

Books

Frameworks for our Past -- a review of research frameworks, strategies and perceptions, by Adrian Olivier. *English Heritage*, 1996.

THIS IS A stimulating, in-depth 1995 survey of archaeological frameworks. The brief was to analyse existing documents, record relevant issues and consider possible solutions. The result is a stark portrait of English archaeology as an increasingly fragmented and mercenary profession.

Today field archaeologists can be largely divided into contractors, consultants or curators/planning officers. Many contractors and consultants are working on developer-funded site assessments, evaluations or excavations, without the guidance of regional research frameworks (defined as the current state of knowledge of a specific topic). Thus it is difficult to formulate good research aims for individual field projects and almost impossible to place these research aims in either a regional or national framework. There is general agreement that English archaeology needs regional/national research frameworks and strategies (defined as proposals for future work). However, beyond this point consensus ends. One problem has been the absence of a clear, workable definition of what constitutes a research framework. Of the 727 framework documents studied in the report, less than 1% fitted the English Heritage definitions of research frameworks and strategies. Most documents contained elements of these functions, plus a diverse range of other things. More worrying was the absence of corroborative data from some framework documents, resulting in unsubstantiated conclusions.

What will be the role of English Heritage in the development of regional or national research frameworks? Now that developer funding pays for rescue excavations, English Heritage wishes to divert

funds to research. English Heritage will not formulate regional research frameworks, but is keen to help others do that. However, it will have a central role in developing national research frameworks.

The report says little on funding policy. But there are hints, such as: "English Heritage should commission national and area reviews, support a series of national seminars to address specific topics and determine priorities and sponsor high-level think-tanks to attack particular problems" (6.1, page 34). At the site level there is very positive support for research: "field projects (whether in the private, public, or developer-funded sector) should always include the costs of engaging in relevant research" (4.3, page 25).

The production of a regional archaeological framework must start with the analysis and hopefully publication of past and recent fieldwork. This can then contribute to regional synthesis, along with contributions from research workers and specialists to provide a multi-disciplinary approach. Only when regional frameworks are established can a national future strategy be formulated. Good examples of the type of regional synthesis required to produce a research framework are *The Archaeology of Surrey to 1540* and *The Archaeology of Essex to 1500*. However, in many regions or counties the lack of up-to-date synthesis prevents the production of a regional research framework. This problem is often compounded by the non-publication of important excavations and research work. A growing problem is the volume of unpublished developer-funded reports languishing unread on the shelves of planning departments or regional archaeological archives. Sadly some regions appear to lack the equivalent of the *London Archaeologist Annual Excavation Roundup*, to publish site sum-

L96/068

Nenk, B & Pearce, J 1994 'Two Stamford-type ware moulded birds from London' *Medieval Ceram* 18, 77-80

L96/069

Watson, B 1994 'Excavations and observations off the site of the Dutch church, Austin Friars, in the City of London' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 45, 13-22

9. Post-medieval to present

L96/070

Davies, P 1996 'All Change at St Pancras (Greater London)' *Engl Heritage Conserv Bull* 30, 12-13

L96/071

Jeffery, P 1996 *The City Churches of Sir Christopher Wren*

L96/072

Milne, G 1996 'A Tudor landing stage at Greenwich' *London Archaeol* 8 (3), 70-4

L96/073

Neale, S 1996 'The tobacco pipe makers of Little Clarendon Street, Somers Town (London)' *Camden Hist Rev* 20, 17-18

L96/074

West, B 1995 'The case of the missing victuals' *Hist Archaeol* 29 (2), 20-42

maries. One important issue in the production of regional syntheses is the definition of the study area: should it be geographic (e.g. the Thames basin) or political (e.g. county or borough).

Regional conferences offer excellent opportunities to formulate synthesis and research designs, while bringing together local societies, contractors, museum staff, schools, university staff and students. The conference papers could be published quickly and cheaply using desk top publishing techniques or simply by retailing the text/graphics on computer disks or CD-ROM.

