts. As for deposition sites, one in five is from a church or churchyard, their being deliberate depositions with bodies throughout the Middle Ages. Over sixty hoardings were in ceramic pots, with stoneware ousting other pottery in the

14th century, but with copper-alloy cauldrons and other vessels also used — their increasing availability shown by the evidence that they were made in two-piece reusable moulds, unlike the three-piece moulds of the 13th century. They were not specially made or selected, as they were mostly old and repaired, just as most of the unglazed clay pots showed signs of sooting from kitchen service.

Many of the earlier hoards contain silver or gold rings and ingots, allowing discussion of weight units: there is a wide range, but the rings may have been approximate multiples of the Danish ore. There is no gold after c. 1130 until 1372, reflecting first the decline in Viking trade with the *Rus*, and then the renewed availability of the metal generally in western Europe in the later Middle Ages. Crosses show the first Christian influence, followed by finger-rings. There is a range of late medieval buttons, bells and belt-fittings. Most have western European parallels, but there are distinctive types of, for instance, cast silver dress ornaments which might be seen as part of a 'Baltic' culture-province. (R. W. Lightbown's volume, reviewed above, is also informative on such objects).

The volumes are full of numismatic information, of course. Bendixen's useful summary argues that 'feudalism' can be seen in Denmark from the 1070s, when its kings banned the use of foreign coins, and limited the circulation-period of domestic issues. Minting by bishops was licensed, but not by anyone else: Bendixen does not accept Spufford's definition of 'feudal' coinage as being one in which the royal prerogative was delegated to counts and princelings. The system broke down in civil strife in the 1280s onwards, and the hoards show this very clearly because those of the later 14th century effectively contain nothing but German and other foreign coins, even though Danish *pennings* were still being minted. The 15th century saw a reversal, despite silver shortages elsewhere, but this was caused by economic rather than by political factors.

Britain needs volumes equivalent to these, but even if they could be compiled, it is not easy to envisage that they could be printed, let alone on high-quality paper and with large numbers of excellent illustrations. As for simultaneous publication in a foreign language...

DAVID A. HINTON

Medieval Monasteries. By J. Patrick Greene. 17 × 24 cm. xiii + 255 pp., 100 figs. and pls. Leicester: Leicester U.P., 1992. ISBN 0-7185-1296-0. Price: £47.50 hb.

The archaeology of monastic sites used to be a branch of architectural history, with the evolution of the individual monastic complex and comparison of one with another the chief matters of interest. Those having been settled to the excavators' satisfaction, sites were displayed for posterity like skeletons; for any inkling of the life that once animated them, visitors had to turn to the results of documentary research, and those were often not available at the site. From the 1950s came the realization that purely 'architectural' excavation was destroying fragile material and ignoring peripheral features that could illuminate aspects of monastic life (particularly the temporal ones) that documents failed to mention, and that those aspects often included the technology of building itself. Since then, recovery of formerly neglected materials and areas has shed new light on monastic life and enabled sites to be vividly interpreted to the general public. In that movement Dr Greene has played a leading part.

His book is about the movement's results rather than its methodology and will thus serve as an up-to-date introduction (with an opening chapter called 'What are monastic houses?') for the non-specialist 'consumer' — the student or traveller; those practising archaeologists permitted to dig monastic sites will know the field already, one hopes. The text is generously referenced and a large bibliography will enable the student to take the subject further. Another strength is that the author, having travelled widely and observantly, is able to cite, from personal knowledge, examples from Scotland and Ireland as well as from England and Wales, and in so doing also avoids undue emphasis on his own sites. He deals not only with monasteries proper but also with friaries, and it is regrettable that his range did not extend also to hospitals, which were equally characteristic of medieval towns and were

often administered by brethren or sisters under a religious rule. Geographically, then, the survey is more broadly based, even within England, than its competitor, Dr Glyn Coppack's *Abbeys and Priories* (1990). Chronologically, however, Greene's book gives only half the story, for the series in which it appears is concerned with the post-Conquest period and thus forces him to marginalize some of the most exciting recent work in monastic archaeology. Moreover the many houses founded on virgin sites after 1066 are those most likely to have coherent visible remains and therefore to be suitable for public display and interpretation; Greene rightly attaches much importance to them. The unintended result, however, is that he appears doubly neglectful of those early pre-Conquest sites that are likely to be rewarding academically but are harder to find and do not lend themselves to public viewing.

In a book that successfully avoids unnecessary technicalities, one is sorry to find that credence is sometimes given to the 'new pedantry' — technique for its own sake. An example is on p. 149, where Greene reproduces a plan (not, it should be stressed, his own) of Kirkstall Abbey; it was drawn in order to show that all find spots of dripping-pan fragments lay near the kitchens. He welcomes this extravagant exercise as evidence that, if broken vessels of a specialized function are found, the buildings in which they were used were probably nearby. One could happily have taken that for granted.

Errors in history and philology are rare in Dr Greene's book but at least as inimical to exact knowledge as, for example, 'the inevitable lens distortion in photogrammetry', the correction of which he commends (p. 230). Edward the Confessor did not die on 29 December 1065 (p. 225) but on 5 January 1066. Templars built circular churches in imitation of Jerusalem's church of the Holy Sepulchre, not of Solomon's temple (p. 235). The term 'reredorter' is admittedly obscure, but is not a 19th-century coinage (p. viii); 'the reredortour, otherwyse callyd the house of esemente' occurs before 1500 in a monastic context (*O.E.D.*). It is more appropriate than Greene's preferred term, 'latrines', which belongs to the army camp. He also dislikes 'reredorter' because it is a euphemism, yet does not mind applying the term 'toilets', a euphemism and an anachronism, to parts of the 14th-century Thornton gatehouse (p. 188); all permissible words for lavatories are in fact euphemisms, and a medieval one, 'garderobe', would have suited the context better.

The line drawings are well reproduced and at appropriate reductions. The photographs, many of them by the author, were of good quality too; they certainly did not deserve to be printed in a feeble monotone that impoverishes contrast and shadow detail at one and the same time. Publishers have made that process the norm for this generation, but no Victorian archaeologists could have admired it, and the prohibitive price of Greene's volume suggests that it can no longer be justified on grounds of economy; Coppack's survey is in paperback at £12.95.

D. C. COX

Finds and Environmental Evidence (Aspects of Saxo-Norman London II). Edited by Alan Vince. 19 × 24 cm. 451 pp., c. 475 figs. and pls. London: London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1991. ISBN 0-903290-37-5. Price: £39.95 pb.

This volume — at 451 pages a real blockbuster — is part of a mini-series concerned with Saxo-Norman London and based on rescue excavations undertaken between the mid 1970s and mid 1980s. Under examination here are most types of artefacts and biological material — other than animal bones — from sixteen sites, some on the waterfront and others within the western half of the walled city.

The volume opens with a short summary description of the sites in which one of the main points to note is the extensive truncation of Anglo-Saxon deposits by modern cellars. This has, unfortunately, had a profound effect on the quality and quantity of data recovered. The inhabitants of 9th- to 11th-century London were, however, avid pit-diggers and it is pits which have provided the bulk of the finds.

The introduction is followed by a section on pottery which makes up c. 25 per cent of the volume and this is succeeded by a slightly larger section on small finds. Here it is pleasing to

find the retention of the traditional approach to classification which begins with grouping by materials. The current trend towards structuring finds reports on the basis of function seems to this reviewer to lead all too often to publications which are difficult to use because their compilers have failed to cope with the problems posed by objects which either functioned in many different contexts or in none which can now be identified. The small finds report is followed by some 70 pages on coins and coin-like lead seals. There are then sections on plant remains and parasites which are succeeded by shorter contributions on metallurgy, dendrochronology and archaeomagnetic dating. The volume is concluded by a survey of the present state of knowledge about Saxo-Norman London.

