

Reviews

The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England. Edited by David M. Wilson. 19 × 25 cm., 532 pp., numerous figs., 21 pls. London: Methuen, 1976. Price £30.00.

Until recently the study of Anglo-Saxon archaeology has been dominated by the approaches typified by the titles of two of the works of E. T. Leeds: *The distribution of the Anglo-Saxon saucer brooch in relation to the battle of Bedford* and *Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology*. The first represents an attempt to relate archaeological evidence to historical events, the second an emphasis on the art-historical aspects of the material. Since for a long time the material available consisted largely of metalwork and sculpture unprovenanced or from inadequate excavations, it is difficult to see how else the subject could have been treated. In recent years, however, there has been a very great increase in excavation and research. The fruits of some of that research are contained in the book reviewed here, which sets out to provide a survey of the period from a strictly archaeological viewpoint.

This is welcome for several reasons. While no one would deny that, where possible, archaeology and history should be complementary, yet a rigid historical framework can produce distortions in interpretation of archaeological evidence. Even were the documentary sources more reliable than is always the case in the early Saxon period, it might be misleading to rely on them for the explanation of distribution patterns of objects such as types of jewellery or pottery. Too much consideration of the metalwork from a stylistic angle has perhaps obscured other aspects such as its function as part of dress or equipment, and the information it might provide as to manufacturing techniques, trade, and industrial organization. Too great a dependence on chronologies based on stylistic criteria has inevitably led to dispute, since such sequences are both elastic and, sometimes, reversible. Jewellery, weapons and sculpture do not provide a balanced picture of the material culture of any people, and it was time the balance was redressed in favour of houses, tools and settlements.

All the same, it is surprising to find the topics previously central to Anglo-Saxon archaeology relegated to a few pages in the introduction, where, it is true, the editor attempts to answer this particular criticism, although not entirely to the satisfaction at least of this reviewer. The typological arrangement of material, whether houses or pottery, is indeed a technique and not an end in itself, but it does not follow that because its typology has in the past been given undue emphasis that metalwork itself should now be given any less thorough consideration than pottery or coins.

The first chapter of the book is primarily a discussion of the continuity or otherwise of land-use between the Roman and Saxon periods, a subject which the seminal article by Finberg showed to be more than usually susceptible to circular argument. Use is made here only of the little evidence so far recovered from excavation of parts of field systems and from field survey. Even extended by hypothesis this does not go very far, since this is surely an area which can only be successfully investigated through interdisciplinary research, drawing on the evidence of documents, place-names, physical geography and aerial photography. The map included (fig. 1. 4) is misleading as it gives undue prominence to one sherd, possibly imported, in Wales, while on the other hand exaggerating the extent of areas in eastern England without early Saxon pottery — for instance, north-eastern Norfolk is not, in fact, totally devoid of 5th and 6th-century pottery.

Comparison of this map either with those published by Myres, from which it must partly derive, or with that in the next chapter (fig. 2. 21) might lead to some confusion.

The second chapter is an invaluable collection of house plans and descriptions otherwise scattered in a multitude of different publications. Comparison of the structures is made much easier by redrawing them at the same scale although the settlement plans are in danger of disappearing through over-reduction. The chief problem still seems to be the discrepancy between continental building traditions and the earliest houses found in eastern England. At least West's reconsideration of the sunken-featured buildings, here restated by Rahtz, removes the necessity of regarding them all as 'squalid hovels'. Any future study of the subject will find the attached gazetteer a necessary starting point. Yet it must have been a frustrating chapter to write, since it is clear that there is work now in progress which should make it possible to go much further, to discuss building traditions rather than simply listing structures and to trace with more confidence the evolution of settlement types.

The chapter on towns is perhaps the most coherent and readable in the book, possibly because it is not so much a compendium of information as an analytical discussion. This is concerned with the known or probable forms of towns, their defences and street plans, and the degree to which they may be derived from Roman predecessors. There is much useful reference to continental research into urban origins. However, it is still true that there is little solid archaeological evidence for the internal layout of early towns, for houses, shops or industry, and unfortunately probably never will be except in rare cases such as York, where not only is there excavation on a sufficient scale, but some early levels still survive.

The archaeology of churches is, in its present phase, a very new subject. Church architecture is, however, a long established subject, and it may come as a surprise to some reading this chapter to discover how little is really known about pre-conquest churches. Again, plans drawn to the same scale facilitate comparison and also show how the neat theoretical projections put forward in the past contrast with the untidy reality of excavated plans. Even archaeological investigation of churches now involves not only excavation — in fact perhaps rather less excavation — but more reconsideration of the standing structure itself with a view to establishing building sequences from archaeological rather than purely architectural and stylistic principles.

Professor Cramp's chapter on monastic sites shows that the considerable activity of the author herself has reinforced the bias already supplied by Bede. We have fascinating confirmation of his record of the introduction of masons and glass-workers to Northumbria. There seems to be demonstration that even the closely associated monasteries at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow were not laid out according to any consistent plan and we now know more about both these sites. Information even about other Northumbrian monasteries, however, is less satisfactory, and outside Northumbria we really still seem to know nothing. Two plans are given. One is of a site, at Tintagel, not strictly relevant to Saxon England and possibly not a monastery. The other, at Burgh Castle, where we know there was a monastery, shows huts of so undistinguished a character that, if they are typical, it will surely be even more difficult to determine the monastic character or otherwise of any eastern sites than it has proved in the south-west.

Craft and industry are topics on which we have inevitably limited information, since materials such as wood or leather seldom survive. When they do, as at York or in the mill at Tamworth, we are reminded of the inadequacy of our evidence. The sophisticated carpentry used in building the mill should warn us against underestimating the skill of Saxon craftsmen.

It is not often that one man writes both the pioneer study of a subject and its subsequent radical rethinking, but that is what comparison of the chapter on pottery with Hurst's 1959 article shows he has done. This chapter brings together scattered information from recent excavations and shows how this, with an extension of research abroad, notably in France, has completely altered previous interpretations of the

re-introduction and spread of wheel-thrown pottery. It is also an interesting illustration of the dangers of distribution maps. The brief section on early Saxon pottery does not reflect any rethinking, and in fact takes for granted several propositions which are in need of reconsideration. The distinction between domestic and funerary pottery has not been satisfactorily demonstrated, owing to the lack of pottery from associated cemeteries and settlements, and the dearth of domestic pottery in general, a lack which works at Mucking may soon supply. The use of late Roman material, in this case Romano-Saxon pottery, as an indication of the presence of Germanic mercenaries is also due for re-examination.

Most of the chapter on coins is devoted to an historical summary. This is a very convenient presentation of information which might not be found set out so clearly in either a specialist numismatic work or in a history of the period. Yet it is difficult to justify its presence in an otherwise purely archaeological book, except for the brief section dealing with coin production which might have found a place in the section on craft and industry. By minimizing the areas of disagreement between numismatists, it also tends to confirm the archaeologist's impression that all coins can be confidently and precisely dated.

The next chapter, on animal resources, shows that even with the limited evidence available some beginning can be made in discussion of the relative importance of different animals to the Saxon economy, and the types of breed. If this chapter could be combined with another, using evidence from plant and animal remains and pollen analysis, it would go some way towards providing a description of Anglo-Saxon agriculture. Previously recourse could only be had to written sources, which may sometimes have been drawn from classical models rather than from life.

The last chapter is a brief discussion of the Scandinavians in England. As with the coin chapter, the historical bias of this chapter makes it seem rather out of place, although it would have been appropriate as an introduction to consideration of the later metalwork and sculpture.

This last chapter and the fact that eight of the twenty-one plates show material relevant only to the introduction, give the impression that it was originally intended to include at least one section on metalwork, for which the introduction is a truncated substitute. If so, it is a great pity it was not possible to complete it. The mere fact that so large a proportion of the literature is concerned with metalwork should have secured it a place in a textbook on the period. The complexities of the subject, especially in the earlier period, are such that one can understand anyone's reluctance to undertake the work, but for that very reason at least an introduction to the major problems and a guide to the conflicting literature would have been most welcome. At present it is impossible to understand some articles without knowledge of those to which they are in response, and very difficult to recover a general impression from the fragmentary information now accessible.

Another related subject which receives little attention is cemeteries. These are not only our main source of information as to the physical character of the people themselves — which surely should not be ignored — but also a source of various other types of information. Series of associated grave-goods from cemeteries excavated on a sufficient scale, and their horizontal stratigraphies, can provide bases for relative chronologies to complement and perhaps modify the purely stylistic sequences. Variations in types of grave-goods may give some indication of the status of individuals and the relative wealth of the communities. Imported objects can be evidence for trade. It is true that much of the material derives from incomplete and inadequate excavations, and that most of the recently excavated cemeteries are as yet unpublished and therefore difficult to study. But all the subjects discussed in the book are likely to develop and change, all the chapters are interim statements and a survey of what we know at present about cemeteries would have been no more provisional than the rest and might, if it included discussion of possible future lines of approach, have inspired some constructive research.