I feel that to celebrate the new millennium we should have a *Millennium County Archaeology of England* series, offering a concise up-to-date period by period synthesis. The start of the 20th century was celebrated by the launch of the *Victoria County History of England*. The aim of the VCH was a national survey tracing the history of the English counties back to the "earliest times". This great study involved local and national societies, archaeologists, architectural historians, botanists, geologists and historians -- an early example of a multi-disciplinary project. With the exponential growth of archaeological data during the last 96 years, we have so much more to say and a duty to share this knowledge with others. I suggest that funding for the County Archaeology Series could be sought from the Millennium Commission and that English Heritage could act as national co-ordinator. Each county volume would be presented first as a regional conference, which with the help of local television companies or university film/TV units and some additional work would be produced as a 15 hour long TV documentary video for schools and retailing. Video presentation would ensure local interest. Later the results of each conference would be published to standard format, using desk top publishing techniques. The volumes could be retailed on disk or CD-ROM as a cheaper alternative to conventional monographs. Such regional conferences would be a tremendous spur to research and synthesis, plus providing a boost for the regional bodies which hosted them and would give our fragmented profession a new sense of purpose.

The review concludes that: "the discipline as a whole must find the confidence to create the right environment to develop a range of outstanding collaborative research projects". Should we start now or wait another thousand years?

Bruce Watson

1. J. Bird and D. G. Bird (eds.) *The Archaeology of Surrey to 1540* (1987) Surrey Archaeol Soc.

2. D. G. Buckley (ed) *The Archaeology of Essex to 1500* (1980) CBA Res Rep 34.

Carshalton, Wallington and Beddington, by John Phillips, Kathleen Shawcross and Nick Harris. *The Chalford Publishing Co. Ltd.*, 1995. 128 pp., many pl., £8.99.

OF THE publishing of books of local photographs there is, it seems, no end. From the supply end, this is not surprising: many libraries and museums, even individuals, possess vast archives of early photographs relating to their catchment areas, and it is a worthy activity to make at least some of them accessible to the public. But from where comes the demand? who buys them? Is it people who have lived there all their lives, and want to remember it as it was? or people who have recently moved in, and would like some help in putting down roots? My guess is that the latter are an important niche market.

How well would this book, in the *Archive Photographs* series, meet their needs? It seems to fail them in two respects: (i) there is no map, so it can be difficult to locate the scenes on the ground (come to think of it, I can't remember any book of local photographs that *does* have a map), (ii) a high degree of local knowledge is assumed: for example, why comment that in 1869 William Ede only carried fruit and vegetables (p. 75), unless the reader knows that this name is now carried by a firm of furniture removers? Having said that, many of the photographs are a delight, and quite new to me. Especially attractive are the 'social history' ones, of people actually doing things (milking cows in the street, in this century) or just posing (e.g. the women's football team). These might well be of importance beyond their immediate area, but without an index (or even a list of contents) how is one to find them? A fun collection, but more forethought could have made it a more useful publication.

Clive Orton

Women in Industry and Technology from Pre-history to the Present Day. Current Research and the Museum Experience, (eds.) Amanda Devonshire and Barbara Wood. *Museum of London*, 1996. 352 pp., many illus., bib., index, price not stated.

THIS VERY welcome book is the publication of a conference held in May 1994 at the Museum of London by WHAM (Women in Heritage and Museums) to celebrate its tenth anniversary. The aim of the conference was to celebrate the activities of WHAM by bringing together museum workers and academics to study women's past -- in this case their role in industry and technology.

The book is attractive and well produced, although the system of referencing is irritating and makes the pursuit of individual references time-consuming. Give me the Harvard system any day.

The scope of the volume is impressive, with thirty papers ranging from prehistory to the present day, flanked by a preface by Catherine Johns, an introductory piece by Beverley Butler, putting the conference in personal context, and an end-piece by Sue Kirk about the first ten years of WHAM. Except for the prehistoric papers and one by Taja Cepic on the female cigar makers of Ljubljana, they all refer to Britain. The papers concentrate on two main themes: women's roles and contributions in the past, and the representation of women in museum displays. They draw on evidence of various types: material culture (including archaeology), documentary sources, art and photography and, for the most recent periods, oral history. The papers are all short and provide only introductions to their respective topics. However, the notes and bibliographies provide guidance for those wishing to pursue any topic further and, most importantly, the papers collectively amount to more than the sum of their parts. What we have here is a picture of working women through some thirty thousand years. Naturally, the picture is very incomplete, glimpsed only in patches and with large parts missing altogether; but the organisers should be congratulated on the breadth of their vision.

There is no scope here to comment on papers individually, so I shall concentrate on three issues of particular interest to me: the role of archaeology, women in museum displays, and the history of women in developmental perspective.

