

NOTICES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

ST. NINIAN AND THE ORIGINS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SCOTLAND. By W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1940. Pp. 112, illustrated. Price 10s. net.

Very little indeed is known about either St. Ninian or the Origins of the Christian Church in Scotland. We are dependent for first-hand information on a brief notice in Bede, and a small group of tombstones: the more dubious evidence of church dedications and ecclesiastical place-names, a twelfth-century hagiography, and incidental references in a few later writers are all that can be used to supplement them. It is therefore not surprising if Dr. Simpson's courageous effort to 'assess the achievement of St. Ninian' should add little to our knowledge: indeed the greater part of his book is necessarily devoted, not to St. Ninian and his doings at all, but to what he terms the Background and the Preparation for his work. Here he discusses the state of northern Britain in its final Roman phase, the position of Christianity in the later Empire, and a good deal of general European history in the fourth century, which may seem rather remotely relevant to the main subject. Thus the fifteen pages spent on a somewhat melodramatic account of the relations of Maximus, St. Martin, and the Priscillianists can only be justified because Ninian may possibly have been at one time a disciple of Martin: there is no reason to suppose that he took any part at all in the events described. But it is only fair to add that without this sort of latitude in the matter of relevance it would be impossible to write a serious book about Ninian at all.

And this is a serious book. Dr. Simpson is convinced that the importance of the Ninianic mission has been much underrated by historians, and that Columba and his followers have had more than their share of the credit for evangelising Scotland. His case for believing that Ninian's operations were more extensive, better organised, and far more durable than is often supposed is a good one: and the cumulative effect of his survey of Ninianic dedications is impressive even if some individual instances turn out to be ill-founded. He makes too the interesting suggestion that Ninian's work may have been officially sponsored by the Roman government in an effort to improve cultural relations with the group of client native states which he believes took the place of a continuously defended military frontier after Maximus' withdrawal of the garrisons from Hadrian's Wall. The parallel with the official support accorded to Ulfilas' mission to the Goths is certainly suggestive in this connection.

It is perhaps inevitable that a book of this kind should abound in generalizations which tempt a reviewer to resort to his blue pencil. But however sternly this temptation may be resisted, the instances of

inaccuracy of statement, loose thought, or unjustified inference are too frequent to be passed over altogether. Thus it is highly confusing to state that the *Notitia Dignitatum* 'shows that, though the Wall itself was gone, a chain of forts was held across England' in Stilicho's time from the Humber to Kirby Thore (p. 12): for unfortunately the *Notitia* assumes the continued tenure of the Wall for it includes the Wall garrisons, *Item per lineam valli*, a fact which has given rise to a familiar and longstanding historical controversy. Nor is it easy to see why Dr. Simpson should argue that the *Notitia* preserves Stilicho's arrangements for the northern frontier (p. 12) if the latter were based, as he believes, on the Stainmore road used as a *limes* between Carlisle and York, for not only does the *Notitia* include the Wall far in advance of this line, but it omits, as he notes himself, the fort at Brougham, which must surely have been a key position on any such *limes*. In fact it is clear that, if the *Notitia*, as we have it, represents any single phase in the last age of Roman occupation in the North,¹ it was one which bears no relation to Dr. Simpson's view of the Stilichonic reorganization. Nor is there any good reason to believe that Stilicho created the office of *Comes Britanniarum* (p. 13), or that Patrick's home was 'either at Carlisle or Dumbarton' (p. 21). A priest with the odd name 'Ides' has been evolved from the *id est* of the Kirkmadrine tombstone and added to the Viventius and Mavorius thereon commemorated (Fig. 10), although on p. 77 Dr. Simpson rightly refers to the two latter only. Latin words are too often bungled (*Redito* for *Reditu*, p. 39; *insuperable* for *insuperabile*, p. 70). Roman Carlisle is at least three times referred to as an 'open town' (pp. 11, 22, 65): but its Roman walls were still sufficiently conspicuous to be pointed out with pride by the local *praepositus* to St. Cuthbert when he visited the place in 685.² It is a pity that a book which contains many interesting suggestions, and is devoted to so good a cause as the rehabilitation of St. Ninian, should be marred by such slips as these.