If this had been a collection of essays on "aspects of Anglo-Saxon archaeology" it could not have been criticized for failing to provide complete coverage of the subject. It appears however to be a textbook, a work of reference and a detailed introduction to the subject, and as such it is incomplete. Nevertheless, it is a valuable contribution to the subject and contains some sections which are likely to remain standard reference for the foreseeable future. In bringing together evidence previously widely scattered the contributors have not only provided a service for those without access to libraries, but have also been stimulated to fresh examination and discussion, some of which does not appear elsewhere. This is a book which should be on the bookshelf of every student of the period — were it not that the price puts this out of the question. One can only hope for the early appearance of a paperback edition to put it within the financial reach of the students for whom it was intended.

CATHERINE HILLS

Excavations at Portchester Castle, II: Saxon (Report of The Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, no. 33). By Barry Cunliffe. 27.5 × 22 cm. vi + 309 pp., 161 figs., 26 pls. London, 1976. Price £12.00.

This is the middle volume of a trilogy. The first report described the Roman occupation of the massively defended fort of 3.4 ha. A final volume will deal with the priory and castle and other post-conquest features.

In the part of the site excavated in detail, several phases of Saxon occupation can be distinguished between the 5th and 11th centuries. These are represented by a series of structures of fundamental importance in the study of secular buildings, and a range of finds among which the pottery and bones are of especial interest.

Not surprisingly, the discussion of the structures and finds comprises the bulk of the book. The historical introduction, a section on the 'establishment of a sequence' and the final summary and synthesis account for under twenty pages — a ratio of 'text' to 'data' similar to that of Pitt-Rivers.

The earliest phase is of the 5th century, demonstrably continuous from that of the later 4th. Cunliffe sees the entry for 501 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as a 'reminder of the sub-Roman use of the old defences into the late fifth or early sixth century', and tentatively equates the 'valuable objects' found in the later part of the 5th century with the *Chronicle* reference to the killing of a high-born Briton, in the attack by Port and his associates. This 'local sub-Roman community who were under attack' are believed by Cunliffe to have been descendants of those same *laeti*, the original 'Roman' population, who were 'augmented by further Germanic settlers whose buildings and pottery serve to distinguish them from the sub-Roman population'.

The finds and structures are indeed of Germanic types, including *Grubenhäuser*, but there is little to indicate anything 'sub-Roman' or British. How soon was the 'take-over', and under what circumstances did it occur? Cunliffe refrains from speculation on this point, contenting himself with the demonstration of continuity through the 6th and 7th century, with no major changes, in a possibly shifting focus of occupation, culminating in a series of buildings of the 7th to 9th centuries. The number of coins of the latter part of this phase suggest occupation by this time 'well above peasant level'.

The first major change does not come until the early 10th century, equated with the acquisition of Portchester by King Edward in 904. The older buildings and wells were abandoned, and whatever garrisons or refugees there may have been are represented only by numerous food bones, but little pottery or other finds.

Portchester was clearly a fort in c. 920, when it was included in the Burghal Hidage. The Roman walls still served, with some rebuilding of the gates, though the chronology

of the latter is uncertain. There is no discussion here of the possible pre-Conquest origins of the earthwork defences outside the fort, which had formerly been postulated as the possible defences of the *burh*.

By the early 11th century, the fort was one of three manors in the area owned by the King. The archaeological evidence shows that this change was happening in the later 10th century, when a complex of aisled halls and subsidiary structures was erected. Subsequently this was augmented by a stone-based tower. The watergate was also rebuilt in stone at this period — a rare example of pre-conquest secular masonry. To the N. of the tower a cemetery developed, secondarily according to the summary on p. 303, but contemporaneously on pp. 60 and 61.

Cunliffe is reluctant to call this tower a church, skating between identifying it as the bell-tower indicating the status of a thane in the early 11th century, with parallels at Sulgrave and Earls Barton, and the religious connotations implied by the later additions of a church to Earls Barton, or the cemetery to the Portchester tower. Is Cunliffe here hinting that Earls Barton (and Barton-on-Humber?) may, like the Irish round towers of a similar period, be of secular origin or function?

There is continuity into the post-conquest period in both cemetery and tower, the latter rebuilt more substantially. The building complex had by now been totally abandoned, to be replaced by the castle complex in the NW. corner of the Roman fort. The tower and cemetery continued as the religious focus until the Augustinian Canons began to erect their priory soon after 1130.

Such is the relationship of the bare historical framework to the archaeological evidence. It is massively supported by a *corpus* of plans, sections and details of the 18 buildings excavated, of several different modes of construction and functions,¹ of pits, wells, the cemetery, and finds of stone, ceramic, metal, glass, wood, bone, and organic material.

The detail given is lucidly arranged, and is very easy to work from. It may be questioned whether much of it would have found its way into a volume produced under the stringent guidelines laid down in the Frere report. There is some wasteful repetition, e.g. the detailed description of the pottery found in association with *Grubenhaus* S1 on p. 17 is repeated word for word in the pottery section on p. 139. Tabulation could also have been employed with advantage, for instance in the list of bones on p. 93.

Drawings are austere but clear. Very convenient comparative plans of all the buildings are given in fig. 34, and phase plans between pp. 123 and 126. These last two sections are really the core of the book, which stand to some extent independently as a classic archaeological sequence.

Among the 60 pages of pit descriptions (?Level III) a notable achievement is the description of Pit (Well) 135, the exposition of which modestly reflects the skill in excavating this most complex of features.

The pottery section is of course crucial but might have been condensed below its present 67 pages. The Portchester sequence is a classic one, and can now be seen in the context of Hurst's recent masterly framework of Anglo-Saxon pottery.²

Finds are fully described and well illustrated, though this reviewer is not partial to the style of the iron drawings, in which the corroded surface is shown in a regularly-scalloped technique which is clearly not naturalistic and might therefore just as well have been in a less elaborate type of shading.

Specialist reports include one on the human burials from the cemetery (which badly needs tabulating), and exceptionally interesting faunal reports by Annie Grant and Anne Eastham, both models of their kind. The latter, on the birds, is unusual in the range of material represented and in the imaginative interpretation, which includes even a quotation from *The Seafarer*.

¹ Cf. D. M. Wilson, (ed.), *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1976), ch. 2.

² *Ibid.*, ch. 7.

It is perhaps regarding the integration of these specialist reports into the text that adverse comments may be permitted about an otherwise exemplary volume. The conclusions could have made a valuable expansion of the 'historical' narrative and synthesis. The principal example is the report on the human bones. The section on the important cemetery (pp. 60–61) could all have been written without a skeletal report at all; the reader is merely referred to pp. 235–61 for the report on the skeletons. The suggestion on p. 61 that the plan shows 'pairing', possibly indicating family relationship, is surely amplified by the sexes of the pairs concerned? The ages and sexes of the skeletons are also relevant to the discussion of the character of the cemetery and its demographic and other relationships to the late Saxon complex, and its continuity into the Norman period (was there continuity of family?), as is the fact that one male died violently by a sword-stroke. There seems even to be some discrepancy between the skeletal report and the plan on fig. 29. In the latter, graves 6–8 are shown with their heads under a baulk: yet these same skulls are fully described in the skeletal report. Are we to believe that the skulls were tunnelled out from the baulk, or that the baulks were removed without drawing the rest of the burials? Either course seems most uncharacteristic of Cunliffe's excavations!

There are few minor errors. The reviewer tends to notice only those of which he has personal experience. In this case he was somewhat mortified to see a bronze object (no. 60 on p. 217) paralleled to *Glastonbury* which is not in fact mentioned in the site bibliography (p. 229), but which turns out to be a reference to *Beckery Chapel*, which is also missing.

These are minor points, however, in a most useful, attractive, accessible volume, produced to the usual high standards of the Society of Antiquaries; the plates are hardly if at all inferior to the original photographs.

PHILIP RAHTZ

Excavations at St Mary's Church, Deerhurst, 1971–73 (Council for British Archaeology, Research Reports, no. xv, 1976). By Philip Rahtz. 21 × 29 cm., 59 pp., 18 figs., 15 pls. Price £4.00.