Although material culture figures strongly in the papers related to museum displays, archaeological evidence is little used in the historical papers. Apart from the articles on prehistory and the Roman period and a useful paper by Stephanie Pinter-Bellows on the use of human skeletal remains to indicate occupations, it is barely mentioned. Only in Rosemary Weinstein's article on the women pewterers of London 1500-1800 do we see how archaeological evidence -- in this case women's touch marks on pewter objects -- can enhance the information available from documentary sources. The prehistoric section, inevitably dependent on archaeological evidence alone, shows how little we yet know about gender in prehistory. Jill Cook's paper emphasises the minimal information available for either women's or men's roles in Palaeolithic technology, although I like the suggestion that the "venus" figurines may have been made by

women -- the apparently exaggerated or distorted proportions explained in terms of a woman looking down at her own body. Marie-Louise Stig Sorenson's paper on women as/and metalworkers also starts from an assumption of ignorance -- we do not know whether women were metalworkers or not in the European Bronze Age -- but she goes on to show how gender can be brought into discussions of metal-working, by thinking through the implications of alternative assumptions. This is a most valuable contribution, allowing us to develop gendered understandings of the past without starting from unsupported assumptions, whether of "traditional" or "remedial" type. In my view, the low profile of archaeology in this volume does not reflect so much the inherent "difficulty" of this type of evidence, as the lack of intellectual effort that has yet been devoted to the subject of gender in archaeology in the subject as a whole -- a lacuna which is at last being addressed, some twenty years later than in anthropology and history.

The correction of the under-representation and misrepresentation of women in traditional museum displays has always been an aim of WHAM, and is a theme of many of the papers in this volume. Coming from outside the museum world, I am impressed by the work in this area. Although many contributors display an infectious campaigning enthusiasm for the cause of women's history, they also tread skilfully a sometimes narrow path between the opposed dangers of displaying traditional female stereotypes and misrepresenting a truly male-dominated past. They recognise the diversity of women's experience and the influence of cross-cutting social categories of age, class and ethnicity. Above all they concern themselves with displays designed to make visitors think about and question the roles of women in the past and the nature of their experiences. Beverley Butler writes that "the project in the museum space has begun". To me it seems to be well under way and in a healthy state.

The chronological range of the book allows us to look at women's roles over an immensely long period and therefore to ask some big questions about developmental trends and whether there are universals of women's experience. These are issues to be wary of, but not, in my opinion, to avoid. The most obvious point to emerge is the diversity of women's experience over the millennia: this is neither a story of universal and unchanging oppression nor of steady decline from a prehistoric matriarchal paradise. This may seem too obvious to

mention, but unfortunately both stereotypes still have currency in some quarters. It is also clear that, except possibly in prehistory (for which we lack evidence), women have never been equal with men in the world of industry and technology. Even in the so-called *Golden Age* of the later Middle Ages, when women were drawn into paid work as never before, they did not enter on the same terms as men: for instance, they could be admitted into the trade guilds only as the wives, widows or daughters of male guild members. This age was golden only by comparison with the early-modern period that followed, when things undoubtedly got worse and women came to be, in Katrina Honeyman's words "associated with lower-status, irregular, casual, flexible and poorly rewarded occupations". The 19th century brought further deterioration, in the context of industrial capitalism, with which we associate the rather familiar images of desperately exploited women, for instance the female coal-miners of Rosemary Preece's paper, or the homeworkers of the sweated labour industries described by Diane Atkinson. It is a relief to turn to the papers on the 20th century, which document, by and large, what can only be seen as progress, though of erratic and patchy kind, as women took their place in an increasing range of previously male jobs. However, history, as documented in this book, also shows us that things can get worse as well as better: as Catherine Johns puts it, "women have been permitted to encroach on 'masculine' skills and responsibilities at times when war or pestilence has reduced the availability of male labour, only to be forced back into the domestic sphere as soon as the population imbalance has been redressed".

To end on a political note, I am reinforced in my view that it is unsafe to rely on any inevitable momentum towards equality for women in the workplace. We should be grateful to the editors and authors of this volume not only for providing us with major contributions to women's history and its representation in museums but also with ammunition for what is inevitably an on-going struggle.

Ruth D. Whitehouse

The Dolphin Swimmer, by Gerard Emerson Langelier. *The Book Guild Ltd.*, 1996. 260 pp., £14.95.