J. N. L. MYRES.

ALABASTER TOMBS. By ARTHUR GARDNER. Cambridge University Press, 1940. Pp. 215 + xix. Pls. 107. Price 21s. net.

Many members of the Royal Archaeological Institute will be already familiar with much of this book, which is an amplification of a paper contributed to the *Journal* in 1923. Nevertheless the appearance in its revised form is welcome and should reach a far wider public. Its publication is opportune, for the jeopardy in which our national monuments stand to-day makes all records of them invaluable, and any reminder of the wealth and beauty of these possessions should quicken that consciousness, already aroused, and put into effect all possible means for their protection.

¹ Reasons are given by Mr. C. E. Stevens elsewhere in this volume (p. 125) for believing that the British section of the *Notitia* is highly composite.

² *Anon: Vita S. Cuthberti*, ch. viii (ed. Colgrave, p. 122).

The sculpture of alabaster 'tables' and tombs was one branch of medieval art in which the skill of the English craftsman had a recognition not confined to this country. His work is found distributed not only throughout England, but was exported the length of Europe, from Iceland to Rome itself.

The researches of the late Sir W. St. John Hope at the beginning of the century and the exhibition held by the Society of Antiquaries in 1911 did much to stimulate interest in the work of the English Alabaster sculptor, and a not inconsiderable literature has appeared, chiefly in the antiquarian periodicals. But Mr. Arthur Gardner is the first to deal exclusively and comprehensively with the tombs and effigies, and few writers are better qualified to do so.

In his introduction he states that in *Alabaster Tombs* an attempt is made to list and classify the surviving monuments from the earliest examples c. 1330 down to the time of the Reformation, which for this purpose may be placed c. 1530-40, and to describe the changes of treatment, in costume and armour, during that period. The attempt has been eminently successful.

From their nature the tombs have escaped to a great extent the destruction wrought by the iconoclasts on the 'tables'; but the imposing number chronicled by the author may well surprise many medievalists. Many, however, have been grievously mutilated, others have been disfigured by 'the abominable habit of initial cutting'; and but few retain evidence of their original glory when gorgeously arrayed in medieval colour and gilt.

Around the quarries of Tutbury and Chellaston grew the centre of the industry, though the material was also transported in block and carved in London and elsewhere. The similarity in design and treatment of certain monuments has enabled them to be assigned to common origins, but only for the well-known Lowick tomb and its associates is the authorship more than a matter of conjecture.

Early Royal patronage gave encouragement to the craft, and by the close of the period under review noble alabaster monuments to the great houses, to lesser knights and their ladies, to bishops, priests and laity existed throughout the country, and now bear testimony of how the work flourished during the Middle Ages.

Following the preliminary chapters the author classifies the effigies chronologically, dividing them into six periods—'The early experiments before 1360'; 'The Edwardian'; 'The Lancastrian'; 'The Yorkist'; and 'The Early Tudor'; while a few pages are devoted to 'The Post-Reformation—the Gothic overlap.' Here the students of costume will find a helpful commentary on the evolution in armour and dress during these eras.

An appendix giving a list of the known monuments arranged in their counties, with their attributes, condition, and special features, is not the least valuable part of the book, which must long remain the standard work on our Alabaster Tombs.

The 107 pages of half-tone illustrations are grouped together at the end of the volume. These show every aspect of the alabastermen's work, from complete tombs and effigies to portraits, weepers

and other details. Quality, however, has been sometimes sacrificed for quantity, but no doubt technical difficulties of reproduction in these abnormal times account for a few of the photographs doing bare justice to the subjects they depict.

E. A. R. RAHBULA.

THE PREHISTORY OF UGANDA PROTECTORATE. By T. P. O'BRIEN. Pp. 315, p. 26. fig. 56. Price 25s. Cambridge University Press, 1939.