The research project at Deerhurst is one of the most important developments in this country in recent times in the archaeological study of the Anglo-Saxon church, and we must welcome in this report the publication of the results of the first three seasons of excavation. Rahtz has not attempted annual interim publication in journals, such as has been adopted elsewhere but which, with rising costs, can no longer be considered suitable to that sort of presentation. He instead has circulated, among those interested, duplicated interim notes on each season's excavation; now he is in a position to present in detail the report for three years. This, and subsequent reports on the same lines, will greatly facilitate the final report on the project — reducing the bulk of small detail that would have to be published there otherwise (detail which is fully justified for a site as important as this). It is only a shame that the present report, having been written with admirable promptness, has taken two and a half years actually to emerge from the press.

We are familiar with Rahtz's attention to detail and his steadfast refusal to jump to conclusions that are not supported by the archaeological evidence, and these are the hallmarks of his work at Deerhurst. Nonetheless, he is prepared to state which of the possible conclusions he considers to be most likely; and on the basis of this the reader is left with a clear picture of the probable development of the E. end of the church, while remaining aware that details may need modifying in the final analysis.

Considerable weight is attached to the study of mortars, although so far only visual comparisons have been made between them, and it is recognized that a study on a more

scientific basis will have to be made in the future. It may be wondered, therefore, whether it was worth publishing here detailed visual descriptions (moreover, should not the colours even be coded objectively?). It is "reiterated that only the evidence of *identical* mortars is positive in structural analysis", but tentative deductions are made also from *differences*: we may look forward in the future to a more prolonged theoretical evaluation of the significance of mortar differences than is given here.

The present excavations have not yet provided much dating evidence for the structure of the church and the two radiocarbon dates here published are not of much help in this. It is hoped that the use of radiocarbon may date the span of burials around the church, and narrow down the dating of the church itself. It is recognized also that typological or stylistic dating of sculptured details *in situ* will be important — to this should be added architectural detail such as the decorative arcading on the polygonal apse. While on the subject of architectural style, it is good to see the Romanesque arch in the E. wall of the S. porticus dated "probably post-Conquest" and "believed to be in the 11th century" rather than earlier.

Among the finds the more interesting include fragments of brick and tile that are described as "not typically Roman", and in one case "may be post-Roman or Saxon"; while one sherd of pottery is a possible "candidate for post-Roman fine red ware". There are three fragments of Anglo-Saxon sculpture: one from the excavations (8th-century or probably 9th), and two from Priory Farm. The capital ST13 for which a pre-conquest date is considered a possibility appears from the drawing of the profile (fig. 13) to be more likely Early English.

One criticism that must be made, and this possibly is the publisher's fault, is of the failure to reproduce the figures to consistent scales where this easily could have been done. It is thus impossible to make direct comparisons among many of the plans and between the plans and the sections. It is hoped this will be improved in future reports. It may be noted also that the figures have not always kept up with the revision of interpretation in the text: thus in fig. 9 AF8c is labelled "offset or earlier wall", but the latter interpretation is not considered in the text (pp. 15-16) and by implication is virtually discounted.

Despite these criticisms, however, this publication should be welcomed, and it is to be hoped that the report on the three seasons' excavation from 1974 to 1976 will appear soon in similar format (but with no increase in price).

R. D. H. GEM

Runerne i Danmark og deres oprindelse. By Erik Moltke. 22 × 14 cm., 436 pp., numerous plates and figures. Copenhagen: Forum, 1976. Price not stated.

Erik Moltke, doyen of Danish runologists, has written a vigorous summary of the material he has devoted so much of his scholarly life to. He surveys the Danish runic monuments from their beginnings in, say, the 2nd century A.D. to their last manifestations in the high middle ages or even later. The book is packed with information on language, history, art, society, religion, education and daily life, in so far as they are recorded by the rune-inscribed monuments which include, as well as the great stones, brooches, rings, coins, combs and censers, amulets, fonts, boxes, sticks and bones and a clutter of miscellaneous objects. It comprises a runic anthology supplementing the Jacobsen-Moltke *Danmarks Runeindskrifter* of 1941-2, and records much of the research done since then. Sometimes it shows Moltke rethinking the problems and reaching conclusions more appropriate to our times than those of 35 years ago. It is, for instance, both instructive and entertaining to find the *fub* of the Haddeby bowl, once thought innocently to be the opening letters of the *futhark*, now under Aslak Liestøl's guidance interpreted as a word too indelicate even for the pages of this journal. As Dr Moltke shrewdly remarks, *tiderne skifter*.

Moltke has long been renowned for his trenchant prose and his commonsense attitude to a subject that too often fell among fanatics. Both qualities are well evidenced in this book. He takes a sensible view of the relationship between runes and magic. He is ready to admit ignorance, to accept there are some inscriptions whose meanings we cannot fathom; having nothing to say in these cases he says it. This may distress those who prefer an improbable solution to none at all. Perhaps most disappointing will be his treatment of the bracteates. Moltke argues that the goldsmiths who made them were in most cases analphabetic, and so there is no point in spending time over the barbarized inscriptions they produced. He may be right. Some may feel he gives in too readily.

On the whole Moltke's preference for the indicative over the subjunctive is a strength — it is good to read a runologist who expresses himself both wisely and uncompromisingly. Yet the runic field is one where evidence is often thin, and a cautious subjunctive is sometimes advisable. Some of Moltke's assertions are perhaps less sure than he makes out. For instance, that the Etelhem brooch inscription *mkmrlawrt(a)* (formerly, and by Krause, interpreted *m(i)k M(e)r(i)la w(o)rta*, 'Merila made me') must be corrected to *ek erla wrt(a)* because early or Viking Age inscriptions do not have the inscribed object speaking, and because a verb *wurkian* would govern some object such as 'runes' rather than 'brooch'. Statistically Moltke may be right, but we would like to know what size sample he is judging by. Certainly, English inscribed objects from the Viking Age speak of who made them and are governed by the verb *wyrca*, as in the Norse-influenced Kirkdale sundial with its *Haward me wrohte*. Or again, that the engraved figure portrayed riding on a monster and using a snake as reins on Hunnestad 3 is the giantess Hyrrokin who, says Snorri Sturluson, rode up like this to push out Baldr's death-ship. But Hyrrokin occurs in the West Norse Baldr story, and Saxo's version suggests that the Danish myth was not the same. In any case Hyrrokin is not the only monstrous woman in Norse literature who could be described in this way (cf., for instance, the prose of *Helgakviða Hjörvarzsonar*). Or again, that since the Viking age was violent, an inscription reporting a man's death, that he *warþ dǫpr*, necessarily records a violent death. Surely even Vikings, even on distant journeys, sometimes died of natural causes and yet were commemorated.

However these are minor criticisms of a rich and fascinating book which general readers will find gives a more accessible picture of the Danish runic corpus than the rather forbidding *Danmarks Runeindskrifter*. It is lavishly illustrated by photographs often by and sometimes of the author, and by elegant schematic drawings of designs from the rune-stones. With all this wealth it seems churlish to complain that a couple more maps would have helped the non-Dane, and that we need a general subject index in a book of this scope.

R. I. PAGE

Studien zur Wüstungsfrage im fränkischen Altsiedelland zwischen Rhein, Mosel und Eifelrand (Beihefte der Bonner Jahrbücher Bd. 35). By W. Janssen. 2 vols. 26 × 18 cm. Vol. I: 330 pp., 41 figs., 3 folding plans, 81 pls., 1 col. pl.; Vol. II: 519 pp., 39 figs., 1 col. pl. Cologne: Rheinland-Verlag, 1975. Price 195 DM.

These volumes are the result of eight years work on the deserted sites of the Eifel region. The documentation is highly detailed, and the discussion of many of the problems raised is lengthy, so that the end product has a massive and, perhaps to the English reader, a somewhat forbidding appearance. Since some of the same problems have been discussed more briefly but in the rather wider context of early medieval settlement in the Rhineland, in the same author's more easily accessible contribution to P. Sawyer (ed.), *Medieval Settlement*, some may feel tempted to pass over this more elaborate and restricted regional study. Yet it would be a pity if this work were ignored, for there is much in it

of the highest importance, both substantively and methodologically, for the study of medieval settlement.

It is interesting to observe the way in which the available terminology in different languages has moulded the archaeological approach to similar problems in different ways. English has no single word for deserted sites, and the study of desertion grew out of the recognition of the widespread phenomenon of abandoned villages. More recently, desertion has been seen as often only the terminal case of shrinking, and the discussion has widened into a more general consideration of village development, but it is still the village that is the dominant theme, with little attention paid to desertion of other forms of settlement, such as isolated farms. In German, on the other hand, the word *Wüstung* has a very general application to desertion and deserted sites, so that the focus of study has been the process of desertion rather than any particular type of site. This more general approach to a *Wüstungsfrage* is typified by the present book, and indeed Janssen has to define precisely those types of human activity that amount to deserted sites for inclusion in his study. He isolates in fact six types of deserted site: village, isolated settlement, mill, defended enclosure, industrial site and ecclesiastical establishment.