THE HISTORICAL novel can provide a valuable and enticing introduction to the history or archaeology of a period of which the reader knows little, or may give a stimulating new point of view on a well-known one. At their best, they can inspire one to further study, or even to a greater appreciation of one's relationship with our collective past.

This example of the *genre* looks at one of the focal points of British history -- the end of Roman rule and the start of the transition from *Britannia* to *England*. It tells the story of the son of an Angle king who, after escaping from Roman slavery, undergoes many adventures before settling down as ruler of a growing kingdom in the Sutton Hoo area. The action is fast and furious, with many of the known historical characters of the period (such as Vortigern and St. Patrick) playing cameo roles. Although the story is centred on the Suffolk coast, it moves rapidly to and from Frisia, Hadrian's Wall and north Wales, with flashbacks to north Africa, Italy and the Danube and Rhine frontiers. It gives a vivid impression of the turmoil of this period, with Romans, Angles, Saxons, Goths and others swirling about Europe under the pressure of the Huns from the east.

As a story, this is what used to be called a 'rattling good yarn' and is without doubt a 'good read'. One could quibble about some of the archaeological detail -- were mosaics still being laid in villas in 5th-century Suffolk, for example? -- but they do not seriously detract. What worries me more is the sub-text: the Romans are identified with slavery and are 'bad', while the Angles and Saxons are identified with freedom and are 'good'. Here we see the author searching for his own ancestral roots, and perhaps enhancing them with some wishful thinking. This partisan approach tends to lead to stereotyping of characters, and reduces the book's credibility as a contribution to the appreciation of one of the most formative, but also most intractable, periods of our past.

Clive Orton

Human Evolution, Language and Mind. A Psychological and Archaeological Inquiry, by William Noble and Iain Davidson. *Cambridge University Press*, 1996. 272 pp., 47 figs., bib., index, price not stated.

THIS BOOK considers the whole question of the emergence of pre-hominid, hominid and human behaviour and accordingly, what it is that makes us human. Noble and Davidson's ideas on human behavioural evolution are based upon their interpretation of the archaeological evidence. They see artefacts as 'the products of behaviour' (p. 227) with the significance of such artefacts lying in the human ingenuity and planning that made them. As the title infers, Noble and Davidson take a combined psychological and archaeological approach to this vast subject, and the result is an extremely interesting, extensive, coherent and analytical book, which will prove useful to anyone

studying, or just interested in, subjects such as anthropology, archaeology, psychology, and pre-human and human development.

I was particularly impressed by the way the authors presented the information and made you think about it in a different way. Things that I took for granted such as gestures, the interaction between adults and infants, brain development and language were not always instinctive but a development due to changing circumstances, surroundings, biology and mental awareness. Accordingly, they see the evolutionary emergence of human behaviour as linked to bipedalism, hairlessness, the ability of blood to flow around and cool the brain (not a common feature among primates), increased brain size, meat-eating (which not only led to closer interaction between hominids/humans and tool-making, but the greater protein intake helped produce healthier brains and bodies), and imitative learning. Hairlessness was something I had never considered, but they argue that it made a great difference to human behavioural development. They point out that without body hair to hang on to, the human infant had to be carried by its mother. Thus, face-to-face contact was the norm. Moreover, as human infants have a long period of brain growth outside the womb and have longer dependency upon its caregivers, adult and child enjoys greater joint attention, and thus the infant has more opportunities for learning.

The authors look at various forms of communication such as gestures, and consider their origins and the consequences of the development. Thus they see pointing as the after-effect of throwing at a target, which then led to it becoming an information signal when hunting. Nevertheless, such a simple gesture led to improved eye-hand coordination and control of musculature when they used sustained pointing to follow a target. Other benefits derived from this included improved flint-knapping skills, hunting and ultimately a form of sign-language.

I have to admit to being a novice in this field, but I found their approach and arguments convincing and easy to follow. The book is thought-provoking but without being so profound that it cannot be understood, and it is academically written without being wrapped up in intellectual 'techno-speak'. It is refreshing to be able to read a book of this quality without having to refer continually to a dictionary or glossary. A particular love of mine is a book's bibliography and is usually the first thing that I look for. With *Human Evolution, Language and Mind*, I was not disappointed -- it has a 38-page

bibliography, which for me was the icing on the cake of an exceptional book that I would recommend to anyone.

