Reviews

The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, 1: Excavations, Background, the Ship, Dating and Inventory. By Rupert Bruce-Mitford, with contributions from numerous others. 25 × 31 cm., 792 pp., frontisp. + 440 figs., 37 tables, 12 maps. London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1975. Price £45.00.

The rich ship burial from Sutton Hoo, discovered almost 40 years ago, still holds a vital place in archaeological research. Although the richness of this find is in itself justification for this interest, the full explanation of the special appeal of this find is the continuing research on it carried out over the last 25 years under the direction of Rupert Bruce-Mitford. The scientific discussion of the Sutton Hoo find has thus become a mirror of the total research of the archaeological period and this research has had a wide international effect. The final report of this work has long been awaited and it is with great satisfaction that one opens Sutton Hoo, Volume 1, knowing that Volume II is already at the printers.

In Volume 1 the site and the other graves and the excavation of the great burial and its treasure are fully presented, and the boat and coins are discussed. The other finds will be presented in forthcoming volumes.

The great ship burial was placed in the largest of the 17 barrows recognized on the site. It is slightly closer to the R. Deben than the other graves and thus breaks a fine row of barrows, which had obviously all been placed along the line of the river. In the same southern part of the gravefield a certain concentration of graves can also be recognized. Among eight graves here, two graves other than the rich grave have been excavated. One of these (mound 3), is one of the row mentioned above, while the other (4) is situated behind this line, in the SE. part of the gravefield. Both graves were obviously cremations. In the other part of the cemetery, however, one barrow (2) in the northernmost part of the row of barrows contained an inhumation grave in a boat. This scattered distribution of boat-graves seems to be confirmed by some unexcavated barrows which exhibit depressions which may have been caused by collapsed boat-burials. Such a distribution is not known in those Swedish gravefields which have inhumations in boats. There the boat-graves are usually placed in groups fairly close to each other (e.g. Vendel, Valsgärde, etc.). However in Anglo-Saxon England a distribution similar to that found at Sutton Hoo seems to have occurred at Snape, where the boat-grave is situated in the middle of an Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery. This connexion between Snape and Sutton Hoo is of importance in discussing the possible relations between the Sutton Hoo ship-burial and the Swedish boat-grave cemeteries. The fact that graves of this type were well established in Scandinavia where they occur also in the Viking-age does not prove that the fashion started there. On the contrary an innovation often continues in more remote areas long after it is outdated in its place of origin. Thus the observation that the woman in the oldest boat-grave in Sweden, the single grave from Augerum is wearing a disc-fibula which has its closest parallels in Anglo-Saxon England, may be of special significance (cf. Arrhenius, 1960).

Bruce-Mitford stresses the special circumstances governing the arrangement of the Sutton Hoo gravefield, namely the fact that it is a royal cemetery. Therefore, unlike Snape (where the boat-grave is situated in a fairly ordinary Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery), there should be no trace here of a settlement, as the royal family was settled

at the *vicus regis* in Rendlesham. Dimbleby's examination, however, of the environment at Sutton Hoo has shown that the site was under a cereal crop in early Anglo-Saxon times and that mounds 1 and 5 were built directly on to ploughed land. The find of Saxon cremations at Sutton Hoo, together with the fact that part of the site was under cereal crop in the Anglo-Saxon period, would suggest that there was an Anglo-Saxon settlement here and that this settlement in some way must have been related to the cemetery. The looted graves at Sutton Hoo give an insight into the risk of grave-robbing, especially for aristocratic graves. To me this was one of the chief reasons why a cemetery was preferably sited near the home. Here custom differs clearly from that of Roman city life; only with the growing wealth of the church could one again reckon with public security for graves. The connexion between the Rendlesham *vicus regis* and the Sutton Hoo gravefield suggested by Bruce-Mitford seems thus not wholly convincing. He has, however (Bruce-Mitford, 1974), shown the importance of the R. Deben and the parallel rivers Alde and Orwell as links between a series of important sites, some of which are connected with East Anglian royalty. The Deben Valley recalls the valley of the R. Fyris which connects Lake Mälar with Uppsala, and along which lie several of the famous boat-grave cemeteries. Behind this resemblance may be a deeper affinity between the East Anglian and Swedish royal families. The boat-graves have long been considered in connexion with trade, and commercial reality may lie behind such an affinity, reflecting in part a long-distance trade from oriental Russia to the *Svear* and then to East Anglia and France. Such a trade is accepted for the Viking-age, but in my opinion this trade with the East started much earlier. Its earliest phases were probably only maintained by a few families who knew the correct routes, e.g. along the Russian rivers, and who could afford to equip boats and men for the journeys.