The study area comprises twelve *Kreise* to the west of Bonn and north of Trier, between the Rhine, the Mosel and the Belgian border, extending in all to 3,000 square miles or an area about half the size of Yorkshire; it is topographically very varied, including the loess deposits of the Rhine valley, the fertile valleys of the Mosel and many other smaller rivers, and the low hills and more mountainous interior of the Eifel itself. There is a corresponding variety in the pattern of human settlement and exploitation, and Janssen has listed some 1,500 deserted sites of his six types including 450 villages and 336 farms. Volume II is a detailed catalogue of these sites, while Vol. I contains the discussion, with an introduction to the state of research and to the sources of information, and a series of studies concerning the distribution and types of deserted sites, the chronology and causes of desertion, the archaeological evidence available from excavation and survey, and the deserted sites in relation to place-names, land boundaries and Merovingian cemeteries. To these is appended a discussion of field systems, mainly prehistoric and Roman, but some medieval.

The sources for these sites are almost entirely documents and maps, and as yet archaeology has played little part. Aerial survey has indeed begun to show results, but there has been surprisingly little field survey and less excavation; no medieval village or farm in the area has yet been dug. This naturally places limitations on the value of the evidence which are the more severe the earlier the period, for, as the author admits, in a study of settlement foundation and desertion the dates of first and last documentary records are scarcely satisfactory. The minimal amount of archaeological fieldwork is not yet sufficient to test whether in this area the last recorded date is a satisfactory approximation for date of abandonment, except of course where it is specifically a record of desertion. The author attempts to overcome this difficulty by assigning the desertions to periods of fifty years, but it is doubtful if even this allowance is sufficient, especially in the earlier periods when records were less abundant. There is also the problem of those sites (nearly one quarter of all deserted villages and farms) for which there is no documentary or archaeological indication of chronology. One might expect that these would not be distributed equally throughout the total time-range of desertion, but would be more frequent in the earlier, more sparsely documented centuries.

The shortcomings of the documentary evidence are clearly exposed for the Merovingian periods in the study of the relationship of deserted sites to *Reihengräberfelder*. Many of the later villages contained within their lands more than one Merovingian cemetery, and Janssen rightly rejects the suggestions that these were chronologically successive or socially differentiated burial areas for the inhabitants of a single settlement. It is however wrong to conclude that this distribution represents a dispersed pattern of

occupation with subsequent nucleation in the post-Merovingian period. The abandonment of the *Reihengräberfelder* represents the end of one burial rite and the emergence of the parish system and a central burial place, and not necessarily the abandonment of the associated occupation sites; the development of such ecclesiastical centres may have been a stimulus to nucleation, but it was not inevitably accompanied by it. It follows that there must be many as yet undiscovered Frankish settlements to go with the cemeteries, but that they need not have been deserted then, or perhaps even at all. Some of the cemeteries can indeed be paired with deserted settlements, many apparently not abandoned until very much later. Nevertheless, many cemeteries still wait for their associated settlements to be discovered, and as many of these must now be no longer occupied, the statistics of desertion may well need serious revision.

Janssen attempts to use the available data despite its limitations to show the chronological incidence of desertion, and to support one of his major arguments: that desertion is a phenomenon of all periods of settlement history, though with phases of greater or less intensity. These figures must, for the reasons discussed, be treated with due caution, and the histograms are suitably adorned with question marks for the earlier centuries, but it would be difficult to deny Janssen's assertion; if, as suggested, there were more desertions in that early period than the evidence at the moment demonstrates, then the point is made all the more clearly.

The fluctuations in intensity of desertion are of particular interest, and it is claimed that for villages and farms there are peaks in the late 13th, late 15th, late 16th and early 19th centuries. Some of the minor peaks may be a reflection more of the limitations of the evidence and the method of analysis than of reality, but the importance of the late 13th and early 19th centuries cannot be denied. This pattern of rural depopulation is matched by the abandoned mills, and there is an equally expected peak of deserted industrial sites in the early 19th century.

With the demonstration that desertion is not a single phenomenon of the late middle ages but a recurring feature of all periods, it is clearly essential to think of many causes, not one. Janssen discusses the role of population movement from one village to another, or more especially to neighbouring towns, of war, epidemic and the state of the rural economy. Plague is, of course, an important fact of medieval life, but it does not seem to have played as overwhelming a part in 14th-century desertion as has sometimes been imagined. Nor does Janssen see much evidence to support the theory of *Fehlsiedlung*, a settlement on marginal land inherently likely to be abandoned. Much emphasis is placed on the development of the rural economy, and on population movement and nucleation, but apart from the occasional record of natural disasters such as flood or earthquake, migration to the town is itself not an explanation, but a symptom of more fundamental economic and social processes.

The difficulty of discussing causes of desertion even in such a restricted geographical area is emphasized by quite marked regional variations. In contrast to the overall peak of desertion in the late 13th century, a study of Kreis Bonn alone shows a clear maximum in the early 14th century. If this is not merely a function of variations in the quality of the evidence, it demonstrates well-defined regional differences in the chronology of desertion, for there must be other *Kreise* with peaks in the 13th century to produce the general pattern. There are similar regional variations in the types of desertion, for instance in the south-western *Kreise* of Trier, Prüm and Bitburg, which show a very low incidence of deserted farms in comparison to other areas. On a larger scale, Janssen's study of the place-names of deserted sites marks off the Eifel from other areas of Germany. In contrast to elsewhere, there is no significant difference between the proportion of deserted sites founded in the initial Frankish settlement, characterized by names in *-ingen*, *-dorf*, *-heim*, *-weiler*, and *-hoven*, and those of the later phase of clearance and colonization, with names containing especially the elements *-hausen*, *-rode*, *-scheid*, *-berg* and *-feld*. Clearly, then, even in a small area the pattern of desertion is a complex one with no single or simple explanation.

One of the most interesting sources of information for deserted sites is the study of the boundaries of the *Gemarkung*, the territory worked by each settlement. Since these boundaries became clearly delimited, possibly around the 8th century, they have shown an astonishing capacity for self-preservation. They are thus a fertile field for topographical study, and can clearly show, for instance, the amalgamation of two territories on the desertion of one site, or the foundation of new settlements around an original nucleus, or the eventual division of a territory and the establishment of new boundaries. But these *Gemarkungsgrenzen* are information not merely for deserted sites, but for settlement history in general, and Janssen presents a number of models of early medieval settlement patterns, using techniques of analysis similar to those employed by Ellison and Harriss in Southern England. Two groups of models are clearly differentiated: those of the early Frankish settlement, and those of the phase of clearance and colonization in the 9th and 10th centuries. The former is characterized by large territories, though with considerable variation in detailed configuration. Expansion in the late Merovingian or Carolingian period produced a pattern of settlement packing comparable to the strip parishes of the English downlands, with all territories sharing the varied resources of river valley, upland and forest. The main phase of clearance is typified by much smaller land units, along the edge of the forest, or following the valleys in areas of sharper relief. These models not only give a basis against which later expansion or desertion can be assessed, but are also themselves important insights into the nature of the original Frankish settlement of the Rhineland. It is a clear demonstration of the power of these techniques, which have been surprisingly little used in the analysis of historical settlement patterns.

As the title suggests, this is not an exhaustive account of desertion in the Eifel, or even a totally integrated attempt to provide such an account. It is rather a series of studies concerning a complex of interrelated problems; though more archaeological work will undoubtedly alter the picture, and the statistics will need revision, the results are of the greatest interest. But perhaps even more important is the fact that this work has attempted to redefine the conceptual framework within which the *Wüstungsfrage* is posed. Desertion is clearly presented as a phenomenon not of one particular period, but as a continuing element of settlement history; not as the fate of villages only, but as something that happened to all types of sites of human activity; not as something to be studied in isolation, but as just one feature to be related to foundation, growth and shrinkage, expansion and contraction, colonization and migration, in a more complex approach to the metabolism of medieval settlement.

T. C. CHAMPION

Vestiges de mottes féodales en Flandre intérieure. (Atlas Archéologique No. 1 édité par l'A.P.A.R.). Lille, 1976. By Guy Lefranc. 31 × 23 cm. 53 pp., 44 pls. (including 13 fold-ins) unnumbered. Price not stated.

This is an inventory of 19 earthworks in the area west of the Belgian frontier, lying between Maritime Flanders and the River Lys. In format it follows closely an inventory of similar sites in the Pays-Bas Argonnais (*Medieval Archaeol.*, xvii, 1973), though it includes rather more photographs. Each site is illustrated by a plan at 1:1000 and a cross-section at 1:500, an air photograph and sometimes a photograph at ground level. There is an introduction, and the earthworks are arranged alphabetically, each with a serial number. There is no index. The plans are of high quality and well reproduced. As in the earlier volume, documentary references, chronologically arranged, follow a description of each site, without any attempt at critical appraisal of their value or implications.