Jacqueline Pegg

Playthings from the Past: Toys from the A. G. Pilson Collection, c 1300-1800, supplemented from other sources, by Geoff Egan. *Jonathan Horne Antiques Ltd.*, 1996. A4, 20 pp., 54 figs., many colour pl. Card covers, £6.95. (Available from Jonathan Horne, 66c Kensington Church Street, London W8 4BY, and the book shops of the British Museum and the Museum of London.)

IT IS NOT OFTEN that a book, and especially one so focused and concise as this, can open a window and throw completely new light on a subject, but Geoff Egan has done that here. The existence of mass-produced toys in medieval and later England from the 14th to the 18th centuries was completely unknown, even unmentioned in the classic work *Growing up in Medieval London* (by B. A. Hanawalt, 1993). There are no contemporary illustrations of such playthings before the 16th century, and what fragments of them that were known from land excavations had largely been dismissed and lay unrecognised -- at best they had been mistakenly identified as fragments from medieval pilgrim badges. This overview, essentially based on examples recovered by mudlarks on the banks of the Thames at London, now makes it abundantly clear that there was a popular market for mass-produced toys from the 14th century onwards, largely made in lead/tin alloy or occasionally in copper alloy. The pieces featured here have been collected in the London area over the last 20 years by Mr Pilson with a dedicated eye. They make an outstanding contribution to the history of childhood in the metropolis and, by inference, to it in other major British cities.

In the past it has been extremely difficult to identify properly and accurately fragments of such toys that come from excavations, they are so fragile that circumstances, let alone their original use in small hands, meant that few have been recovered complete. Now, with so many examples complete, or nearly so, made available, illustrated and carefully described for the first time, curators and collectors are going to have to take a fresh look at their collections.

The toys are grouped into a series of categories, prominent initially, obviously, being human figures, male (especially knights) and female, birds, and then vessels -- jugs, cups, bowls, etc., cutlery, vehicles (boats and coaches), firearms and tools. Many of the basic objects are familiar from their

manufacture and use in later popular dolls' houses, but it has not been previously realised that they had a much earlier history before dolls' houses 'came in'.

Being mass-produced these toys, by implication, indicate that there were obviously manufacturers catering for the market, but the individual manufacturers of these later medieval toys remain unknown, but not quite anonymous. The most prolific toy maker of the late medieval period is known only by his initials on many of the pieces – IQ, or sometimes appearing as IDQ. On the analogy with 17th-century token issuers, the central 'D' could stand for his wife's Christian initial name. IQ's floruit appears to be the 1640s, but the popularity of his products is evidenced by copies of them appearing from less competent makers.

The excellent photographs, many in colour, of very difficult items, together with the fine line drawings, make this a reference work that should be in every curator's and collector's library. Teachers will find it an invaluable aid to childhood studies, and collectors of small artefacts may well find by comparison with these published items that new identifications are now possible and necessary for their pieces. It is a book that elucidates, guides and educates, all this within a very small compass. Geoff Egan of the Museum of London, recently noted for his meticulous and useful publication of medieval lead cloth seals, has left curators and collectors in his debt in producing an exemplary and extremely useful publication.

Peter Clayton

The Reach of Rome. A History of the Roman Imperial Frontier, First to Fifth Centuries AD, by Derek Williams. *Constable* 1996. 342 pp., 27 figs., 23 pl., bibliog., index. £25.

THE PRODUCT of fifteen years' exhaustive research, *The Reach of Rome* transcends its orthodox and conservative subject-matter to present a valuable historical study of Rome's vast and continually-shifting imperial frontier system; approximately 4,000 miles in length and stretching from Scotland to Germany, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

The subject is approached chronologically, corresponding with imperial reigns, to present a picture of the gradual development of individual defensive sectors and insight into their contemporaneity. The book allows us to see both the practical and conceptual development of frontiers and the consequences of their implementation for the Roman

World. The move towards frontiers is seen as beginning with Augustus' desire to banish the army to the outer provinces, well out of trouble, and the necessity, as the Empire expanded, to produce a military front-line capable of both aggressive advance and passive occupation. From Hadrian onwards, the former purpose is seen to stagnate as expansion declines, and their increasingly static nature is proposed as the cause of ruinous complacency and inefficiency, which during the 3rd to 5th centuries sees the gradual destruction of both the frontiers themselves and the world they were designed to protect. A ruin compounded by the long-term 'Romanizing' influence of the frontiers themselves on their barbarian enemies.