This volume is, perhaps, of particular value for two reasons. Firstly, it deals with material from a number of sites scattered over a good part of the walled city. As a result, it has been possible to offer a convincing analysis of the development of the Saxo-Norman town which is based on comparing areas with both different functions and different spatial relationships to major topographical features such as the river and the city walls. Secondly, the volume has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach in the sense of bringing together the work of numerous specialists in the study of many different classes of material which are often published separately. Not only do we find, therefore, a stimulating overview by Frances Pritchard of the small finds, but also the environmental archaeology gaining a much wider audience by being set alongside the artefact-based studies.

Running through the contribution of each specialist or group of specialists we find a number of common themes. One of the most important is the chronology of Saxo-Norman London which now appears to have a firm base in Alan Vince's six ceramic phases. A useful supplement is, however, provided by Peter Stott's wide-ranging study of coins from both excavations and other provenances. Secondly, there is the theme of technology with the contributions on pottery manufacture and on the working of leather and non-ferrous metal being especially valuable. Thirdly, we learn about trade in Anglo-Saxon London with particular stress being laid on the lower level of international contacts in the period between the late 9th and late 10th centuries when compared with the periods immediately before and after.

Finally, a theme which a number of contributors touch upon is the extent to which their data can be used to characterize in detail the function of individual parts of the Saxo-Norman town. At first sight the conclusions are, as Frances Pritchard points out on p. 121, a little disappointing. Nevertheless the very facts that finds — apart from pottery — were sparse and that assemblages of both finds and biological material appeared to exhibit little variety from site to site may still tell us useful things about Saxo-Norman London such as, for example, that the recycling of materials was rigorous and that zoning of craft activities was not a feature of the town in the way that it would become in later times. The subject of functional differentiation, and its implications for social differentiation, is surely one which will be worthy of further research and particular value would appear to lie in the plant ecologists' attempts to identify taxa which colonize very specific types of habitat (p. 347).

To sum up, we have here a most stimulating contribution to the study of early medieval England for which criticisms of detail or emphasis would be nugatory. Bold in its conception and scholarly in its execution, the volume is also considerably enhanced by the high standard of photography and line illustration we have come to expect from the Museum of London.

PATRICK OTTAWAY

The Bridgehead and Billingsgate to 1200 (Aspects of Saxo-Norman London III). By Ken Steedman, Tony Dyson and John Schofield. 19 × 24 cm. 216 pp., 1 fiche, 75 figs. and pls. London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1992. ISBN 0-903290-40-5. Price: £27.00 pb.

This is the third in the series of volumes dealing with the development of the north bank of the Thames in the period following Alfred's reconquest of the city in 886. After the overall

study of the buildings and street development and the review of the finds and environmental data presented in the first two volumes, this volume looks in detail at the evidence for the development of a particular area of the Thames waterfront. Four sites form the focus for this study: New Fresh Wharf and Billingsgate Lorry Park downstream of London Bridge, and Seal House and Swan Lane upstream of it. After a brief introduction which outlines the academic reasoning behind the production of the study in this form and looks forward to complementary volumes in the series, there is a summary (by Tony Dyson) of the by now reasonably familiar model of *Lundenwic* as the mid Saxon settlement situated to the west of the Roman walled town. He then looks at the historical evidence for the resettlement of the City in the reign of Alfred. Of particular importance are two late 9th-century grants, to the Bishop of Worcester and the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the harbour of Queenhithe. These demonstrate not only the restoration of trade in this area and the perceived commercial importance of a viable river frontage, but also that a system of streets had been established by the end of the 9th century.

There follows the detailed account of the development of the four bridgehead sites. Perhaps inevitably there is greater emphasis on the New Fresh Wharf and Billingsgate sites since they were far larger, Swan Lane and Seal House consisting of single narrow trenches. At New Fresh Wharf, a timber jetty was found, together with a rubble bank and possible timber walkway. The jetty was clearly of particular importance in the utilization of this part of the waterfront and additionally had an important relationship to an adjoining street, *Rederesgate*. The jetty and rubble bank were succeeded by a series of clay embankments, principally to counter river erosion. From this period (first half of the 11th century) tenement divisions, on comparable lines to those documented in the later medieval period, can begin to be recognized.

The development of the neighbouring site at Billingsgate Lorry Park is compared closely with that of New Fresh Wharf. Here the site was bisected by an inlet, perhaps the mouth of a natural stream to the north. From this feature was created an area of hard-standing, possibly for the berthing of boats, at least initially, although its progressive construction suggests that it was used as an access point to the river. As such it resembles the common slipways well known on the Bristol waterfront, representing a means of access to the river at all points of the tidal range. Botolph Lane would have led directly to this inlet, reinforcing the impression of its function as an access point.

The whole of this site coincided with the location of St Botolph's Wharf, one of the public wharfs of the London waterfront. The back-braced revetments excavated at this site, together with the hard-standing to the rear on the upper surfaces of the embankments, reinforce the impression of waterfronts carefully built with the primary objective of creating favourable facilities for the docking and unloading of vessels.

Swan Lane, upstream of the Bridge, had a series of embankments dating from the first half of the 11th century similar to those recognized at New Fresh Wharf and Billingsgate Lorry Park. By contrast, such embankments were absent at the Seal House site where the earliest structure post-dating the river-deposited silts and gravels was 12th-century. The relationship of these two sites with the medieval Ebbgate is an important one. Ebbgate marked the eastern limit of a system of embankments in the same way as *Rederesgate* at New Fresh Wharf marked the western extent of the embankments there.

All the sites are summarized in the context both of localized waterfront development and of the development of the London waterfront as a whole. The inter-relationship of the identified tenements is an important consideration which is addressed in part here. There must have been some means of access to the various properties, presumably from the north. This presupposes either that the Roman riverside wall was completely demolished by this time in the area of Billingsgate and New Fresh Wharf, or that openings had been cut through it to serve the properties. In addition, one wonders whether the construction of the embankments eastwards from *Rederesgate* and the laying out of tenements from the 11th century implies a degree of central control, perhaps from a single landlord of an extensive property covering much of the area downstream of the Bridge.

This volume is particularly valuable in examining the development of the street system. Those streets which can be identified as extending unimpeded from the river to the centre of the city are seen to be earlier and part of a planned system in contrast to the more erratic streets which came later and which display a more piecemeal infilling of an already established plan. An important distinction is drawn between those streets which terminated at Thames Street on the north and those which crossed the line of Thames Street. The former were generally given the suffix '-lane', while the latter were distinguished by the names 'wharf', 'hithe' or 'gate', indicating more formal landing places at these points on the river frontage.

As a whole this volume raises many important points about the development of the London waterfront, particularly its development from the 11th century. It draws the important distinction between the essentially *private* river frontages of much of the Thames waterfront and the important public quays of Queenhithe, Billingsgate, and St Botolph's Wharf, the latter forming part of the core subject matter of this report.

The report is well produced with generally clear illustrations. The arguments are cogently put forward, although the details of the stratigraphic sequence and descriptions of some of the major structural elements are sometimes hard to follow. This is especially true of the jetty at New Fresh Wharf where it is extremely difficult to match the textual description with the relevant figure. Slightly worrying is the statement that lack of time led to inadequate recording of the Saxon occupation at New Fresh Wharf. The sites at Swan Lane and Seal House, although supplemented by subsequent watching briefs, seem too limited upon which to base far-reaching conclusions about the development of the London waterfront.