The sites divide into motte-and-bailey castles and moated sites. By British standards the mottes tend to be low; Strazeelle and Merkeghem, at 4.40 and 4 m. respectively, are the highest, while few of the remainder reach 3.5 m. On the other hand the moated sites are somewhat higher than most of ours, averaging some 2 m. above the surrounding countryside, probably because most of the area is flat and liable to flooding. Maps indicate the distribution of the mottes and the relationship of some to the Roman road system, but there is no map to show the whereabouts of the 60 or so moated sites in the region, of which eight are chosen for illustration. Many of the plans look familiar to British eyes, emphasizing the similar seignorial pattern on either side of the Channel; but the competent, large-scale excavation necessary to elucidate their chronology and development has yet to be attempted. It is suggested that mottes originated as early as the 10th century, but the main evidence advanced for this early date is that of Lambert of Ardres who wrote very late in the 12th century when mottes were a common feature of the landscape.

The book is to be welcomed for the material it offers for comparison between analogous sites here and on the continent and archaeologists will look forward to the appearance of inventories of similar earthworks in other regions.

H. E. JEAN LE PATOUREL

Keramik des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit aus Nordfriesland. By Peter Hartmann. 29.5 × 21 cm. 60 pp., 1 folding fig., 7 pls., 29 figs. Neumünster: Offa-Bücher, 32, 1975. Price 48 DM.

During the past twenty-five years an increasing amount of medieval pottery has been published from the North Sea littoral clearly showing the extent of trade from middle Saxon to late medieval times.

The north-west German coast has been largely left out of these discussions, mainly because it was not itself producing good-quality pottery and was therefore importing rather than exporting. The present study fills an important gap, dealing with the W. coast of Schleswig-Holstein (the new *Grosskreis* of Nordfriesland established in 1970) between the Eider (just north of the Elbe) and the Danish frontier by Sylt. Peter Hartmann completed his survey as a post-graduate at Kiel in 1972 but has taken some time to work up for publication since he is now a school teacher bringing up a young family. No publications after 1970 are listed in the bibliography.

The area investigated comprises the western coastal area and the mainly submerged littoral to the W. now forming the North Frisian islands. The settlement was in two phases. From the 7th and 8th centuries Frisians colonized the higher ground adjoining the rivers, building up settlement mounds (*Warften*). The territory was part of the Danish crown estate which seems to have planned, from the 11th century, the dyking and draining of the marshy areas for colonization. The rising sea level, and worsening climate, was at first countered by raising the dykes but, following a major storm in 1362, this marshy area was inundated and had to be abandoned in the same way as other drowned areas such as the villages of Mariakerke and Raversijde (west of Ostend in Belgium) and Oude Krabbendijke and Reimerswaal (in the Oosterschelde west of Bergen Op Zoom in Holland). In England we have similar conditions at Meols, on the Wirral peninsula in Cheshire and on the south side of the Humber estuary. In the Scandinavian period there was a W. to E. trade-route up the Eider, overland to Haithabu and along the Schlei to the Baltic. Following the destruction of Haithabu in the 11th century Frisian contacts were more with the West until the Hanse took over the main trade. The catastrophic flood disaster of 1362 destroyed many of the Frisian trade centres after which the main trade contacts were broken.

The pottery described is divided into two groups, from the present dry land and from the inundated areas. Unfortunately much of the pottery is unassociated. Even from the excavations at three *Warften* at Elisenhof, Forsbüll and Welt only the latter has produced good stratigraphy. An important source of finds from the inundated areas are the turf wells (*Sodenbrunnen*) which were so constructed because of the lack of stone and timber. Other finds are not necessarily pre-1362 and in fact include post-medieval pottery. The main body of the monograph comprises a catalogue, of 26 pages illustrated by 26 pages of pot drawings and seven plates, listed according to 49 locations and divided into classes of vessel. The pot drawings follow the arrangement of the catalogue fairly closely and it is easy to refer back from the drawings to the descriptions using the site reference numbers. The photographs of pots are not so easy to refer to especially as some of them do not appear in the catalogue and are hard to find in the general text. The catalogue and figure-captions do not identify the imports so it is even harder here to refer back to the general text unless one has some idea what the vessels are.

The catalogue and illustrations are prefaced by a general introduction, details of the circumstances of the finds and a typological and chronological summary divided by types of pottery. It is clear from the few stratified deposits that, as in England, many of the individual forms are long-lived so that the first appearance of a type and its termination are difficult to establish. The *terminus ante quem* of the flood of 1362 and the *terminus post quem* of about 1100 for the settlement of the marshes, however, gives a good general date bracket for the finds from the inundated areas.

The local coarse *Kugeltöpfe*, pipkins and jugs are especially difficult as they continued to be made right on until the 17th century unlike other areas of Europe where medieval forms were replaced by stoneware or other more sophisticated wares. No kiln sites are known, and no fine wares were made in N. Frisia, so these are all likely to be imported. In the 11th century there was a multiplicity of rim forms of *Kugeltöpfe* but there was a steady growth in uniformity until by the 14th century there was a single principal type caused by the increase of production and standardized methods of manufacture, a development very similar to that in England. On the other hand the number of shapes multiplied in late medieval times, with more varied forms including an increase in the proportion of jugs and the late development of cups, dishes and plates.

Glazed pipkins and jugs do not appear until the 14th century but were in use before 1362 as is shown by finds from the inundated areas. Glazed jugs are rare also from the dry-land sites, confirming the impression from other areas that no jugs in the highly decorated tradition were made in NW. Germany between the Low Countries and Denmark. Recognizable imports include two Aardenburg-type jugs (fig. 18, nos. 8 and 15).

Large quantities of stoneware were found especially at Südfall and Trendermarch in pre-1362 contexts. This provides useful confirmation that stoneware was in full production, and being widely traded, in the first half of the 14th century, as is confirmed by finds in Britain and Scandinavia, but is less easy to establish in the Rhineland itself. There is little attempt to assign the sources of individual vessels except to say they may have come from Brunssun/Schinveld as well as Siegburg and Langerwehe. The possibility that some of the stoneware came from the important centre at Duingen, near Hanover, should be considered. Some of the shapes, especially the slightly thumbled flrilled bases, of which there are several examples, are typical of these kilns. The most important finds are fragments from five Spanish Andalusian lustreware jugs. The jug from Eiderstedt has been well known ever since Sarre's publication of 1936 but the other examples, including recent finds in private collections, are a very important addition to the distribution of Málaga-type jugs. There are only a very few examples in England and one from the Netherlands so this large number from N. Frisia is quite remarkable and throws important light on the extent of Frisian trade in the half century before the flood of 1362. The reviewer has recently made a study of imports at Lübeck and it is very striking that there are no 13th or 14th-century imported pots there from

either Spain or France. It is not until the middle of the 15th century that Valencian vessels reach the Baltic. This confirms the dichotomy between North Sea and Baltic finds as evidenced by the quantity of French imports at Ribe in western Jutland and the lack of these in eastern Denmark and into the Baltic at Visby and other sites. At the same time it is surprising that there is so much difference between the large number of Spanish imports in North Frisia and French imports at Ribe only a little way further north.

Peter Hartmann's monograph fills a very serious gap in our understanding of NW. German pottery. It is a pity that the finds from Hamburg have not been more fully published which would then give a wider picture of the situation to the West of Schleswig-Holstein to add to the important finds now being produced from Schleswig and Lübeck which, when published, will show us the position on the Baltic side. The differences between Baltic and North Sea finds, which seem to be suggested by recent excavation, need more work to assess the true situation. Surveys of this type, which include the full range of stratified and unassociated finds, are an essential start to pottery studies in any area but they must be supplemented by fully documented dated and stratified groups. We owe a considerable debt to Peter Hartmann for giving us a first preview of this important material in this much neglected part of NW. Europe.

J. G. HURST

Rotterdam Papers II. A contribution to medieval archaeology (Teksten van lezingen, gehouden tijdens het Symposium 'Woning en huisraad in de Middeleeuwen' te Rotterdam, van 20 t/m 22 maart 1973). Edited by J. G. N. Renaud. 27 × 20 cm. 200 pp., 223 figs. Rotterdam, 1975. Price 30 fl.

Rotterdam Papers II comprises the proceedings of the second symposium on medieval archaeology to be held in Rotterdam. The report on the first symposium, held in 1966 (*Rotterdam Papers*, edited by J. G. N. Renaud, 1968) has towns and trade as its theme and has proved to contain a number of articles invaluable to the medieval archaeologist. As an exercise in assembling up-to-the-minute information on medieval urban archaeological excavations in north-west Europe, *Rotterdam Papers* (1968) could hardly be faulted.