Among the commonest oriental imports in Anglo-Saxon England were garnets used in jewellery, together with some of the blue glass inlays. But attention should also be paid to the unique cameo found in mound 3 at Sutton Hoo. Bruce-Mitford has pointed to the close parallels which this object has in the Uppsala W. mound. The Uppsala cameos were earlier described as pseudo-cameos, but x-ray diffraction has shown that they are sardonyx (cf. Arrhenius, 1971, p. 32). However, burning during cremation has turned the onyx white and given the sard the appearance of a greyish limestone. It would therefore be of great interest to know whether the cameo from mound 3 (described as of limestone) is in fact a sard. It would indeed be very odd if such high-quality cutting had been executed in such a simple stone, the relative softness of which would make it difficult to carve the extremely fine detail seen here. Limestone is much more suitable for larger sculptures with coarse details. Ashmole has compared the plaque with Alexandrian sculptures and proposed an Alexandrian origin. Such an Alexandrian origin was also proposed by Zeiss for the Uppsala gems. I have, however, suggested (cf. Arrhenius, 1971, p. 34) that the best parallels to these cameos are to be found in Sassanian art (the only source at that time of good cameos). Sardonyx and sard are typical of that area. Bone fragments found in the Uppsala mound with cameo fragments suggest that the cameos were originally fastened to a bone casket inlaid in a kidney-shaped pattern with silver. Sutton Hoo mound 3 also seems to have produced fragments of what was probably a bone casket. Finally, the close affinity between the comb fragment in mound 3 and combs from Swedish cremation graves of the early Vendel period is to be noted; the decorative cuts at the ends are closely paralleled.

A most impressive part of this volume deals with the structure of the ship. To complete this examination the barrow was re-opened and the ship re-excavated. The technical skill shown in this re-excavation emphasizes the possibilities which might have been fulfilled in the original excavation, had not the special circumstances dictated speed. Re-excavation demonstrated that the Sutton Hoo ship was a 40-man rowing-boat. Secondary repairs indicate that the boat was not built specially for the burial, but was used in daily life. The existence of a rather heavy plank which would act as a

keel when the ship was under way suggests that the ship was intended for long-distance travel. Such a ship could very well have sailed to Sweden and further E. Although the trade route from Russia to Sweden and W. Europe would follow rivers and coasts, it would always involve a crossing of the open sea in the Baltic and the N. Sea. It is thus interesting to note that the shortest route over the Baltic in open sea leads from the Uppland coast, to Åland along the Finnish W. coast, into Lake Ladoga. Such a route in winter could be followed with sledges on the ice. At a time before the fully developed Viking ships, open-sea navigation must have been very difficult and dangerous. The mere fact that the *Svear* of Uppland could provide a shorter crossing to the East could explain the close relations between the Anglo-Saxons and the *Svear*. Such an explanation becomes clearer when it is realized that Uppland was situated in the middle of the eastern route. Ellmers (1972, p. 252) reckoned that in the Viking age the journey from London to Birka was about forty-five days (excluding breaks for bad weather, acquiring fresh food, etc.). Taking into account such breaks (which could, according to the sources, be long) together with the probably slower progress of the older types of boats, the likely length of the journey would be between four and five months. Thus, seldom more than a single journey could be made in one sailing season (again according to Ellmers, one journey a year was normal for this area). Such a journey would necessitate wintering in Uppsala, before returning in the spring to England. The traveller could also have journeyed in the late winter over the Baltic ice to row down the Russian rivers in spring, returning to England another year.