These are, however, minor criticisms of a work which is an important contribution to the study of the re-emergence of London following Alfred's reconquest of the city. Some of the models put forward remain to be tested, but nevertheless they are convincing ones and are of great value in helping to understand the development of the late Saxon port and its relationship to the rest of the city.

ROBERT JONES

Dress Accessories c. 1150–c. 1450 (Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 3). By Geoff Egan and Frances Pritchard. 19 × 25 cm. xi + 410 pp., 269 figs. and pls. London: H.M.S.O., 1991. ISBN 0-11-290444-0. Price: £39.95 pb.

Dress Accessories is the third volume in the series on medieval finds from excavations of mainly waterfront sites in London; it follows volumes on *Knives and Scabbards* and *Shoes and Pattens*. It is well over twice their size but, at more than three times the price, it is expensive and one wonders if the paperback binding will withstand repeated handling.

The book catalogues nearly 1,800 objects of metal, leather, textile, wood, bone, amber and jet. Following a general introduction and a chapter on the dating and context of the finds, these are dealt with thematically in chapters on, for example, girdles, buckles, mounts, brooches, hair accessories, beads, bells, purses and cased mirrors. In addition, since the majority of the finds are of metal, there are chapters on alloy nomenclature and metallurgical analysis, and a section on conservation which usefully highlights the pitfalls of trying to identify materials by appearance alone.

The importance of this book lies most obviously in the vast numbers of excavated objects that the authors have been able to include, allowing more meaningful comparison and analysis than is usually feasible within an excavation report. It has been possible, with the aid of coins and dendrochronology, to date the pottery sequence quite closely, and most finds can be confidently assigned to phases, some of which span only 30 years, with little residuality or intrusion. It can also be shown that most of the objects had been only recently discarded at the time of deposition. Taken with the excellent conditions for preservation afforded by the waterlogged deposits, this has resulted in an assemblage of finds to make many a small-finds archaeologist envious.

All the objects are catalogued and numbered consecutively throughout the volume, which makes for easier reference. However, in some of the more numerous categories, such as simple buckles and strap-ends, only representative examples are illustrated and described in detail; the others are listed in summary form. The discussions at the beginning of each chapter, and introducing every type within the category, contain many references to other British and Continental material and make effective use of the evidence from historical sources, documents and effigies for the ways in which objects were used and made. Anecdotal information makes the text readable in its own right and the bibliography of more than 300 works provides plenty of scope for further reading, as well as testifying to the authors' wide-ranging research.

Most of the types of objects are already familiar from other excavations around Britain; there are few surprises amongst the copper alloy dress fittings but the very large proportion of lead-tin alloys is notable. There are very few items of gold and silver, but this is consistent with the material having been derived from the rubbish deposits of the poorer parts of the city rather than high-status sites. However, the sheer size of the assemblage and the anaerobic burial conditions have ensured that objects which might, from other evidence, have been considered rare, such as mirrors, needle cases, leather and fabric purses and wooden combs, are here present in more representative numbers. This has provided the authors with the opportunity to consider the relative abundance of different types of objects and different materials and to note any changes which occurred during the three centuries covered by the study.

It is a pity that in a book that is otherwise so good one has to draw attention to a number of negative points. These lie in the design and format of the series and are not in any way the fault of the authors. A greater attempt could have been made to place the figures on the same page or on the page facing the appropriate catalogue entries, and the figures showing chronological trends in buckles and strap-ends could have been placed on facing pages to allow comparisons to be made. On many of the illustrations the figure number and caption become mixed up in the drawing, thus making it difficult to find a particular figure. But the biggest regret in this large volume, which contains such a diversity of types and materials, is the lack of an index.

Inevitably this series of reports will be seen in the light of a successor to the much-loved London Museum *Medieval Catalogue*. The present volume is certainly worthy of that regard. Although it makes no claims to be an exhaustive or definitive study of the subject, and rightly resists any temptation to define 'Types', it is valuable as a reflection of the lives and dress of ordinary Londoners in the medieval period and will provide a most useful source of reference material for archaeologists throughout the country.

ALISON GOODALL

Textiles and Clothing c.1150-c.1450 (Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 4). By Elisabeth Crowfoot, Frances Pritchard and Kay Staniland. 19 × 25 cm. x + 223 pp., 183 figs., 16 colour pls. London: H.M.S.O., 1992. ISBN 0-11-290445-9. Price: £29.50 pb.

This is the fourth volume in the Museum of London's fine series publishing the finds from the many excavations undertaken in the City during the boom years of the 1970s and 1980s as a product of the sponsorship deals negotiated by the Museum's Urban Archaeology Department: the recession has at least provided a breathing space for research and writing up, although we must hope that there will be some archaeologists left to continue excavating the sites, and even some developers to provide the opportunity when the green shoots eventually materialize. The textiles discussed in this volume provide evidence of the excavators' and conservators' skills in recuperating such fragile material.

However, this is very much more than a list of the hundreds of fragments from thirteen City sites excavated between 1972 and 1983. Each section is structured around the catalogue of each textile type and weave, which then generates a far-ranging discussion of technique, decoration and function, reinforced by documentary and artistic parallels, each helping to

bring the other to life. This is the real strength of the book, that the different sources complement each other so well and therefore make it of interest not simply to textile and clothing specialists but to those concerned with most aspects of medieval life.

It must be stressed that the evidence, through its very nature, is partial. The varying deposit conditions affect the survival rate, which is further modified by the type of fabric and the treatments involved in its preparation. A recurrent feature is the economy which was practised, hard to imagine in today's throw-away culture. Nothing was wasted: textiles were almost endlessly recycled, resulting in some chronological problems — one piece of silk had been used in different forms for over 200 years before it was eventually discarded. Silk was subject to particular ingenuity. Remarkably small lengths were laboriously knotted together for sewing, and one way of making it appear to go further was to use it to bind only an external bias seam, with linen binding on the inside of the garment. Narrow bands of silk were used in the 14th century to decorate woollen cloths, while the surface patterns of locally woven twills imitated those of imported silks. Tailored garments were designed to include all offcuts, and those few scraps which could not be incorporated into a tunic or sleeve became bindings, purses or seal bags. Documentary evidence suggests further recycling by the vigorous 13th-century communities of fripperers, or second-hand clothes dealers.

Industrial techniques examined include the preparation of fabrics and changes in the type of loom, interpreted by helpful drawings; alterations in the structure of yarns attest the increasing use of the spinning wheel by the late 14th century. The appendix on dyes suggests that the most common dye was the versatile madder plant, which produced a range of warm red tones; also present was the expensively imported Mediterranean louse, used for the scarlet dye *kermes* on quality garments. The reader's imagination has to work hard to visualize the bright colours and patterns which can be reconstructed, but the significance of colour and design was integral to medieval dress.