What of its successor? The theme of the 1973 symposium was domestic life in the middle ages and the published papers are concerned more with small finds than with excavations and structures. Synthetic works on excavated small finds are badly needed; in particular, the medieval archaeologist needs an up-dated chronological framework akin to that provided in 1940 by the *London Museum Medieval Catalogue*, and work such as that published in *Rotterdam Papers II* could be the beginning of such a compilation. The objects discussed include table-glass (D. B. Harden), English decorated tile pavements (E. S. Eames), leather footwear, mainly recent finds from Amsterdam (W. Groenman-van Waateringe), 15th and 16th-century pewter jugs (A.-E. Theuerkauff-Liederwald), wooden bowls from excavations at Lübeck (W. Neugebauer) and pottery (H. J. E. van Beuningen; J. G. Hurst *et al.*; S. E. van der Leeuw). Manuscript illustrations, documents and typology are all used to build up a useful chronological framework for the various types of artifacts.

One article which is less chronologically orientated but which is of the utmost importance for the study of medieval pottery is that by S. E. van der Leeuw, 'Medieval pottery from Haarlem: a model', in which he describes the experimental methods used in reproducing the manufacture of medieval pottery. We are used by now to experimental kiln-firings (a report of one such attempt appears in this volume of *Medieval Archaeology*) but experimental pottery production has not been as thoroughly investigated. Among the interesting finds to emerge from Mr van der Leeuw's work is

the conclusion that sagging bases were not produced by vessels being dragged off the wheel after throwing (as generally stated by archaeologists although questioned by practising potters), but by deliberate knife trimming after the pot had been cut from the wheel in order to reduce stress on the basal angle during drying or firing.

Excavation reports appear in this volume only in the form of articles on the structures and objects from the French 14th-century deserted village of Dracy where the excavation of a single building has produced a quantity and variety of finds such as to make any English DMV investigator stagger. Was the average Englishman then, as now, the poor man of Europe? The pewter jugs, wooden bowls and so on illustrated with profusion in *Rotterdam Papers II* certainly support this feeling; in decorated tile pavements alone can we hold our own, and even there, as Mrs Eames says, 'decorated tile pavements were introduced into England from the continent'.

Rotterdam Papers II, then, is of interest and significance for the English reader and a worthy successor to its predecessor. The only criticism one might make is that several articles are in Dutch without foreign language summary, but this applies to only three articles out of a total of fourteen and should not deter the non-Dutch reader. The high standard of the publication and the works it contains must make us hope that Dr Renaud will soon organize another symposium in Rotterdam, and edit the third volume in what is surely becoming a most useful series.

HELEN CLARKE

Manuel d'Archéologie Médiévale de la Fouille à l'Histoire (Regards sur l'Histoire, no. 23).

By M. de Bouard. 22.5 × 18 cm., 340 pp., 58 figs. and pls. Paris: Société D'Édition D'Enseignement Supérieur, 1975. Price not stated.

In Britain, and many other countries, medieval archaeology meant art and architectural history until recently. In France the realization of the importance of medieval excavation came later than elsewhere. The major developments were in the 1960s with, especially, the work of Mlle. Gabrielle Démain d'Archimbaud in the south and Jean-Marie Pesez in central France initiating important excavations on rural settlements. But the real founder of medieval archaeology in France was Professor De Bouard who ploughed a lonely furrow against some opposition in the early years after the last war from his Centre de Recherches Archéologiques Médiévales at the University of Caen. His pioneer work established in France the basic principles of medieval archaeology using modern methods of excavation and scientific backup. From his teaching has come a series of students who have now spread his new techniques and ideas throughout France. It is therefore very appropriate that Michel De Bouard should write this manual on medieval archaeology.

The manual starts with an introduction explaining the difficulties of establishing the principles of medieval archaeology using archaeological methods. In the first part, dealing with the general background, the first section discusses general history both regional and local. The second section is on economics, society and institutions, dealing with demography, historical geography, rural society, agriculture, towns and cemeteries. The third section describes methods of construction in wood and stone for castles, domestic and ecclesiastical buildings. The fourth section discusses the main finds of pottery, glass and metal.

The second part of the manual describes the preliminaries to excavation, manuscript and printed documentary evidence, place-names, aerial photography and geophysical survey. The next part then discusses the laying out and actual methods of excavation with the principles of stratification well illustrated with a series of fully explained sections from a number of recent important excavations. Methods of recording and photography are then set out. In the final section the drawing of objects is explained,

then the main methods of scientific dating and scientific analysis, both environmental, and for pottery and metals. The two final parts deal with analytical archaeology and publication.

There is, therefore, a wide coverage of all aspects of excavation, its background and execution. The aim is to provide general notes on all these subjects together with a full bibliography so that various topics can be followed up. It is a pity that, in a book of over three hundred pages which should give plenty of scope to deal with all aspects equally, there is so much discrepancy in length between the various sections. On building construction, after an admirable sixteen-page discussion of techniques of timber and stone building, there are three pages on ecclesiastical structures and ten pages on domestic but 56 pages on castles. It is fair enough to dismiss major ecclesiastical and domestic buildings in a few pages as full references are given but it is out of all proportion to then devote over fifty pages to castles. The discussion of military constructions is admirable, as may be expected from an expert in this subject, with full discussion of timber and stone fortifications through the centuries; but this would have been much better as a separate article as it throws the whole of the rest of the book out of balance. It would not be so bad if other subjects were also more fully treated but there is hardly anything on vernacular architecture. This is dismissed as de Bouard says it is hard to make an adequate bibliography because the material is scattered through many local journals with no general synthesis. Fair enough, but why then give a seven-page bibliography on mottes most of which comprises articles in local journals?

The problem is, however, deeper than that since throughout the book the emphasis is on medieval archaeology, meaning excavation and not art history, and there is a tendency to regard vernacular architecture as architectural history and therefore not to be dealt with. This is too dogmatic a view. Certainly twenty years ago it was fashionable to disregard the archaeological evidence for the upper classes (except when they built mottes) and concentrate on peasant houses. But in England this was never confined to excavation; parallel with the pioneer work of the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group, there was the very active Vernacular Architecture Group founded about the same time in the early 1950s. Now we have come to realize that medieval archaeology is the complete investigation of the medieval period. The study of standing buildings is as much part of this as is excavation if buildings are looked at in an archaeological as well as an art-historical or architectural way. This trend is particularly shown by recent work on churches where there has not only been a great increase in excavation but a remarkable combination of this with structural analysis of a type particularly equated with the work of Dr Harold Taylor. It may be that the French have swung too far towards excavation and it is to be hoped that they will not ignore the totality of medieval archaeology which is now possible if there is full inter-disciplinary co-operation. It is really however only in the last five years that medieval archaeology may be said to have come fully into its own in France with the publication of *Archéologie Médiévale* since 1971. It is perhaps surprising, with the large amount of work in progress in Germany, that *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters* did not start until two years after, in 1973. Developments in Italy were even later with the start of *Archeologia Medievale* in 1974.

There is unfortunately throughout the book a curious imbalance in the space given to different subjects besides types of site. The declared aim is to introduce people to medieval archaeology by summarizing the main topics and especially providing a bibliography. This object is followed in some chapters, like those on economics with single pages packed with useful references of just the kind needed, for demography, historical geography, agriculture, etc. But when he comes to scientific aids De Bouard spends 25 pages on geophysical survey, including nine pages on resistivity, going into very complex detail that must be very daunting for even a university student much less an interested amateur. The section on analytical archaeology is mainly taken up in explaining, again in great detail, the complex system proposed at Caen for classifying pottery. It would have been better here to summarize rather than go into so much detail

as the method has been fully published elsewhere. In any case there are serious doubts about the practicability of this system for the current large excavations where millions of sherds are being dealt with. Classification is certainly required and it is hoped that the guidelines, published by the working party of the Medieval Pottery Research Group, for the Department of the Environment, will provide a more practical way of dealing with large amounts of material and make reports more comparable while at the same time using objective scientific methods rather than the very subjective classifications used before in reporting on pottery.

Coming to the section on actual excavation De Bouard sensibly explains both grid and area excavation methods without coming down too heavily on either side, explaining that different methods are required for different situations. On the other hand the way in which open area excavation can be fully carried out, at the same time as taking sections at will, is not fully brought out so that the student will get rather a black and white choice without the various grey possibilities in between being considered. De Bouard is against a fixed layout for site notebooks but if there is to be fuller understanding and compatibility of results some form of standardization is essential preferably in a looseleaf or card form.