Trade is richly evidenced in the Sutton Hoo find, particularly through the coins found in the purse. All 37 Merovingian coins come from different mints and do not, therefore, represent a normal collection, but rather one gathered together for a special purpose. Grierson has explained the number by including the three blanks; the total would reflect the number of oarsmen and could form their tribute. Such an explanation, however, does not tell us why the coins came from different mints. One could add that when purses of this kind are found in continental graves they do not seem to be containers for obols; on the contrary in the case of graves with purses at Krefeld grave 1782 and Beckum the obols were found by the head.

The proposal that the owner had been a numismatist, or kept the coins as souvenirs of mints he had visited, could be accepted but does not solve the problem of the three blanks, which differ greatly in weight from the coins. I have arranged the coins according to their weight in TABLE 1. Here it can be seen that they form an even series of which 16 coins are below the mean weight of 1.2703 grammes and 21 above the mean. The series becomes still more even (cf. TABLE 2) if we add the three coin blanks — the mean thus becomes 1.2733 with 20 above and 20 below the mean. Multiplying this mean by four (i.e. 5.0932) we come very close to 5.0904, which is the mean value of the two large billets also found in the hoard. The two billets (which weigh 4.9677 and 5.2133) differ from their mean by 2%. Such a difference could be tolerated on a balance but is less than that demonstrated by Merovingian coins where the differences ordinarily vary by as much as 8%.

The variation in weight of the Merovingian coins shows the rapid decline in metrological ability after the fall of the Roman Empire. The lack of officially controlled standard weights was probably the reason for the metrological diffusion. If, however, we take a closer look at the coins and the three blanks in the Sutton Hoo purse and group them 2 to 2, i.e. place the coin with the lightest weight with that with the highest weight, we find that the coins show a remarkably constant weight about the double mean. The greatest difference is 2.8% and the commonest difference less than ½%. Thus we have an assemblage of weights of the highest accuracy. It seems to me quite probable that the coins have been deliberately sorted to form weights. The use of coins as weights is well known in Roman times and among the Arabs. It is also known from Scandinavian Viking-age graves and, moreover, in these graves the weights are often placed in a purse (as at Birka, graves 543, 837, 855, 1037, etc.). Such weights are commonly found

TABLE I

The Sutton Hoo coins and blanks arranged according to their weights. Number and datings after Volume I.