The textiles are discussed according to type, with a general history of the fabric followed by an illustrated catalogue. The non-specialist could start by reading the glossary at the end; the clear descriptions could have been enhanced by some diagrams here, although these are generously provided throughout the text. The highest proportion of surviving fragments are wool, concrete evidence of the prosperity signalled by the wool churches of East Anglia: worsted was called after the Norfolk village of that name. The few fragments of linen surviving represent a wide range of self-patterned towels, table cloths and napkins. Although silk was never made in Britain, its constant import illustrates patterns of trade with the rest of Europe. From the 12th century, Islamic Spain was replacing Byzantium as the main source of supply, but by the 14th century, Italian silks were more popular. There were also oriental imports as a result of the Mongol Empire's reopening of the trade routes with the East. The documentary sources are again confirmed by the archaeological evidence: a fragment with a peony design (fig. 72) from an early 14th-century deposit is Chinese. Other examples, with exotic patterns of birds and foliage, represent Italian mid 14th-century reworkings of eastern models. Another luxury was satin, sometimes with economically painted rather than embroidered designs. The satin damasks favoured by the court became so popular that Edward IV attempted to prohibit their wearing by anyone below the rank of knight. Velvet was another popular luxury, used originally for furnishings rather than clothes. The fragments here are offcuts used as pouches, and not abandoned until thoroughly worn out.

Accessories show further skills. The Iron-Age and Anglo-Saxon technique of tablet-weaving continued, an activity appropriate for noblewomen and nuns, producing tubular braids for purse strings or necklaces; plaited braids were made by hand from silk threads, while fingerloop braids were made by a cats' cradle process, for edging hairnets or purse strings. Hairnets themselves were knotted from silk threads by copper netting needles; the mesh became larger during the 14th century when it was fashionable to reveal more hair. Figures 121 and 122 show two cobweb-like hairnets whose recovery seems almost miraculous. Garters, increasingly fashionable from the early 14th century to coincide with the shortening of the male tunic, were not necessarily purpose-made but could be recycled strips of cloth.

The final chapter is a pioneer study of sewing and tailoring techniques, demonstrating again the interface between archaeological and documentary sources. Buttons and button-holes, hose and hoods, the florid ornamental edges known as dagges, all provide evidence of conspicuous consumption constantly tempered by economy. The book is not merely a survey of medieval products and techniques but an important contribution to a general history of dress.

CAROLA HICKS

Archeologia a Monte Barro. I-II Grande Edificio e le Torri. Edited by G. P. Brogiolo and L. Castelletti. 22 × 31 cm. 267 pp., 190 figs. and pls., 39 tables. Lecco: Editrice Stefanoni, 1991. No ISBN. Price not stated.

The impact of the Ostrogoths in Italy is well documented historically and is dominated of course by the figure of Theoderic the Great, who established a kingdom which endured from A.D. 493 to 553. The writings of the king's chief minister, Cassiodorus Senator, provide a comprehensive image of Theoderic's state machinery, ranging from Gothic soldiery, to Arian and Catholic bishops, to Roman bureaucrats. The period is even dubbed a 'Golden Age' by the contemporary Byzantine author Procopius, being marked by an economic resurgence following the stagnation and near collapse under the last western Roman emperors. The documentary image is one of general co-operation between Goths and Italians, and a largely willing Gothic assimilation of Roman culture.

Archaeologically this picture is not so easy to trace: unlike most other Germanic tribes, Ostrogothic burial custom restricted the insertion of grave goods to the female elite, leaving male warriors indistinct from native Christians. Better known of course is the structural heritage preserved in the Ostrogothic capital of Ravenna, comprising primarily the Arian cathedral of S. Spirito and its baptistery, and the churches of S. Agata, S. Apollinare Nuovo and S. Apollinare in Classe, most resplendent with gold-backed mosaics. Furthermore, excavations in the early part of this century in the town centre revealed the foundations and some of the decoration of Theoderic's palace, built in late Roman style. Churches and palace combine to demonstrate energetic Ostrogothic maintenance and embellishment of the late Roman city. The picture recurs elsewhere, with palaces documented (if little known archaeologically) in other favoured Ostrogothic seats such as Verona and Spoleto. Gothic royalty also followed late Roman imperial trends in having rural palaces or hunting lodges, as has been claimed at Galeata near Foggia, investigated in 1942 and recently restudied. To these palaces can now be added the excavated structures at Monte Barro, located in the Lake Como district of central north Italy.

The excavations, as reported by Brogiolo and Castelletti, commenced in 1986 and are still in progress. The volume under review discusses work carried out on the principal structures and the associated defensive installations partially preserved on the hillside. Monte Barro (922 m) lies at the south-eastern end of Lake Como (Lago di Lecco) and its slopes offer clear views along various natural communications lines, notably the lake itself and the River Adda. The archaeological features cluster on the 600–700 m contours, with a defensive curtain (the *Muraioo*) identified for a length of 1,200 m; finds from within two of the three recognized towers recommend a short-lived usage in the 5th–6th centuries (pp. 50–55). A more closely defined chronology is possible for the habitation zone, where the excavations focused on what can justifiably be termed a palace (pp. 26–50, 55–57). Though of somewhat rough build, the edifice is well planned, comprising a courtyard with residential, service and storage wings on the north, west and east sides (with a total surface area of 1600 sq.m). The focus was the north wing whose second storey featured a well-appointed central hall with traces of painted wall plaster and crushed tile floor, plus quality finds which included a bronze pendant crown and pendant crosses (pp. 106–15) — suggestive perhaps of the audience chamber for a royal functionary. Various coins and other finds from the palace combine to suggest a date range of c. A.D. 500–540, terminating with a destructive fire (coinciding rather neatly with events in the war with Byzantium). The data all point to an

Ostrogothic fortress-settlement (a *castrum*?) designed to observe activities from the Alpine valleys; whether as elsewhere (e.g. Invillino, Castelseprio) a late Roman origin exists remains to be determined, since although there were hints of earlier activity on the site and in its environs previous to the construction of the palace (p. 28), there were no secure structural traces associated with this presence.

The close date range is of great interest in assessing the economy and environmental backdrop of the site. Plentiful archaeozoological and palaeobotanical assemblages were retrieved from good contexts within the palace complex, bolstering the image of domestic and storage areas on the ground floor of the building (pp. 145–203). Full and exceptionally well-illustrated coverage is given to the analyses of these data — essential in that they provide a first insight into Gothic-period economies, and since the palace complex as a whole can be deemed to be an elite structure, the faunal and other remains should provide a reliable cross-section of the full food-range. The service areas were of course occupied by non-elite members of society and duly produced evidence for hearths and domestic activities such as weaving, wood-working and agriculture (pp. 59–143). Ceramic finds are interesting in being generally fairly unexciting coarse wares with very restricted numbers of African or Eastern imports evident — a picture which tallies well with other contemporary non-coastal high status sites (e.g. Castelseprio) — indicating the ever-diminishing external market in the post-Roman world (pp. 61–83).

The importance of the finds at Monte Barro is well signalled by this volume, although not fully developed: for example, comparative discussion in relation to the other known Ostrogothic palace sites is limited, nor is there any real comment on the general archaeology of the Goths in Italy (pp. 49–50, 55–57); similarly, more specific elements such as the discovery of three clearly contemporary burials in the courtyard of the palace are inadequately interpreted (cf. pp. 43, 149–51). To some degree this limited coverage is due to the interim nature of the excavations. Four seasons of work (1986–89) are reported, but excavations still continue and undoubtedly more complex discussion will follow. This published volume is none the less extremely useful: its merit lies in its adoption of a compromise between a coffee-table book and a full-blown excavation report by offering a partially abbreviated text but plenty of high-quality illustrations (colour plates within the text and most black and white plates and line drawings following the text), including some useful watercolour reconstructions (pp. 44–47, 180). Throughout, there is a successful blend of archaeological description with readable scientific analysis, particularly evident in Part 3 of the volume, which summarizes finds related to both site economy and environment (pp. 145–203).