The book is written in an easy, approachable style, but without doubt, its real beauty and value lies in its astonishing wealth of detail on the frontier systems themselves, the armies that manned them and the lives, from Emperors to soldiers' families, they affected. This detail makes the book a valuable record in itself and courtesy of its vast factual database, an invaluable spring-board into future military studies. Reference notes and bibliography are thankfully equal to this latter task, with regard to both archaeological and historical sources.

It is, however, not without flaws. Above all, it is unclear whether this is an archaeological or historical study and statements of 'fact' are often made without a clear reference-point. This is worrying, as literary sources follow their own writs, often substituting propaganda for 'truth'. Whilst major events are touched on with ease, the tempo of the book is unsteady and tends to ramble in the middle. Hadrian's Wall is a much-loved national monument, but is it really more important than the vast Danube/Rhine frontier? Similarly details are wonderful, but unrelated historical anecdotes at unnecessary moments can break the thread of the text. Insights can also be rather wild: did Hadrian really have a proven 'famous-father' complex? Errors regrettably do occur; those regarding the British Fosse Way frontier are particularly disappointing, but these are, on balance, minor given the size of the database. On a final critical note, the number of photographs is disappointing, and the sparsity of maps frustrating, in the bewilderment of unfamiliar names and terrains.

The Reach of Rome is a satisfying book, illuminating the splendour of Rome's defensive strategy and indirectly revealing the superb versatility over both time and geography of the Roman army.

Kathryn Meheux

Roman Britain, by T. W. Potter. *British Museum Press*, 2nd edn., 1997. 96 pp., 90 illus., index. £8.99.

THE BRITISH Museum publishes several books and booklets to do with Roman Britain. This second edition of a general introduction which allows visitors who have seen the galleries, or any other readers, to find their way about the subject without any prior knowledge. It will also be comforting reading to those who feel that the Roman Britain they knew and loved is falling to pieces around them.

I enjoyed reading it, was instructed, entertained and worried by turns, and I would want seriously to question every third statement.

To deal with larger topics first. There is an imbalance in the type of material which is given on different subjects and the depths of detail which are plumbed. If space is needed for new ideas in the next edition, I suggest that much of p. 21 with its details of knights and senators, decurions and procurators, could go. In the same way, p. 45 gives rather more than any but the army freaks want to know about legates, tribunes and auxilia.

The second point which I would like to see changed is the use, or rather the non-use, of inscriptions. Many examples of written texts are illustrated, from the tombstone of Classicianus to a lead 'pig' from Derbyshire. The problem is that we are only told, in paraphrase, what they say rather than being helped to find out for ourselves. I know that not many (British) readers of the book will read Latin fluently, but I am quite sure that many would be interested to see the Latin transcribed and then translated. At the very least it would be good to have Reburus's name highlighted on his diploma (I found that), and Claudia Severa's signature on the birthday party invitation (I failed). The book has wide margins, many unused, and this would be an interesting, useful and challenging filling to those blank spaces.

Points to be challenged range from the pretentious nigger -- what does it mean to describe (p. 13) Tacitus as an 'ancient historian?' -- to the strong objection -- (p. 29) 'Few Britons, it would seem, ascended high on the social ladder'. This last phrase takes Potter's acceptable decision to write the book (p. 6) 'very much from a Mediterranean viewpoint', to unacceptable lengths. My worry is numerical, for, if the Governor and his staff were to have any but sleazy foreign traders and shady eastern doctors at their receptions, they had to drop down the scale to Britons. At that point they would switch from the Roman list (Senators, Equites and downwards) to

the British list, which would have totally different degrees of precedence. The view in Britain might have been that administrators over a certain rank were given the honorary title of Chief during their tour of office. To suggest that there was only one (Roman) form of society in Britain between AD 10 and 380 is to miss out an awful lot of the subject.

But as long as this general point is kept in mind the 91 pages, and 90 brilliant illustrations, many in excellent colour, will form a good introduction to the British Museum's Roman Britain.

Richard Reece

Britain and the Celtic Iron Age, by Simon James and Valery Rigby. *British Museum Press*, 1997, 85 pp., 96 illus., bib., index. £9.99 paperback.

THIS BOOK succeeds in providing a realistic archaeological framework of the Iron Age occupation of Britain. It is clearly written and the main themes, together with the major classes of artefactual and structural evidence from the period, are presented in a series of well chosen photographs and reconstruction drawings. The photographs are of a high quality.