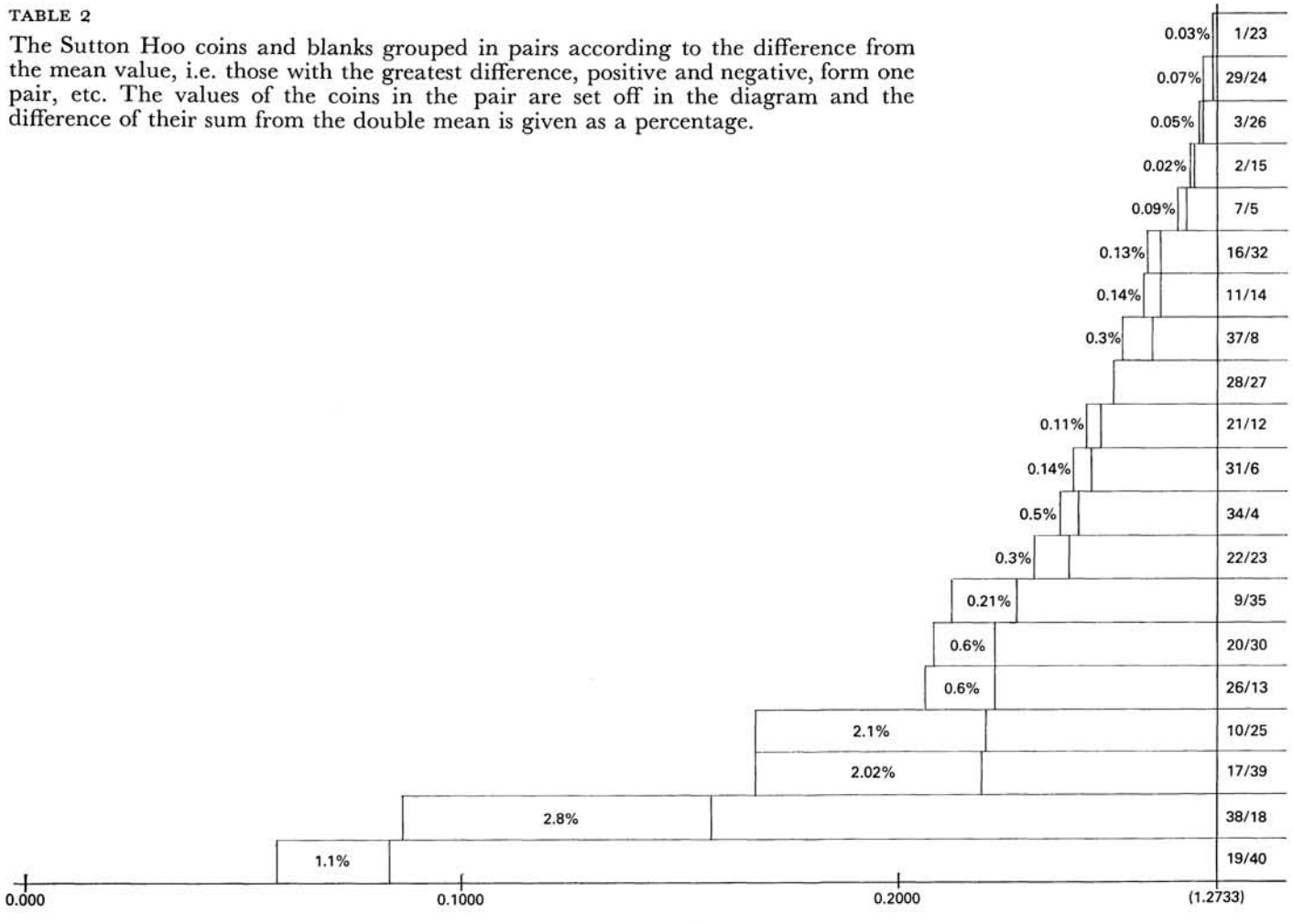
TABLE I

Coin number	Weight	Date
19	1.0578	605–15
17	1.2194	500–615
10	1.2216	590–600
26	1.2226	595–605
20	1.2228	600–615
9	1.2271	605–615
22	1.2312	605–15
34	1.2375	615–25
31	1.2403	595–600
21	1.2431	600–15
28	1.2492	600–10
37	1.2512	610–20
11	1.2566	585.90
16	1.2574	605–15
7	1.2641	580–90
2	1.2675	595–612
3	1.2704	590–600
29	1.2724	605–15
1	1.2728	575–585
23	1.2745	605–15
24	1.2759	615–20
36	1.2774	600–15
15	1.2787	585–95
5	1.2803	595–605
32	1.2859	595–600
14	1.2863	615–625
8	1.2879	595–610
27	1.2975	590–600
12	1.3007	590–610
6	1.3027	595–605
4	1.3051	580–590
33	1.3074	605–15
35	1.3141	600–615
30	1.3378	595–600
13	1.3391	590–600
25	1.3785	590–600
18	1.3878	585–90