The Monte Barro excavations offer a first proper study of a closely datable Ostrogothic settlement site, to fill the sizeable gap between the Arian churches of Ravenna and the scattered female grave goods recognized across northern and central Italy. The bonus is the presence of a palace structure and a range of 'symbolic' artefacts, plus a comprehensive sample of economic indicators. This prompt and high-quality publication bodes well for the continued success of the research project.

NEIL CHRISTIE

La Ceramica nel Mondo Bizantino tra XI e XV secolo e i suoi Rapporti con l'Italia. Atti del Seminario Certosa di Pontignano (Siena), 11–13 marzo 1991. (*Quaderni del Dipartimento di Archeologia e Storia delle Arti Sezione Archeologica*, Università di Siena). Edited by Sauro Gelichi. 17 × 24 cm. 352 pp., 192 illus. Florence: Edizioni all'Insegna del Giglio, 1993. ISBN 88-7814-029-5. Price: L. 60.000.

Fourteen papers form this volume. Its subject is ripe for and will repay study. During the centuries of the Crusades there was much interaction between Italy and the Byzantine world and the importance of the ceramic evidence has yet to be fully exploited. The papers,

delivered at the University of Siena in 1991, give an idea of the potential of the subject. They make public plenty of raw data: finds from excavations in Italy and Greece not previously available are well presented and generally illustrated to a high standard. Statistics too, illustrating distribution patterns of different types of pottery, are comprehensively presented. Study of medieval pottery in Italy is at a more advanced stage than its equivalent in the Byzantine world, a fact reflected in the dominance of Italian contributors to this volume. As a whole, these papers mark a significant advance in the subject.

In the introductory article, 'La ceramica Bizantina in Italia e la ceramica Italiana nel Mediterraneo orientale tra XII e XIII secolo: stato degli studi e proposte di ricerca', Gelichi traces the evolution of the systems of classification for the respective ceramic traditions and assimilates the material presented at the conference, together with other recent publications, to indicate how these might be improved. He rightly points out the nebulous relationship between Zeuxippus II and the various categories of I, especially IB and IC. The work of Lazzarini and Canal, reinforced and developed in this volume by F. Saccardo in 'Contesti medievali nella laguna e prime produzioni graffite Veneziane', has shown that derivatives of IB and IC were produced at Venice. Saccardo points out (p. 202) that it is difficult, but not impossible, to distinguish the Venetian from the Byzantine products. It would be interesting to compare the IB wares (*spirale-cericho*) from Venice with those at, for instance, Nikaia (Iznik), where there is also plenty of evidence for their production. The main components of trade in glazed pottery were clearly Zeuxippus and contemporary sgraffito wares, imported to Italy from the Byzantine world, and the various types of majolica coming in the opposite direction from Italy to the eastern Mediterranean. Interpretation of the geographical distribution of the various ceramic types is less straightforward. For instance, Gelichi's Fig. 17 (p. 34) is intriguing: fragments of Zeuxippus II are found throughout Italy, but it is only in the north-west that they occur as *bacini* (immured bowls). However, he is able to refine our previous understanding of the distribution of protomajolica wares from southern Italy in the eastern Mediterranean by showing that there is a correlation between them and the activities of the Venetians.

T. Mannoni, 'Provenienze ed analisi petrografiche interpretate. L'esempio delle ceramiche Bizantine', presents the results of analysis of thin-sectioning from 47 vessels thought to be Byzantine imports into Italy. The large quantities of late 12th and early 13th century Byzantine ceramics from northern Italy revealed by A. Gardini, 'La ceramica Bizantina in Liguria', and L. Lazzarini and E. Canal, 'Altra ceramica graffita Bizantina dalla laguna Veneta', contrast with their paucity in Campania as shown by P. Peduto, 'Ceramica Bizantina dalla Campania'. H. Patterson, 'Contatti commerciali e culturali ad Otranto dal IX al XV secolo: l'evidenza della ceramica', is interesting in revealing evidence of earlier interchanges than the three articles just mentioned, as well as exemplifying an assemblage of a very different nature, with imports of Byzantine domestic wares besides the glazed wares. C. K. Williams, II, 'Italian imports from a church complex in ancient Corinth', and A. Oikonomou-Laniado, 'La céramique protomajolique d'Argos', illustrate the extent of Italian imports into late Byzantine cities. B. Papadopoulou and K. Tsouris, 'Late Byzantine ceramics from Arta: some examples', place the imported Italian and contemporaneous local ceramics in an historical framework and are able to show that Italian economic influence preceded rather than followed political influence in Eperos. The quantity and variety of imported wares, mainly Italian, described by T. E. Gregory in 'Local and imported medieval pottery from Isthmia', is surprising, on what must have been primarily a non-urban setting. G. Berti and S. Gelichi, 'La ceramica Bizantina nelle architetture dell'Italia medievale', catalogue the Byzantine bowls to be found amongst the numerous *bacini* of Italy and quantify them as percentages of the total number of *bacini* of a particular date associated with an individual building. In a neat marriage of documentary and archaeological evidence, V. François, 'La céramique Byzantine à Thasos, ses liens avec la flotte Latine au XIIIe au XVe siècle', divides the pottery from excavations on the island of Thasos into three phases and connects each with the changing political and economic history of the region, with the Genoese playing the main role as distributors of glazed pottery in the

first and second phases, while in the third a narrower range of pottery reflects the restrictions of Ottoman control. M. Michailidou, in 'Ceramica Veneziana dalla città medievale di Rodi', shows that the island of Rhodes, while under the Knights of St John, imported many high-quality glazed wares from the western Mediterranean, from Spain as well as from both northern and southern Italy.

PAMELA ARMSTRONG

Naissance des Arts Chrétiens. Atlas des Monuments Paléochrétiens de la France (Atlas Archéologiques de la France). Edited by Noël Duval *et al.* 24 × 32 cm. 433 pp., numerous figs. and black and white and colour pls. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, Ministère de la Culture de la Communication, 1991. ISBN 2-11-081114-5. Price: FF 890.

The first in the state-sponsored series of Archaeological Atlases of France dealt with cave paintings; the latest is on early Christian archaeology, from the Roman period to the end of the Merovingian dynasty. Some 20 specialists were concerned with writing the individual chapters; almost all the great and the good in the field of early Christian archaeology in France were involved either as authors or as advisers. It is itself a great monument to the work which has been done on early Christian France over the last 30 years: anyone interested in early medieval archaeology is going to find its summaries of the current state of knowledge of considerable use, and will admire its collection of often very fine photographs.

The book witnesses to a peculiarly French conception of 'Atlas' (a collection of illustrations, rather than of maps); indeed, the very subject appears odd to the British eye. It is about 'Christian art' and/or 'Early Christian monuments'. Although an attempt is made on occasion to show how Christian arts grew out of pre-Christian forms (as in a fine four-page spread illustrating how the various pre-Christian motifs on a gold buckle-plate from c. 400 could be adopted and adapted by Christian artists), in many cases the 'Christian' elements are simply removed from the cultural context. We thus have four pages illustrating Christian motifs on pottery, without an overview of early medieval pottery; a chapter on metalwork decorated with Christian symbols, again in isolation from comparable material; and, most worrying of all, a chapter on urban churches which has only brief reference to the immense amount of work which has been carried out on urban archaeology as a whole. A reader is bound to be left wondering whether the concept of 'early Christian archaeology' is either valid or helpful.