In the final section it is a pity that twenty pages are given to detailed descriptions of scientific dating methods which are again daunting to read and easily accessible in other text books. Only two pages are given to the drawing of objects, and there are no examples given, as with the excellent descriptions of sections and their interpretation. Worst of all perhaps is the final section on publication in only three pages which exhorts excavators to publish quickly and fully but without really giving them any guidance or instruction. Here surely some of the pages that could have been saved in other sections could have been used to deal with this most important and complex subject.

In all then this manual is a most useful reference work for French medieval archaeologists but is not of so much value for British archaeologists although the bibliography is usefully wide, referring to English and German excavation publications and not only to French examples. The large descriptive sections reflect the interests and considerable scholarship of De Bouard's work over the last 25 years, and it is useful to have this knowledge passed on. For the amateur or the general student, and there seems some ambivalence as to which the manual is intended for, each will find things of interest. However, the former may find some sections too difficult and offputting, while the student on the other hand would have found a more balanced survey of greater use. It is particularly those sections on methods of excavation and more particularly publication, about which there are no other works in France, which should have been expanded. Nevertheless we owe De Bouard a great debt of gratitude for presenting us with so much important material and for providing the extensive bibliography which in itself makes the book worthwhile.

J. G. HURST

An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in North-East Northamptonshire. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). 27 × 22 cm. xlv + 133 pp., 24 pls., 127 figs. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1975. Price £14.50.

This volume in which 'archaeological sites' are separated from standing buildings represents a new departure on the part of the Royal Commission. At first sight one is tempted to condemn out of hand the distinction between what is above and what is below ground, or represented only by slight earthworks or crop-marks, for it is necessarily artificial and goes against the whole contemporary policy of viewing landscape as a whole. Previous specialization in Commission Inventories has been along chronological lines as with Roman London or Roman York, or, in another vein, in isolating a single

monument of outstanding importance by giving it a volume to itself as with Westminster Abbey. This is more obviously logical than to extract standing buildings from their earthwork context. Looking deeper it is clear that some such decision had become inevitable. The Commission is the victim of its own standards of excellence. The much welcomed decision to include buildings up to 1850 in recent volumes has expanded the subject matter enormously so that the number of parishes covered in each volume has had to be reduced (ten only were included in *North-East Cambridgeshire*), while earthwork plans had to be severely restricted. Furthermore it is a much slower and more laborious task to record standing buildings than to survey earthworks or to interpret air photographs. At the same time it is probable that earthworks, and archaeological remains generally, are rather more at risk than buildings; and while present economic trends may well slow down the destruction of buildings, the rate of destruction in the countryside accelerates in the face of the needs of both agriculture and the extractive industries. Open-cast mining as well as gravel extraction and deep ploughing were pressing threats in the area covered by this present volume. No doubt considerations such as these influenced the decision to adopt the new publication policy.

The Commissioners were fortunate, perhaps, in the area chosen for the first implementation of the policy, since it includes few sites of dual character, yet the problems it raises are only half concealed. The earthworks NW. of Barnwell castle, for example, can hardly be unconnected with it and it is scarcely logical to separate the Jacobean remnant of Hemington manor house from its garden earthworks, a separation that would be roundly condemned if applied to excavation. Things would be even more difficult in the case of such monuments as Castle Rising, with its intimate relationship between earthwork and stonework, or in the case of villages such as Wharram Percy with its multi-period earthwork and standing church. Monuments are best recorded in their entirety. Yet facts have to be faced and if the possible alternatives are long delay in publication and the separation of archaeological from other sites, the new policy can be regarded as making the best of a bad job. At least in the present case it can be said that it is a remarkably good best.

The volume includes 57 civil parishes with boundaries as defined in 1973. These represent the NE. corner of the new county of Northamptonshire after the detachment of the Soke of Peterborough, with the archaeologically important Nene valley running almost through its centre. A clear, if somewhat unwieldy map is included in the back pocket. An inset map to show these inland parishes in relation to the whole country would have been a useful addition. Almost every earthwork of any size has its plan, usually prepared specially for the volume, sometimes redrawn from early estate maps or excavation plans or projected from aerial photographs, more often prepared in the field, and all these are of first-rate quality. Wherever possible, moreover, they are related to their topographical context. All the 434 sites known in 1973 are included and of these 31 have been recommended for permanent preservation. It is recognized that the settlement pattern may be incomplete, especially in woodland, in areas of permanent pasture and in places where fieldworkers are thin on the ground. It is possible that the last two dry seasons will have added considerably to the number of crop-mark sites, but this is a universal hazard.

Sites of medieval date include Saxon cemeteries and settlements, castles, moated sites, cultivation remains, windmill and pillow mounds and park enclosures. It happened that only one church site and no monastic remains lay within the area of the inventory. For reasons of clarity it was found necessary to separate medieval settlement plans from their prehistoric and Roman predecessors, which makes for some difficulty in comparing the sites chosen at different periods. It is a pity too that, having advanced in the Cambridgeshire volumes a viable classification for moated sites, the Commission should have abandoned it in Northamptonshire, though it is true that most of the moats illustrated are of simple character. Archaeologists may question the desirability of locating sites by six, and in some cases by eight-figure grid references in these days of

metal detectors and treasure hunters, but it is not easy to see how else they could be identified to give the volume full value. The index is exemplary.

No inventory could be expected to answer all the questions likely to be put to it by archaeologists today, still less to anticipate questions likely to be raised in the future. This volume however is a courageous and successful survey of archaeological sites in the area concerned, prepared and published with commendable speed. Those who worked on it are to be congratulated.

H. E. JEAN LE PATOUREL

Houses of the Welsh Countryside: a Study in Historical Geography. By Peter Smith for the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales. 19 × 25 cm., xxv + 604 pp., 188 figs., 51 maps, 2 colour + 108 half-tone pls. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. 1975. Price £25.00.

This work is a remarkable production. The volume weighs five pounds (and as a result of the weak binding, the cover and spine had parted from the book before I had opened it). The chapters on 'historical development' contain less than 150 pages of letterpress, the remainder of the 604 pages being devoted to line-drawings, lists of houses, and distribution maps. The chapters are difficult to read for apart from the sheer weight of the book the margins have references to maps, figures and plates, without any page reference. Page 23, for instance, has seven marginal references. All this makes it difficult for the reader to follow the author's argument and, to add to the reader's difficulties, he has to turn to the end of each chapter to find the notes enumerated in the text.

The work is sub-titled 'a study in historical geography', but it proves to be a study in house design and construction; the author's opinions about Welsh history are often questionable. This, however, is unimportant, for Mr Smith states categorically (p. 7) that 'the distribution maps . . . are the basis of this book'. These, with explanatory texts and lists, form a substantial part of the book (pp. 337-548). As one who received his academic training in historical and geographical studies, I have always been dubious of the value of distribution maps which are so often intended to 'prove' the theories of those who prepare them. The map of crucks (p. 360) can only show our *present knowledge* of the location of known cruck buildings; for the author to state that it 'shows a pattern of cultural contact along the land frontier of Wales', etc., can be misleading, for the student of culture will know that during the centuries of cruck-building the cultural frontier was considerably further East.

Here I interpolate my congratulations to the author on his sensible view of Cyril Fox's espousal of Mackinder's highland/lowland theory. I queried its value as early as 1935 (before a Royal Archaeological Institute audience) and I am glad to see Mr Smith — and Mr Eric Mercer in his excellent *English Vernacular Houses* — stating its limitations. Incidentally, Mackinder's 'creation' of 'North and South Wales' (p. 16) was never true.

But to return to crucks, I cannot find the base crucks of Llwyn-rhys (Llanbadarn-odwyn, Cardiganshire) or the scarfed crucks of Capel Pen-rhiw (now in the Welsh Folk Museum) on Mr Smith's maps or in his detailed lists. His map of 'wickerwork fireplaces' shows Montgomeryshire as blank. But I well remember wicker-and-clay chimneys in my native West of that county; many of the ruined houses in the parish of Llanbryn-Mair (listed by my grandfather in 1887) were timber-framed with daubed hazel wattle in the panels. Indeed, the timber-framed chimney of Abernodwydd (a Montgomeryshire house now in the Welsh Folk Museum) has its panels in wickerwork daubed with a mixture of cow-dung and clay.

It is stated (p. 329) that 'the policy [of the Welsh Folk Museum] has been to remove to St. Fagans a characteristic house or cottage from each county in Wales'. This is not so. The policy of the Museum has been to exhibit at St Fagans examples of types of buildings (including houses and cottages) which have been of significance in the Welsh tradition.

It was merely the pressing need for financial aid from local councils which caused us to re-erect the first buildings from different counties. My final regret is to see in this book still another architectural study using the term 'vernacular' in the wrong context of material culture.

This is an important work and both the author and his team and the Commission are to be congratulated on its production. It is a source and reference-book to be dipped into for many details. The 'distribution' maps should not be taken too seriously for several are concerned with theories rather than facts. The plates are magnificent, but for the price of £25.00 one could expect an adequate binding.