Blank number	Weight	Date
38	1.0883	—
39	1.3787	—
40	1.4611	—

TABLE 2

The Sutton Hoo coins and blanks grouped in pairs according to the difference from the mean value, i.e. those with the greatest difference, positive and negative, form one pair, etc. The values of the coins in the pair are set off in the diagram and the difference of their sum from the double mean is given as a percentage.



without a balance, which is understandable, since the weights rule the accuracy of a measurement whereas the balance would be less important and could be borrowed.[1]

In this publication the coins are largely treated from a chronological point of view, Kent now finally proving Lafaurie's thesis which dates the coins early. Bruce-Mitford properly remarks that, if the coins were collected for a special purpose, their closing date cannot be used for dating the grave. However, if my proposal is correct, this does not mean that this set of weights was in use for a long time or collected over a long period. I would suggest that the weights were assembled in connexion with making or giving of the purse and provided from a well-furnished treasure. This would also explain the date range of the series (cf. TABLE 1). The making of the blanks, two of which are heavy and one light, could be intentional (i.e. they could have a special function in the weighing process). It would be tempting to extrapolate that the coin mean value 1.2733 grammes is the Merovingian equivalent to the Roman weight unit *scripula* with a weight of 1.137 grammes which corresponds to the weight of six *siliquae*. However, the difference from the Roman weight unit is as much as 10.7%. The whole coin-hoard would in that case correspond to 288 *siliquae* (the coins and blanks being forty times 6 *siliquae* and the billets two times 24 *siliquae*). As 144 *siliquae* in Roman times was meant to make one ounce, the hoard thus consisted of two ounces.

Volume 1 includes a report on scientific methods used for dating the grave. The dendrochronological date was provided at an early stage in the development of the method and is therefore of no real use. The two carbon^{14} dates present a rather confusing picture. One, carried out on the wax in the iron lamp, gives a very early date (523 ± 45) and the other, on a piece of oak, gives a later date (694 ± 45). The carefully compiled inventory shows that there are several other pieces of oak some of which could perhaps have been used for carbon^{14} dating. As carbon^{14} dating is based on statistical calculations it is always better to examine several samples from the same grave so that one can analyse the spread of the dates. It would also be interesting to see if carbon^{14} dates from what seem to be older mounds (3 and 4) would provide the same diffuse pattern. Of great interest is the dating of a skull found outside Mound 5 which provided a carbon^{14} date from the 8th century, hinting that the cemetery was still in use in that period.

For the dating of the ship-burial it is of extreme importance if Bruce-Mitford's identification of the buried man as the East Anglian king Redwald is correct. According to Bruce-Mitford the evidence that the burial was royal depends on the supposition that certain equipment — the standard, the sceptre and the richly adorned gold jewellery — is royal regalia. The earlier, oft-repeated hypothesis that the burial was a cenotaph has now to be abandoned as the phosphate analyses indicate the presence of a corpse. The jewellery was obviously spread around the body and the sceptre and standard placed above the head of the dead man. This suggests that the regalia are gifts rather than items used by a king. This combined with the anonymity of the buried person, for example the lack of any personal ornament such as a finger-ring, gives to the grave a character which I have difficulty in reconciling with King Redwald. I would see the regalia as representing a royal person who had never ruled — an heir, for example, who died too early to be crowned. If the dead man was of royal birth but not a king this could explain why he was buried at Sutton Hoo and not at Rendlesham. I have, for reasons referred to above, some difficulty in accepting the Sutton Hoo gravefield as the royal cemetery of the East Anglian kings whose centre was at Rendlesham. There is in fact nothing which would suggest that this grave is not *sui generis* in the cemetery. It is the largest and it breaks the line of a neat row of graves. Although the other graves excavated on the field are rich, their richness cannot be compared with this grave. I doubt the possibility that the looted grave 2 was of the same quality as it seems incredible that the robbers did not continue such looting in the other graves.