The book is, however, handsomely produced, with a good bibliography, a glossary, and a separate index for personal names (with brief biographies) and place names. One of its weakest features, oddly enough to an outsider accustomed to a very different meaning for the word 'Atlas', are the maps, which are few and over-schematic, sometimes poorly captioned and occasionally just plain misleading. The map on p. 137 illustrating pilgrimage to St Martin of Tours, for instance, gives a very false picture of the geographical pattern of pilgrimage, and is greatly inferior to the similar map in Charles Lelong's *La vie quotidienne à l'époque Mérovingienne*. The two pages in the chapter on rural parishes which contain five maps of different church dedications in the diocese of Limoges have no explanatory captions, and are not linked to any discussion in the text: as it stands those two pages are largely wasted.

The text itself is varied. It gives an overall impression of blandness, presumably because the editors felt that the great French public for whom the book was intended would not wish to be disturbed by the problems of source criticism or the details of academic debate. Even so, the best chapters are undoubtedly very good introductions to their subjects. Noël Duval's own chapters on the urban church and on the development of ecclesiastical architecture are models of clarity. The chapter on cemeteries, by Bailey K. Young and Patrick Périn, partly because it ignores the restrictions placed on the subject matter by the label 'Christian', covers an equally complex and changing field very clearly, and, much more than most, links developments in Gaul with what is happening elsewhere. Nancy Gauthier offers probably the best brief introduction to early Christian inscriptions that one could find anywhere. Claude

Brenot does a similar job for coins, aided by some outstanding photographs, and hindered again by the poor maps (one produced for the purpose, though hardly more than a sketch, the other, amazingly, nothing more than a reproduction of M. Prou's map of Merovingian mint-sites, which celebrated its hundredth birthday in 1992). Xavier Barral i Altet discusses mosaics and Catherine Metzger liturgical fittings, both subjects whose basics were difficult to learn before this volume. The last chapters, which might more logically have been the first, by the late Paul-Albert Février and Xavier Barral i Altet, deal with the history of the development of early Christian archaeology, putting the achievements of the great pioneers like Cochet, Ponton d'Amécourt or Camille de la Croix into some sort of context, and reminding us that this topic has not attracted the detailed attention of historians as much as it deserves. Altogether the amount of information, conveyed and presented in an attractive manner, is tremendous. If price were no barrier, this book would be on the shelf of every medieval archaeologist.

EDWARD JAMES

The Archaeology of Novgorod, Russia (The Society for Medieval Archaeology, Monograph Series No. 13). By V. L. Yanin *et al.* Edited by M. Brisbane. 24 × 18 cm. ix + 240 pp., 89 figs. Lincoln: Society for Medieval Archaeology, 1992. ISSN 0583-9106. Price: £19.50 pb. (Obtainable from The Society for Medieval Archaeology, P.O. Box YR7, Leeds LS9 7UU).

While doing the Penguin translation of Mongait's *Archaeology in the USSR* (1961) in the late 1950s it was the frozen barrows of Pazyryk but even more the great excavations at Novgorod that impressed me most. A translation of the former with the author's emendations did not present the problems of Novgorod. Four large volumes of the *Materialy* and six volumes on the birch-bark documents had to be compressed and translated, and photographs obtained from Moscow so that a one-man publisher could bring out *Novgorod the Great* (1967). I think the book has proved useful over 25 years, but now another work on Novgorod has appeared under almost contrary circumstances. I had been very conscious of the importance of the excavations for a budding subject (I was very active in this Society), but now the Society itself has invited the Russians, whose resources are stretched, to write the book which has been published by the Society in its Monograph Series. Great credit must attach to the promoters, John Oxley and Mark Brisbane, and no less to Academician Yanin, the moving spirit at the Russian end. It is a fine achievement.

The book has seven chapters of varying length. The first by Yanin describes the excavations in the town made almost continuously since 1932 (except during the German occupation) with a valuable map showing four grades of depth of deposit and the position and date of the different excavations. The second chapter by Nosov deals with antiquities of the area around Novgorod with maps of sites of Kufic coin hoards of two periods and the five types of monuments of the late first millennium in the area. There is much meat here. This culminates in the description of the Gorodishche (the Hill-Fort), a little upstream from Novgorod itself, its predecessor and the site of the prince's palace. The Scandinavian influences are of particular interest. This sets the scene for a masterly account by Yanin of the whole archaeological and historical background. Although the Gorodishche was occupied from the 9th century and Novgorod from the 10th the two overlap, and when the prince was forced out of the town the Gorodishche took on a new lease of life. Yanin sees the *Veche* not as a popular assembly but an assembly of *boyars*. It makes a fascinating story, based as much on archaeology as history; Novgorod had its chroniclers but to some extent its history is created by archaeology through the birch-bark documents revealed in the excavation. I warmly commend this chapter to historians.

Chapter 4 by Khoroshev and Sorokin deals specifically with the Troitsky excavation, south of the *kremlin*, and so can be directly compared with the earlier Nerevsky excavation,

north of the *kremlin*, described by myself in 1967. The scale of publication of the latter (four volumes) was much greater so much more detail will be found of the streets, yards, particularly the sections, in my account. Basically the story is the same: 28 or so levels of decking in the streets (less well preserved), the yards ('properties'), log houses and so on. Nerevsky had the excitement of initial discovery and a little of the gilt has come off the gingerbread. Thus the tree-ring dating is now regarded as to within a year or two, principally because freshly cut wood was not always used, and partial relaying took place in front of each yard. Troitsky is less well documented so tie-in with fires is less easy and the pre 18th-century layout is not so well understood. The identification of particular property-owning *boyars* from the birch-bark documents has led to a concentration on ownership of the yards or 'properties' as the translator calls them. More of that in a moment. Many of the finds are very familiar, as well as the graphs plotting their chronological frequency (varying from one yard to another); the 12th and 13th centuries being the most prosperous period as we might expect. There are very valuable accounts of the wood-working, the houses (classified on p. 137), the position of stoves and so on. Heating in Eastern Europe was by a stove set usually in a corner, and the western-style hall with central hearth, quite unsuitable in the severe climate, was unknown. The assumed cause of the rising levels, the accumulating animal dung, is not referred to; has it been abandoned? One could go on comparing Nerevsky and Troitsky without end.

The next chapter by Rybina describes some of the 150,000 objects found in Novgorod from 1932 to 1991. Some are already familiar but the sampling by activity is of great interest to the museum-worker. For the historian the next chapter, also by Rybina, on the objects from foreign trade and the relative importance of south and east on the one hand and of north and west on the other at different periods, is of absorbing interest. Only the imports, not the exports, can be studied. The final chapter, by Povetkin on musical instruments, is on more familiar ground. The two string instruments, the *gusli* and the *gudko*, psalter and fiddle, are the most interesting, surviving in the local folk culture until the 1920s. The book concludes with a bibliography of 143 items on Novgorod archaeology since 1936, and there is an index.

There are some signs of the rather hasty production for the York Conference in the editing: no caption for the figure on page 189, 21 not 12 in the reference on page 13, Gorododok on page 37, Fig. iv.4 on page 119. They are quite trifling and hardly deserve comment.