This well illustrated book is of definite importance to pre-historians. It gives for the first time a clear view of the genesis of that very special African culture, the Tumbian. The author suggests that a degenerate Upper (Oldowan) Acheul stage at the beginning of the Upper Pleistocene, phase u¹, received sufficient cultural impetus in the Congo to blossom out as the Tumbian which then spread over Central, East and West Africa. Concurrently with the Tumbian a Kafuan-Oldowan, and a Levallois culture evolved, and from the latter came the Stillbay and its Magosian derivative. The late Levallois in contact with late Tumbian produced a new form which O'Brien calls the 'Walasi Stillbay.'

In the Middle Pleistocene two cultural traditions existed, the Acheul and Kafuan-Oldowan, and came into contact in phase m². The author separates the Kafuan and Oldowan, but only on very slight and insecure evidence. There are no undoubted artifacts found in Lower Pleistocene beds.

A large appendix is given over to a discussion of the key level for East African pre-history, the M-Horizon. It is perhaps unfortunate that Mr. O'Brien, a prehistorian, did not leave this part to his geologist Dr. Solomon, who elsewhere in the book shows a firm grasp of the complicated geological problems of the Rift. The reader is left with a feeling that before accepting Mr. O'Brien's view it would be better to await the report on the same question in preparation by Mr. Wayland and Professor van Riet Lowe.

T. T. P.

ROMAN PORTRAITS. By L. GOLDSCHIEDER. With photographs by J. SCHNEIDER-LENGYEL. Phaidon Press edition, G. Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. 1940. Royal 4to. Pp. 1-14, Pls. 1-120. Price 10s. 6d.

The brilliantly efficient and cheap Phaidon publications are well known for their haunting and sometimes startling reproductions of earlier art, and the volume on the portraiture of ancient Rome now published is no exception to the rule. It illustrates what is commonly, and in many respects rightly, regarded as the finest artistic expression of the Roman spirit, through the medium of photographic studies of individual heads so large as to reveal and exaggerate every feature of the stone. True, in several cases the texture of the print deceives us by dissolving and diffusing the compact solidity of the original material (for example, nos. 37, 113, 115) and gives in at least

one case a quite false value to an incrustation of dirt (no. 41). But as a whole the result of this painstaking and accomplished photography is to present a remarkably close picture of the most powerful and versatile achievement in portrait statuary the world has seen. But upon those familiar with Roman artistic ability in other fields of sculpture alone this very fine collection of detailed studies has a curious effect. It brings home with great force how much Roman art attained not merely in portraiture but in the other manifestations whose absence speaks as powerfully as their presence. The dignified processions, the development of the group, the stately historical scene, the vast progress made in the evolution of conventional ornament, each and all had in fact a far more lasting effect upon the subsequent development of art than had portraiture. For this branch of sculpture, while gradually moving away from its religious associations and the gruesome fidelity of the death-mask, found its apogee either in highly individual studies or in the superhuman majesty of the fourth-century Imperial portrait. The choice, in fact, lay between the two modes and this explains why the old tradition died hard. No wonder that Tacitus had to apologise in the *Agricola* for the slightest breath of criticism of the family portrait-bust, when surely a death-mask, perhaps taken in York itself, lies behind a bronze mask-portrait so late as Constantius Chlorus (no. 106), while the realism which such masks inspired gives us the pert *insouciance* of no. 116 or the grim severity of Valentinian I at Barletta, an omission from the series which we regret.