There is an interesting causality in the existence and preservation of a rich grave. The best chance for the survival of a rich grave in an unlooted state must be if the grave

is that of a young person whose relatives were in complete control of a district. The danger of a grave being robbed by people who knew of its contents could only be overcome by the protection of wealthy surviving relatives; after a generation the grave would be forgotten. But, if the relatives are the immediate successors of a wealthy man, they would be much occupied in establishing their own wealth and might have had difficulties in securely guarding the grave of their predecessor. In other words, it seems less probable that Redwald's successor, Sigeberht, arranged a burial of the Sutton Hoo class (with all its regalia) at a period when he had to fear his rival Eorpwald. It is more likely, for example, that the mighty Redwald buried his eldest son Raegenhere (died 616/17) here.

In this review I have only been able to discuss certain points from the 792 pages of Volume I. There is much else to consider in this splendid book.

BIRGIT ARRHENIUS

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NOTE

[1] In one of the purses from Apahida II (Horedt and Protase, 1970), were 16 pieces of gold with garnets, said to be gaming pieces. Twelve were of smaller size and had a weight between 4.3–4.7 grammes, whereas four were bigger and had a weight between 7–9.9 grammes (one was so fragmentary that the weight was less than 2 grammes). Several of the pieces had lost their garnet inlays which may be an explanation for the variation in weight. I think it is quite possible that here also is a series of weights, in which the larger pieces probably represent double the weight of the small ones, and the number of weights are quotients of four.

Norfolk — Spong Hill (East Anglian Archaeology Report no. 6). By C. Hills. 21 cm. × 30 cm. 90 pp., 10 pls., 155 figs., 1 fold-out plan. Norwich: Norfolk Archaeological Unit, 1977. Price £3.60.

The volume is the first part of an excavation report on a large pagan Anglo-Saxon mixed cremation and inhumation cemetery. The site lies between Kings Lynn and Norwich, 2 km. from North Elmham which was an important Christian site by the 10th century, perhaps earlier. The author has directed excavations every year from 1974 onwards (previous excavations were in 1968, 1972, 1973), and the intention is to continue until the site is fully excavated when an estimated 2,000 urns may have been produced. The threat of long-term plough damage makes the project an ideal match of research and rescue archaeology.

This volume deals with the archaeological contents of over 700 cremation burials from the NW. area of the cemetery excavated to 1975. Previous finds and excavations in other areas are to be included in further reports. J. N. L. Myres's *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery* includes some of this earlier material and several important finds have been noted elsewhere (cf. *Medieval Archaeol.*, XXI (1977), 167; *Antiquaries Jnl.*, LIV (1974), 87–91). There is a brief introduction to the site and its geographical context, history of previous excavations, etc. The bulk of the contents is a brief inventory of each grave, with

drawings of the reconstructible pottery and better-preserved artifacts arranged by broad type and category, and tabulated combination lists. Sections showing the distribution of cremated bone and artifacts within some of the urns and the interrelationships among some urn-complexes are also provided. There is a brief discussion of each class of object and a general summary of the site's significance. The information given is the primary set needed to assess the significance of the site assemblage, although a preliminary description of the surface treatment and fabric of the pottery would have been useful. Particularly important is the preliminary study of stamp impressions on the pottery, and their distribution within the excavated area. The studies of the spatial distribution of other selected artifacts shows the potential for the comparison of artifact distributions, and of elements within artifacts, to define their chronology of use. The information derived from these topographical, chronological studies, combined with the skeletal and other information, will lead to an understanding of the development of the cemetery and associated features. Certain 'early' finds, such as the *stutzarm* fibula 1598 of N. German, NE. French form, the razor 1672 paralleled at Looveen and elsewhere and some of the pottery which ranges late into the 6th century at least, suggest the chance of establishing a regional sequence of artifact assemblages by typology, association and site-topography. Inter-regional comparison, and the consequent ability to set in context material from individual artifact studies, will be a consequent development. The need to deal with information over wide areas, or in detail at a single site, will inevitably bring about the application of computer techniques. This lies in the future. The excavated finds and their treatment, of which we see an interesting preliminary part, will provide a great deal of information. Full-scale scientific excavation of large Anglo-Saxon cremation cemeteries, adequate analysis and publication have been lacking in English archaeology to date. The remains themselves are not spectacular, the glass vessels for instance being burnt and melted, but their value for the history of culture is considerable nonetheless.