TORWERTH C. PEATE

English Vernacular Houses: a Study of Traditional Farmhouses and Cottages. By Eric Mercer for the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). 28 × 22 cm., xxii + 246 pp., 204 figs., 112 pls. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1975. Price £17.50.

The limitations of this book are explicit, though they can be exceeded when it suits the author: it is presented as 'a study of small, rural houses, throughout England', 'from the Middle Ages to the 19th century', in a regional and social context. Things can be dismissed as 'supra-vernacular' (almost any wall-framing before 1450); the richest *corpus* of all, that of market towns, is, theoretically, ignored; barns, usually the decidedly 'supra-vernacular' ones, are used to drive points of controversy home, but humble buildings other than dwelling-houses get scant treatment; medieval matters are argued about, often in the now familiar categories, but the objective analysis is mainly about post-medieval ones, yet, in a desperate effort to be fair to Cumbria, the rich and truly vernacular body of relatively recent small buildings in eastern England is underplayed. This sounds harsh, and if I add that the book uses those absurd substitutes for distribution maps that shade whole counties on the strength of one example, and that it is as wrong to say 'probably late' as 'probably early' when the case is not argued either way, I may seem to be laying on the strictures. In fact, in this composite work, the Commissioners have given us as much as they can within the (just) tolerable bounds of size and price. The book will be indispensable to future students, carrying, as it does, an unrivalled *corpus* of photographs, both of individual buildings and well-chosen samples of single features, a collection of over 500 brief descriptions, mostly unobtainable elsewhere and selected from the Commission's huge 'bag' over the last three decades, and, comprising about half the wordage, Mr Mercer's argumentative essay, thoroughly versed in the literature, the philosophy, the methodology of the subject, even though I personally believe that the 'national theme' is a will o' the wisp and that *at vernacular level* 17th-century Cornwall or Cumberland stood closer to western Ireland than to Metropolitan England. At least he does not speak of 'the' English Vernacular House.

To be of much use the 500 descriptions, compressed to the Commission's norm, need rehydration, like Japanese water-flowers — not easy when even a minute plan is lacking. How skimpy they are can be seen by comparing that of Newhouse Grange barn with the published 19th-century description. They are supposed to be the examples from Mr Mercer's thesis, but include many good things beyond his brief and are really a 'calendar' of existing surveys. Despite the 'social context', nearly all are of dwellings divorced from their ancillary buildings and well under half (the proportion varies from area to area) can be called medieval. At this level the concept of medieval is irrelevant. The thesis itself must not become, and was not meant to be, 'definitive'. It is esoteric, very personal (though Sarah Pearson is chivalrously given the credit for one part) and provocative as an essay by anyone of Mr Mercer's experience in this

protean subject must be. It merits a line-by-line critique but I have only space to take up his challenge on barns, a marginal theme. For supra-vernacular monastic barns, as at St Albans, or Titchfield, or several in Kent, I would defend dates late, or sometimes early, in the 14th century on documentary, general historical and manifold typological grounds. I defer to Mr Hewitt for terminology, not date. As to the structure of the thesis, I doubt the value, except mnemonic, of proceeding from the 'classic' long-house, hall-house, or what have you. The method is deductive rather than scientific but if it is accepted I would add the 'classic' cruck-house too, as something evolved, composite, probably urban. What is cruder may be a component and is not necessarily derivative; and what is derivative, as any numismatist will tell you, may be near-contemporary. I would, however, agree with Mr Mercer's ultimate test of the 'vernacular', which is self-defining without being circular and applicable to all archaeological objects, especially the large and unportable (short-transit boats as well as buildings), viz: that which has a dense distribution, but only applicable within the area of density.

The matter of this book then, is not specifically medieval. How far, within the medieval apportionment, is it archaeological in method? It certainly uses the critical test of distribution. With Mr Mercer's sceptical view of dates, it preserves the essential priority of description over dating. It presents the results of material analysis and dissection, without the space for full details; (it would be useful to know what houses have been dissected, i.e. demolished with care, which have just 'vanished' and which are still there). It has an important section on materials and asks why, where and when did durable buildings — fine carpentry, fine masonry — become reasonably cheap. The answer, surely, is in and from towns and both together. Good carpentry requires a good ground-wall or stylobates in order to last; stone undercrofts carry timber superstructures and all require a good roof. The critical point is the economic price for just enough of both.

S. E. RIGOLD

SKALK: Nyt om gammelt 1977, nos. 1-6. 14.5 × 21 cm., each issue 32 pp., numerous coloured and monochrome figures. Available from *SKALK*, Jelshøjvej 9, DK 8270 Højbjerg, Denmark. Subscription 45 D.kr. annually.

Twenty years ago *SKALK* appeared for the first time and rapidly became one of Europe's most successful popular journals of archaeology, with its lively, accurate and up-to-the-minute accounts of recent work in the fields of archaeological and historical research in Denmark. It soon attracted an audience of addicts from farther afield who were prepared to tackle the rigours of Danish for the witty, colourful and authoritative reporting of new discoveries and fresh ideas, which very often were of not merely Danish or Scandinavian but international significance. Now *SKALK* have taken the bold step of issuing a complete English translation with every copy sent abroad. This far-sighted decision brings it at last within the reach of many more English readers, whose appetites may be whetted by current articles on the remarkable Viking bridge recently excavated at Ravning in Jutland and dated to A.D. 979 by dendrochronology, that is, to the same time-horizon as the great fortresses of Trelleborg type; and on the largest Viking gold torc yet found — almost two kilos! — which was turned up by the harrow in April 1977. And where else could one hope to find late 19th-century boating songs side by side with recipes for curing malaria?

For those who may not yet have sampled its many pleasures, *SKALK* with its excellent new translations is strongly recommended; and at the current subscription rate of 45 D.kr. for 6 issues it is something of a bargain.

LESLIE WEBSTER

The following publications have also been received:

An Inventory of Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan, Vol. 1: Pre-Norman. Part 1, The Stone and Bronze Ages. 22 × 28 cm. 144 pp., 10 pls., 36 figs. + 2 maps. Cardiff: H.M.S.O. for Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, 1976. Price £9.50.

An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Baston, Lincolnshire (Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, no. 3). By P. Mayes and M. J. Dean, with a report on the pottery by J. N. L. Myres. 21 × 29.5 cm. 63 pp., 6 pls., 12 figs. Sleaford: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1976. Price £1.00 to Society members, £1.40 to non-members.

Sherborne Abbey: the Early Church (Addendum to *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments of Dorset Vol. 1, West* (1952)). 22 × 27 cm. 6 pp. + figs. London: H.M.S.O. for Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), 1975. Price 30p.

Alsted: Excavation of a 13th to 14th-century sub-Manor House with its Ironworks in Netherne Wood, Mersham, Surrey (Research volume of the Surrey Archaeological Society, no. 2). By Lesley L. Ketteringham. 21 × 29.5 cm. 73 pp., 16 pls., 42 figs. Guildford: Surrey Archaeological Society, 1976. Price £1.50 plus postage from Miss J. M. Harries, Dean Cottage, Dippenhall Street, Crondall, Farnham, Surrey GU10 5NY.

Welsh Medieval Paving Tiles. By J. M. Lewis. 23 × 15 cm. 35 pp., 40 pls. Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1976. Price 60p. plus postage.

The English Medieval Town. By Colin Platt. 19 × 25 cm. 219 pp., 125 figs. London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1976. Price £6.00.

The Small Towns of Hampshire: The Archaeological and Historical Implications of Development. By Michael Hughes. 20.5 × 29.5 cm. 148 pp., numerous maps. Southampton: Hampshire Archaeological Committee, 1976. Price £1.50 including postage from Department of Archaeology, The University, Southampton.

The Landscape of Towns. By M. Aston and J. Bond. 14 × 22 cm. 255 pp., 20 pls., 43 figs. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1976. Price £5.50.

Historical Atlas of West Penwith. Compiled by I. S. Maxwell. 33 × 28 cm. 20 pp., 19 figs., 20 maps + overlay. Sheffield: Department of Geography, University of Sheffield, 1976. Price £4.00 including postage.

A Catalogue of Seals in the University of Glasgow. By David Reid and Anne Ross. Microfilm edition. Glasgow: Oxford Microform Publications for the University of Glasgow, 1976. Price not stated.

Images of Stone: Figure Sculpture of the Lough Erne Basin. By Helen Hickey. 21 × 19.5 cm. 119 pp., numerous pls., 2 maps. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1976. Price £1.95.

How to Record Graveyards. By Jeremy Jones. 14.75 × 21 cm. 40 pp., 11 figs. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1976. Price 75p.