An interesting and competent review of sources and ancient analogies for the art of portraiture forms the short preface. But something must be said upon the question of its style. The pictures speak for themselves, and we appreciate their foreign presentation with our own English eyes and brain. The preface is written by a foreign exile who has achieved a meritorious command of English vocabulary but all too little of the English idiom of thought. His thoughts and constructions are un-English, and it is a matter of some difficulty to estimate what effect they are likely to have upon those who do not know the German language from which they spring. No one knowing German who reads the preface will deny that it is an able and stimulating account of its subject: but it is not a readable production in English, and its author's thoughts are too often disfigured by a rendering literal rather than accurate. The Renaissance, with which the present scholastic diaspora is sometimes hopefully compared, had the inestimable advantage of being able to express its thought in a universally accepted language. One of the most urgent needs of the present situation is that English scholars acquainted with a foreign medium of thought should become the interpreters of emigrants who manfully and painfully struggle with a language richer and far more subtle than their own. Only so shall we arrive at such an understanding of the imported methods and thought as is required in order to evaluate and assimilate it in a true comity of international scholarship and understanding. The task is not easy. It requires zeal, good will and patience on both

sides. The purpose of this comment, as will now be obvious, is not to detract from the work under review, but to express constructive thoughts prompted by it. In brief, the external stimulus afforded by this influx of new learning and new methods must be accompanied by rigorous standards of expression if it is to serve its purpose; and this need very particularly applies to delicate instruments of thought like historical or artistic criticism, in which all too much jargon is already employed. It is a matter of high importance for culture, national and international alike, and is therefore worth criticism in a journal less concerned with the technicalities of classic art than with its broader implications.

I. A. RICHMOND.

EXPLORATIONS IN EASTERN PALESTINE III. Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Vols. xvii-xix, for 1937-9. Published in England by the Oxford University Press. xxiv + 288 pp. 22 plates, 68 figs., 8 maps. Price 11s. 6d.

To students of the Bible, there is something rather legendary and yet alarming about the names Edom, Moab, Ammon and Gilead. Their kings hover in the background, always prepared to pounce on the Jewish kingdoms on any sign of weakness, and yet their existence seems a little unreal and mythical. The American School in Jerusalem has done a great service to history and archaeology by a painstaking survey of these territories lying east of Palestine, and south of the Wadi Zerqa. The staff and students of the School have in the past years visited a very great number of ancient sites, and have usually been able to give an approximate date to them by the surface sherds collected and to some extent by the type of the remains.

These territories, forming the border region between the Arabian desert and the Mediterranean coastal belt, have throughout their history served two functions. The first was to defend the frontier of the settled communities of the fertile coast regions against the nomad tribes of the desert. Historical references and the present survey have alike shown that successive waves of nomads, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Israelites and Nabateans in turn forced their way in from the desert, and then settled down to defend their new territory from those left behind in the desert. The other function was to serve as a corridor for the highly important caravan trade between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia. As far back as the third millennium B.C. trade connected Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the routes used included ones passing through the present Transjordan, and either by the Fertile Crescent in the north, or cutting across the desert. Petra, Amman, Jerash and many other cities flourished under the impetus of this trade, and the riches which it brought helped to develop the countries in other directions.

The survey has enabled the American School to make a number of deductions both as to the periods of intensive occupation, and as to the frontiers of the various kingdoms. There appear to be three

main periods of settled occupation. A few sites may have been occupied early in the third millennium, but the majority date only to about 2200 B.C., and show pottery and other material remains very similar to those of contemporary Palestine. These E.B. IV sites are mainly well-fortified hill sites, close to a good water supply, and in some cases the fields belonging to the settlement were enclosed within the defensive walls. No evidence was found, though it may be suggested that evidence about the early periods was in some places concealed by remains of later ones, of any common system of defence against the desert, with the suggestion of some central authority which such a system would imply. In due course this civilization apparently did succumb to the desert, for the expedition found no evidence of settled occupation for the period between about 1900 and 1300 B.C. This is a fact of some interest to Palestinian archaeologists, since for much of the period that country shows remains of an elaborate and rich civilization, and yet it must have been exposed to marauding raids from its nomad neighbours.