The author has shown great promptitude in allowing other scholars access to primary details of her finds. This form of publication of material should be seriously considered by other cemetery excavators with a backlog of unpublished work or with long-term projects which make speedy overall assessment impossible. The report bears favourable comparison with the publications of similar material so long the ornament of N. German archaeology, and is of general reference for migration period scholars. The Norfolk Archaeological Unit and the Scole Committee are to be congratulated on producing a volume of generally high standard at a reasonable cost. The D.o.E. and other sponsors deserve wide recognition for their enlightened, long-term support of this internationally important excavation. Anyone familiar with the amount of work involved in clearing, cleaning and excavating such a site and sorting, restoring and drawing the fragmentary remains will recognize the considerable achievement of the author.

DAFYDD KIDD

Mercian Studies. Edited by Ann Dornier. 15.5 × 24.5 cm. 255 pp., 68 figs. Leicester: University Press, 1977. Price £6.95.

Miss Dornier has edited papers given at a conference held at Leicester in December 1975. The circumstances of the conference meant that two major fields were omitted, the material culture of the pagan period and the Viking impact, and in a sense these omissions are symptomatic of the special difficulties which face the organizers of any such conference and the editors of any such volume. It is exceptionally difficult to establish a coherent theme. The object of this particular exercise was to attempt to dispel the dark pessimism that has surrounded efforts to put together a trustworthy

account of early Mercian history and within these terms of reference the editor and authors can claim a modest success in helping us understand further the course of events and the inner meaning of the social moves of the day. The studies remain inevitably isolated and inconsistent (what was the significance and indeed extent of Penda's reign and what was the date of the Tribal Hidage?), and it is possible that they would have been more effective and reached a wider public if they had appeared in the pages of the relevant specialized journals.

For the political historian Dr Wendy Davies makes a positive contribution in arguing that Penda's prominence may indeed go back long before the 620s, perhaps even to as early a date as the first decade of the 7th century. The events of the 620s and early 630s provide something of a hinge point, opening the door to Celtic monks on the Christian side, to be sure, but also to the dominance of the pagan Penda. The Middle Kingdom enjoyed its consolidation, but needed the acceptance of Christianity and the techniques of the Tribal Hidage to consummate it fully. Valuable evidence for early urban development and for the distribution of trade and coins is presented by Dr Rahtz and by Dr Metcalf. Good work on Breedon and Brixworth is faithfully reported, and Professor Cramp adds greatly to our understanding of Mercian sculpture, neatly categorized into four principal stylistic schools. Dr Hart further refines his identification of the location of the communities referred to in the Tribal Hidage, and interesting notes are given on Welsh accounts of the borders, on the early history of Northampton, and on the territorial extent of Rutland, possibly associated with a primitive *regio*. The book as a whole presents a series of illuminating glimpses from a variety of angles, place-names (useful discussion of Repton), architecture, art (the *Book of Cerne*), sculpture, numismatics as well as the more familiar archaeological and annalistic angles. The raw material is further refined in collection, and we are brought a shade nearer (particularly by the interesting chronological extension granted by Dr Davies) to the possibility of a coherent Mercian history in the 7th and 8th centuries.

H. R. LOYN

Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress (*Royal Irish Academy*). Edited by Bo Almqvist and David Greene. 18 × 25 cm. 152 pp., 51 illus. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College, 1976. Price not stated.

When every four years linguists, historians and archaeologists from Scandinavia and the islands to the West meet to discuss the Vikings and their impact they consider particularly the host country, and so, in 1973, Ireland.