The translation was by a paid professional and in so far as one can judge skilful and graceful (not always easy with Russian scientific literature!). Even toy swords (p. 75) have pommels, not terminals. One or two points deserve fuller discussion. The Russian word *dvor*, yard, was employed to denote the tenements in the chronicles, and so was presumably the actual name in speech. I am not happy about using an estate agent's term 'property' ('this desirable property') for such a unit, even if the birch-bark documents give us the resident's name. Ownership could evidently comprise several yards. The yard was an area with permanent fenced boundaries and usually of squarish shape (unlike the equivalent elongated English tenement) and contained one or more pine log houses that were rebuilt or altered every few years. The second point is 'paving' which in English implies stones or tiles or wooden blocks; planks or half-logs set transversely side by side on a log frame cannot be called paving. The most suitable word is surely 'decking'; as with a ship's deck the object was to produce a smooth surface, in this case for the passage of sledge or sled runners (wheeled vehicles were apparently not used at Novgorod). Similarly in the yards the transversely laid logs or planks for footpaths served as duckboards but surely are best called decking. In spite of the elaborate drains the ground at Novgorod was sodden — hence the need for decking and of course the reason for the survival of the wood. Pits dug into this would simply fall and had to be lined, but structures, not (p. 148) 'buildings', is surely the right word (the same word in Russian). They must have been waterlogged and were perhaps cess-pits or latrines, not otherwise identified at Novgorod. Gorodishche (*gorod*, town with pejorative suffix) is the word for hill-fort but it has become the proper name for the predecessor of the town; would it help if we gave it a definite article, which it lacks in Russian, 'the Gorodishche', like the Tower of London?

However it is not my intention to find fault in what is an admirable piece of work and a notable addition to our Monograph Series, to which it brings a decidedly cosmopolitan feeling. The quality of survival at Novgorod brings us closer to the way of life of the people who lived there and left more remains than in any other excavation that I know of. So our warmest congratulations to all concerned with the production of the book and of course to our Russian colleagues who made such a publication possible. It marks a notable step forward in medieval archaeology and — dare one say it — in medieval history as well!

MICHAEL THOMPSON

Rescue and Research: Reflections of Society in Sweden 700–1700 AD (Riksantikvarieämbetet Arkeologiska Undersökningar, Skrifter no. 2). Edited by Lars Ersgård, Marie Holmström and Kristina Lamm. Translated by Helen Clarke. 17 × 25 cm. 352 pp., 107 figs. Stockholm, 1992. ISBN 91-7192-859-6. Price not stated.

The introduction to this attractively laid out book claims that the results of a 20-year programme of rescue archaeology of medieval sites in Sweden have been published in reports which, it is alleged darkly, 'have concentrated more on facts than on advancing knowledge' (p. 9). This new volume tries to redress the balance, with an accessible mixture of facts, tempered by interpretation and speculation. It also shows off to good effect the increased theoretical awareness and the more problem-orientated approach to medieval archaeology so evident in Sweden in the 1980s and 1990s.

Even more than that, it provides English readers with a concise summary of present-day thinking on Swedish medieval archaeology, not so much as seen by the pioneering Department of Medieval Archaeology at the University of Lund, but viewed from the ground, since the authors of the fifteen contributions are all from the staff of the State Antiquities Service archaeological units based in Stockholm, Linköping, Uppsala and Visby. Their essays are arranged in four sections, *Medieval Town*; *Methodological Problems in the Study of Medieval and Post-medieval Towns*; *Production and Consumption*; *Rural Settlement*. Each essay is broadly independent of its fellows (there is, incidentally, no universal figure-numbering system, figure list or index), but they nevertheless form a more than useful collection.

The proceedings open with important general essays on the archaeology of 39 medieval towns in Sweden in the aftermath of the Medeltidsstaden Project (1976–84) and subsequent extensive excavation programmes (B. Broberg and M. Hasselmo, pp. 13–75). The early medieval phase of urbanization saw a regular layout of town plots established in Sigtuna in the 970s, a pattern which can be identified in Visby from 1100 and Skara and Lödöse by the mid 12th century. All these settlements were occupied before they took on what is interpreted as a characteristically urban layout. The number of such planned centres expanded greatly in the high medieval period (1200–1350) with the development of planned towns such as Uppsala, Söderköping and Kalmar, while seventeen more planned towns appeared from 1350 to 1500. Again, most of these were on sites of earlier, apparently non-urban settlements.

Sitting alongside these planned towns were smaller settlements, termed 'central places' in this book, which also acted as a market or ecclesiastical focus for their region; in other words they served an urban role but did not benefit from a street plan commensurate with that urban function. All this clearly calls into question the infamous definition of what constitutes a town in the medieval period: should it be dictated by what a settlement looks like or by its socio-economic function?

Presumably the answer lies in the conscious demolition of the artificial divide between 'urban' and 'rural' studies and its replacement with regional studies so that the necessary interaction between 'towns' and 'villages' can be more readily investigated. If you wish to begin to understand the settlement development pattern as a whole, read the *Agrarian Society* section first (A. Broberg and C. Åqvist, pp. 273–333). The once simple picture of rural development has been complicated in the 1980s by the results of a series of major excavations,

such as Björka (1982–83); Gredelby (1984); the Viking-Age settlement at Pollista (1986–90) and Sanda (1990–91), occupied from the 7th to the 15th century.

There is also an essay on the role of castles in the Swedish landscape and economy (M. Mogren and K. Svensson, pp. 334–52) and one on the pilgrimage centre at Vadstena (L. Lindgren, pp. 76–97), studies of the occupation levels at Visby, Uppsala and Lund (pp. 98–149), on the limited use of 17th-century maps in medieval urban research (pp. 150–71), as well as reports on aspects of post-medieval archaeology. Among the many projects summarized in this book which will be new to most members of the society is the remarkable 14th–15th-century cauldron foundry, excavated at Pantern in Uppsala in 1990 (J. Anund *et al.*, pp. 221–51). The excavators recovered the complete plan of the complex with the furnace foundation, charcoal store, clay quarries for the moulds, casting pits and an unusual timber-lined casting tray 3.6×1.8 m wide. Detailed analysis of the mould fragments showed that tripod cauldrons 0.24 m in diameter were being made here, together with flat-bottomed skillets and a range of lids.

To take minor issue with the title, this book is not so much reflections of Swedish society in antiquity, rather ruminations of contemporary archaeologists working progressively towards a social history of Sweden based on a wealth of newly acquired data. As this book shows admirably, they have the sites: provided they ask the right questions of the vast data-base, they will get the right answers.

This book is an excellent overview of a wide range of material and is clearly and concisely presented. It is obviously of great interest in its own right: however, it also provides a usefully packaged mirror in which to view similar trends and approaches to medieval archaeology in countries beyond the Baltic.

GUSTAV MILNE

Craftsmanship and Function (Statens Historiska Museum, *Monographs* 1). By Gustaf Trotzig. 21 × 27 cm. 278 pp., 155 figs., 36 pls. Stockholm, 1991. ISBN 91-7192-817-0. Price: SEK 350.

Ölands järnåldersgravfält. Vol. I, edited by Margareta Beskow Sjöberg; Vol. II, edited by Ulf Erik Hagberg *et al.* 21 × 30 cm. Vol. I, 438 pp., Vol. II, 517 pp. Innumerable figs. and pls. Stockholm: Riksantikvarieämbetet och Statens Historiska Museer, 1987 and 1991. ISBN 91-7192-696-8, 91-7192-814-6. Price: vol. I: SEK 314; vol. II: SEK 450.