Eventually, some of these nomads settled down and formed the border kingdoms of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and so on. The survey has shown that they had at least as elaborate and highly organized kingdoms as Israel and Judah. The frontiers towards the east, and the boundaries between them were all elaborately defended by an interconnected series of strong posts, while the territory within shows signs of having been intensively cultivated, and of having had a number of prosperous cities. This period came to an end by the sixth century B.C., and it was not till the Nabateans became powerful, probably about the second century B.C., that the area was once more well organized. The Nabataeans in many cases used the same frontier posts as the Edomites and Moabites. Their development of the country was much more intensive, which was made possible by their elaborate systems of water storage. The expedition has produced much interesting evidence about their towns, especially the temples, and has shown that it would be a great mistake to regard them only as traders, since agriculture obviously played a great part in their state. The Nabataeans were in due course conquered by the Romans, and the expedition found numerous traces of their elaborate organization; this survey thus links up with that of the Roman Limes recently carried out by Sir Aurel Stein.

It will thus be seen that the work of the expedition has opened up an enormous field for future examination, for a survey of this sort can only produce provisional results, and its findings must be confirmed by excavations. The worth of this work cannot be over-estimated, but it may perhaps be permitted to criticize the presentation. The style of the volume is far more business-like and less discursive than the first report, and the photographs of sherds and the usefulness of the maps much improved. But there is still a great deal in the volume which would be far better in the form of a gazetteer. Probably of two-thirds of the sites visited, nothing of great interest could be recorded except the situation, general characteristics, and sherds, all of which could be much better tabulated. Scattered

among these descriptions are interesting and important deductions and generalizations, which are only discovered by a very thorough study of the volume. In its present form, it is not a book anyone could read for general interest, while those searching for information about a particular site or area would get it much more easily from a tabulated form. There is no doubt a most interesting account could have been put together with descriptions of the chief sites by categories, and the resulting deductions. It is also surely rather pedantic to use *wudyan* and *tulul* for the plural of words as thoroughly anglicized as wadi and tell, and there is throughout a tendency to use the Arabic names for things for which there is a perfectly good English equivalent. But these criticisms of presentation do not detract from the importance of the work done, and the American School is to be congratulated on carrying through so enterprising a scheme.

K. M. K.

DESIGN FOR A JOURNEY. By M. D. ANDERSON. Cambridge University Press. Price 7s. 6d. net.

The writer of this pleasant book has already given proof of her keen appreciation of sculpture in British churches and of her power in communicating it to her readers. This is no connected record of an ecclesiological tour, but a series of vignettes, each of which illustrates some variety of the subjects which appealed to English carvers in wood and stone. Within a small compass she has given us her impressions, vivid and concise, of the numerous beautiful and unusual things in her special line of interest which her travels through the length and breadth of England have revealed to her. Such a book as this, thoroughly well informed without any forbidding parade of learning, accurate without pedantry, may well draw many who are inaccessible to more severe treatises to follow in the author's footsteps and experience for themselves the charm of works of art such as she describes. She deals easily and lightly with all sorts of topics, with carvings in wayside churches, with the sculptured foliage of the chapter-house at Southwell, the highly-decorative treatment of Easter sepulchres, the 'angelic orchestras' of Lincoln, Exeter, Gloucester and other churches, the *graffito* of Old St. Paul's at Ashwell, in Hertfordshire, the triptych by Melchior Salabossi (this time a painting, not a carving) at Burford, in Shropshire, and a host of objects, familiar and little known. At Bacton, in Herefordshire, she discovers the monument of Blanche Parry, maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, with its quaint effigy of Blanche attendant on her royal mistress; at Whitchurch or Little Stanmore she comes down to more modern times with Handel's organ; and she is again at home in the eighteenth century with a short discourse on folly in architecture. Her most conspicuous gift, and an admirable one, is her ability to picture her themes in the local setting which gives them personality and is so constantly missed by writers with the best intentions. If her sketch of Stokesay adds little to our knowledge of the history and plan of the building, it very

sufficiently conveys the atmosphere of the place, suggesting more than it says ; while to those who know and love the Black Mountains and the Golden Valley, the country of Abbey Dore and Llanthony, of Kilpeck and Rowlestone and Peterchurch, Miss Anderson's account of her wanderings will recall its manifold enchantments and the peculiar harmony between a group of buildings second in interest to few and their natural environment. When we add that the book is illustrated by photographs taken by Mr. Arthur Gardner, it is a guarantee of a similar harmony between the illustrations and the text which they adorn.