The introductory chapter (The Making of the Celtic Iron Age) reviews the European background to Iron Age studies in Britain. It lucidly explains how earlier scholars have viewed the 'Celtic past'; in particular, how their interpretations of the Classical writings of the protohistoric period had come to distort our perceptions of everyday life in Iron Age Britain. Professor Hodson's challenging view to Hawkes' 'Invasion Theory' in 1964 has led to the belief of an enduring and persistent Bronze Age culture underpinning life in Iron Age Britain. Despite the many elite Celtic trappings to be found in the archaeological record of Iron Age Britain, Simon James and Valery Rigby have rightly emphasised the underlying indigenous culture in the light of regional diversity. This is the main theme of the book.

What follows is essentially a brief survey of the people: where and how they lived; settlement form; regional, cultural and temporal differences; absence of and changing burial patterns; trade networks within Britain and a realistic appraisal of continental contact and migration. Social stratification and the emergence of a warrior elite within a tribal society are also discussed.

The increasing influence of the encroaching Roman Empire, particularly in southern Britain following Caesar's expedition in 55/54 BC and culminating in the Claudian Invasion of 43 AD, sets the

Late Iron Age apart from what went before. However, the book finishes where it begins by dispelling the notion of a generalised 'pan-Celtic' culture in Iron Age Britain: the process of Romanisation is one to which the indigenous cultures of the Late Iron Age adapted, rejecting some aspects and accepting others. What emerges is an individual nation made up, to quote the authors, "of a patchwork of societies, artistically accomplished and often quite wealthy."

In discussing recent research and the new ways of interpreting and presenting archaeological data from Iron Age studies, the authors might have said a little more, albeit briefly, and religion and ritual, and in particular 'structured deposition' (e.g. J D Hill's work at Cambridge on intra-settlement patterning work). Also, Mike Parker-Pearson's more recent work at Sheffield on the spatial and organisational relationships of activity within both the home and settlement ('the Sunrise Theory') is another emergent idea which we may hear more about soon. These fascinating newer insights might have provided a little fodder and stimulus to those who want to come to grips with the 'Newest Archaeology'.

Nevertheless, at £9.99 *Britain and the Celtic Iron Age* is excellent value and provides an extremely useful summary background to the archaeology of Iron Age Britain. Apart from appealing to the general reader, this book provides a helpful introduction to undergraduates intending to pursue a course in Iron Age studies, or those undertaking extra-mural Certificate and Diploma courses in period archaeology.

David Dunkin

Pottery in the Making, (eds) Ian Freestone and David Gaimster. *British Museum Press*, 1997. Many illus., bib., index. £18.99.

THE ATTRACTION to a museum of putting on an exhibition entirely from its own collections

is must be great; so too must be that of producing an accompanying book entirely from the museum's own staff. That is what the British Museum has achieved with its current exhibition and book *Pottery in the Making*. The book follows the design of the exhibition in being organised, not by period or by part of the world, but by modes of production, i.e. the social, technical and economic circumstances in which the pots were produced. So here we have 32 essays under the headings of *Early Sedentary Communities*, *Urbanisation*, *Professional Workshops*, *Rural Communities*, *Specialised Products* and *Industrialisation*, and a final one on *Modern Studio Potters*. The chronological scope is enormous (from the earliest Jomon pottery of Japan to the present day), and the geographical scope includes almost all the continents (except for North America). There are also contributions from the British Museum's scientific side, in the form of 'boxes' giving details of clay and glaze compositions, firing techniques, etc., and X-ray pictures clarifying some of the constructional details.

Something for everyone, then, but does this approach really work? You could buy this as a 'coffee table' book, look at the pictures, and derive a great deal of pleasure from it. But that would be a pity. Readers who think they know about pottery will have their horizons broadened by parallels and contrasts from unfamiliar parts of the world (I was surprised to read, for example, that some of the earliest Chinese porcelain was produced by farmers as a way of supplementing their income). Those who see pottery simply as dating evidence, or as a rather arcane branch of finds research, will be able to appreciate some of the depth of social and technical interpretation that lies behind the 'sherds in the soil'. This is a book that can be read at many levels -- for pure pleasure, for instruction, or (using the excellent bibliography) as a springboard for one's own research. I recommend it to you.

Clive Orton

Also received

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