Craftsmanship and Function is the first in a new series of monographs from Sweden's National Historical Museum. It tackles a substantial topic vigorously, with many good-quality and informative figures. The book focuses upon a group of 36 copper-alloy bowls from graves of the very late Viking period or early Middle Ages in Gotland. Essentially, this work seeks to enhance historical understanding by setting these Gotlandic vessels in a frame of reference constructed of technical analyses and studies of 'ethnological' parallels. The basic questions the study seeks to answer are how, by whom, where, why and for whom the vessels were produced, the reasons for their appearance in Gotland (a question that virtually presupposes their external origin) and what contribution, if any, they make to our understanding of Gotlandic Viking-Age society. This study is genuinely illuminating, particularly on the skills and organization that probably lay behind the vessels' production.

The interest and value of this book for most readers will lie in its survey of analogous material and craftsmanship rather than the application of that data to this special find-group. Trotzig shows how relevant metal-working skills seem to have come down to the present day as a tenuous but still-living tradition in which technical and organizational features and their social implications can be observed. It is surprising but important to learn that merely referring ancient artefacts to specialized modern craftsmen for their opinions on how they were made produces no more than 'odd theories based on hazy ideas of how things were in the old days'. It is thus the reassured scholar, the thorough empirical researcher, who

must classify the relevant techniques and their diagnostic traits. Those details are presented in a series of interlinked sections on the anatomy of the vessels, metal alloys and hammering techniques that are truly informative to the interested non-specialist.

This in turn is a solid guide to what may be involved in the production of equivalent or similar material in comparable societies. That in fact includes a wide range of copper-alloy and silver artefacts of the medieval period, and is no insignificant achievement. Some shortcomings remain in this section, however, not least the need for some discussion or explanation of technical terms that occasionally confront the reader in a teasing way, such as 'poling' (p. 32), 'lathe-turning' (p. 41), 'pickling' (p. 42) and 'recrystallization' (p. 69).

It is concluded that most of these Gotlandic vessels (Trotzig's type B: vessels hammered out from cast metal blanks) were imported to the island from the Rhine/Maas area, while all but one of the remainder, a small number of 'composite' vessels (type D), may have been made in southern Gotland. This is followed by a survey of their functions that offers nothing very remarkable.

The book also contains an excursus by Birgit Hulthén on a group of pots (some associated with Trotzig's copper-alloy bowls) mostly linked either by identical or similar 'bottom marks'. She considers the shape and material of these pots in considerable detail, and again produces remarkably precise conclusions on a probable combination of external influence and subsequent local production. This is a valuable complement to the main body of the book.

Unfortunately the book is marred by editorial lapses. Most serious are lists and tables that do not match (e.g. 36 vessels divided into groups of 17, 16 and 4: p. 16), and internal figure and page references left as XXX or ??. None the less the book has much to offer the archaeologist at a very general level, and for the more specialized historian/archaeologist provides another substantial insight into the ever-peculiar pre- and early history of Gotland, an island of some, but not outstanding, strategic importance that maintained contacts with far-flung areas and still remained quite distinctive in its own culture.

The nearby island of Öland, closer to mainland Sweden, has never appeared so distinctive and has never attracted the same level of international attention as Gotland has, although it is no less important in the general culture-historical view. Best known internationally are Öland's large sacrificial site, Skedemosse, and the enclosed settlement at Eketorp. Two volumes of a comprehensive publication of the Iron-Age cemeteries of Öland are now available; in Swedish but with substantial English summaries. The chronological range of this survey is c. 400 B.C. to A.D. 1050; from the pre-Roman Iron Age up to and including the Viking period. These, quite simply, are essential reference works for the serious study of late prehistory and the early medieval period in northern Europe.

They are well-organized data collections. Finds are presented site by site within parishes. The first two volumes of the projected four-volume series deal with fifteen parishes in the centre of the island. For each parish a brief description of topography, history and geography is given, followed by more detailed registers of burial sites, and finally a general summary of the parish in both English and Swedish. The level of illustration is excellent: the figures are copious, with maps of exemplary clarity; the style of line drawing used for the artefacts is unpretentious and unambiguous; even some obviously elderly photographs make a clear and informative contribution to the book.

This survey of the Öland cemeteries can contribute significantly to the general study of northern Europe in and around the first millennium A.D. Current research trends emphasize the need to interpret our archaeological evidence for this period within both a deep chronological perspective and a broad geographical context. The first requirement is met by the creation of a conspectus of the whole Scandinavian Iron Age, about 1,500 years ago, on this island, which should then stand integration with the results of research projects that have examined much of the neighbouring area in recent decades: older work on Bornholm, Gotland and central Sweden; more recent work on Denmark, southern Sweden and southern Norway. We can look forward to the areas east and south of the Baltic being included in comparable studies before long.

Central topics in this wave of research are the hierarchical organization of society and the extent of political entities. Potentially, an island 'community' such as Öland, with clear natural boundaries, would seem to offer scope for an illuminating case study of the processes involved, especially as the island concerned is consistently less conspicuously peculiar in its material culture than contemporary Bornholm and Gotland. Much research needs to be done, however, to achieve that goal, and the authors and editors of *Ölands järnåldersgravfält* rightly eschew premature and superficial conclusions. It can be pointed out, for instance, that the burial evidence seems to cluster markedly in two phases, the Roman period and Viking periods. There is little visible reuse of earlier well-furnished burial sites in the Viking period and virtually no detectable continuity of burial on a site between either end of the first millennium. The Migration period is sparsely represented in these burials and the Vendel period all but absent. This immediately suggests that it will be difficult to study local long-term processes in detail. However this survey provides a rich source of comparative data for the broader regional study of the Roman period, widely seen now as the horizon in which far-reaching changes leading towards modern state-formation took place in north Germanic society, and for the Viking period, particularly with the new attention that the mid-Swedish centre at Birka is enjoying and the republication of its cemetery finds.

Both volumes end with a general commentary focused on some special topic that seems to be particularly pertinent in the given local context, Volume I on the distribution of settlement, Volume II on weapon graves. It is perhaps most instructive to read these sections as a reminder of the need for the thorough examination of data, case by case, to assess their real source value in any general synthesis. These volumes are not the place for grand comprehensive propositions, especially as radically new general views of the period and zone do not seem to be called for at present. The detailed refinement of existing perceptions is true scholarship too. These selective analyses are clearly supposed to function as pilot studies. A superficial impression is that such sampling gives a more representative view of settlement history than of burial practice. That in itself is a methodologically significant hypothesis which can be further assessed when this most welcome series is completed.

JOHN HINES

Short Reviews

The Archaeology of Medieval Germany: an introduction (Studies in Archaeology Series). By Günter P. Fehring. Translated by Ross Samson. 14 × 23 cm. xix + 266 pp., 99 figs. London: Routledge, 1991. ISBN 0-415-04062-0. Price: £40.00 hb.

Over the last decade or so there has been a virtual explosion of published syntheses on medieval archaeology in Europe. Günter Fehring is well known for his many scholarly papers, including several on medieval church archaeology, and on the development of the flourishing port of Lubeck in the Middle Ages. This volume is a translation into English of his valuable *Einführung in die Archäologie des Mittelalters* (1987). Indeed, the translator's introduction is important in its own right as it sets the book in its proper geographical and chronological context for the English reader. The translator, Ross Samson, also gives the reader a very useful archaeological glossary explaining the meanings of the more important and complex German terms used throughout the text.

The book covers the medieval archaeology of Germany in a most comprehensive manner, from the end of the Roman Empire up until the 16th century, concentrating on settlement rather than artefactual evidence. Its comprehensiveness is revealed by the inclusion of topics such as a concise survey of the available university courses in medieval archaeology in Germany, which is not covered in other comparable works. The text proceeds