A. H. T.

THE CARE OF CHURCHES : THEIR UPKEEP AND PROTECTION.

Eighth Report of the Central Council of Diocesan Advisory Committees for the Care of Churches. Price 2s. 6d.

Since the last of this series of reports was issued, the Faculty Jurisdiction Measure, 1938, has given statutory powers to Diocesan Advisory Committees and to the Central Council which is composed of their representatives. At the present time there has been little opportunity for testing the practical effect of this step, and it remains to be seen how far such committees as a whole will take advantage of their new status and its responsibilities. This book, however, issued in a handsome form, well printed and excellently illustrated, contains reports from thirty-one out of forty-two committees, most of which bear witness to considerable activity in the work of preserving churches and maintaining a high standard where additions and alterations are concerned. The watchfulness of the Central Council over works of importance in historic buildings is unimpaired by the temporary removal of its office from London to Somerset. Apart from its influence upon the treatment of churches and their contents as works of art and its endeavours to awaken the public consciousness to the value of the treasures in the custody of the Church of England, its occasional publications upon practical, as distinct from artistic and historical matters, embody much useful advice from expert quarters. The articles upon electric lighting and insurance of churches in the present report are typical examples of this side of its work. Other portions of the book deal with aspects of its subject which, though not directly associated with the actual work of diocesan committees, are yet closely allied to it, such as the benefactions of the Pilgrim Trust and the contribution of bodies of Friends of cathedral churches to their adornment and preservation. It is possible that a criticism of action by the Ancient Monuments Board in the case of churchyard monuments might have been expressed with less acerbity and with some view to the arrangement of a *modus vivendi* upon a disputed point. The illustrations, drawn from a wide field, are uniformly good and clear, and most of them call the reader's attention to buildings which are not too widely known, thus displaying the inexhaustible riches of which every English diocese is full.

A. H. T.

PRIMITIVE ART. By L. ADAM. Pelican Books, 1941. Pp. 160, 36 Plates, 38 figs. Price 6d.

As an introduction to the subject, Dr. Adam's *Primitive Art* is excellent. And in view of the fact that it is illustrated by thirty-six photographs as well as by numerous line drawings it constitutes one of the most enterprising of the recent additions to the Pelican series.

Of the eighteen short chapters the opening ones are the most interesting and the most informative, presenting, as they do, a sound approach to the study of the problems involved. Those, on the other hand, which deal with the specific contributions of primitive man in the different continents are less easy to follow owing to the wealth of material to be discussed, the chapter on Asia, for instance, being condensed almost to the point of confusion. But this is inevitable considering the scope of the survey and is a minor drawback in comparison with the interest of the examples selected for comment. Thus it is refreshing to find the Galloping Horse (Fig. 13) given as an illustration of the Paleolithic cave-paintings at Altamira, instead of the more famous bison, an example that, like the Fighting Scene (Fig. 14) from the Galeria del Roble, is as vigorous in drawing as it is concentrated in execution. Among other examples that are notable either for their curiosity, their delicacy, their naturalism or their style are the Bears Meeting (Fig. 34), a Northwest American painting, an Eskimo engraving on ivory (Fig. 33), the Bushman Rock Painting (Fig. 21) and the Wood-carving from the Belgian Congo (Pl. 11).

From the citation of these among many equally important illustrations it is obvious that a work on this scale is intended only to be a brief outline of an art that is as varied in style as it is wide in distribution and extended in period; and that the author does not consider it to be more is evinced by the comprehensive bibliography given in the Notes, to which constant reference is made throughout the text. For all this and for the lucidity of his treatment of a difficult subject Dr. Adam is to be congratulated.

E. H. R.