Linguistically the field is thin. Magne Oftedal points out that almost all the few known Scandinavian place-names were taken over by speakers of English not Irish, and David Greene finds not more than a score of Scandinavian words in modern Irish, mainly derived from seafaring and trade. Although the Scandinavians were a major political factor in Ireland for over three hundred years they did not settle any extensive lands as in other western colonies, but in contrast established towns. These, Liam de Paor argues, were "not so much ports as emporia and way-stations on the long sea routes which linked the Scandinavian homelands and colonies with the Mediterranean and North Africa, in the fundamental exchange of slaves for silver".

Dublin was the main town, and along with a brief account of 10th to 12th-century levels in his excavations there, Breandán Ó Ríordáin illustrates a range of finds, some subsequent to *Medieval Archaeol.*, XV and the catalogue of the exhibition at the time of the congress. He stresses the trial pieces, as well as some finished carvings.

Something of the wealth of the towns, and the extent to which they influenced their hinterland, is indicated by James Graham-Campbell's maps and long lists of gold and

silver objects. Preponderantly eastern and coastal, they spread out beyond the contemporary coin hoards. The importance of silver (of which 8th-century Ireland had been rather short) is evidenced, before the main period of coin-deposition (920–1000), by a 9th-century Hiberno-Viking type of flat armlet or bracelet. One of these provides an Irish link for the unorthodox coin hoard from Croydon, Surrey, *c.*875. Unfortunately, most of what is associated with coins is rather dull except for two hoards probably put together in Ireland though buried in England. Cuerdale, Lancs., *c.*903, from which important still unpublished material is mentioned, and Goldsborough, Yorks., *c.*920. The later Irish or Scandinavian elements in jewellery have been discussed more fully elsewhere by Graham-Campbell and others.

In another of the longer papers Charlotte Blindheim brings together the insular metal objects found at Kaupang in southern Norway, with some new contributions to the discussion of what is Irish, Pictish or Anglo-Saxon, raised by Bakka in 1961. (His drawing of a silver cross is, however, a more convincing interpretation than hers.) She stresses the need to study the evidence for secular trade, and the links to England perhaps through Hedeby. A mould for a thistle brooch is thought to be an import, possibly of Cornish stone. A reserved Anglian cross might have been pointed out in the over-all interlace of fig. 18, and also the resemblance of the rune-inscribed bowl to saucepans which have repoussé ridges below a flat brim, such as one from a grave in Islay (Shetelig, *Viking Antiquities of the British Isles*, Vol. II, p. 40) and the larger one from Castle Derg, co. Tyrone, now in Edinburgh.

R. B. K. STEVENSON

The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church. By K. Hughes and A. Hamlin. 13.5 × 21.5 cm. 131 pp., 22 figs., 1 map. London: S.P.C.K., 1977. Price £2.95.

The Celtic Church in Wales. By Siân Victory. 13.5 × 21.5 cm. 146 pp., 4 pls. London: S.P.C.K., 1977. Price £2.95.

These two books are very similar in length, appearance and price, but they differ in purpose, scope and, in the last resort, quality. *The Modern Traveller* . . . represents the last publication in her lifetime of a much-missed scholar; and it is characteristic of one whose ambition and peculiar gift was the lucid exposition of highly complex problems for the benefit of a wide audience without sacrifice of scholarly integrity that she should have left us with a work designed to make the surviving monuments of early Irish Christianity more intelligible to the ordinary visitor. In this objective, it surely succeeds. The first three chapters, by Dr Hughes herself, discuss the function, location and economy of early Irish monasteries. Ann Hamlin then contributes chapters on the buildings, the carvings and the present state of these sites; it is also to her that we owe the list of places to visit, whose admirable fullness might lead some footsore tourists to wish that it had been equipped with star-ratings, Michelin-style. There is a very clear map, to which a grid system permits easy reference from the places named in the text. The suggestions for further reading nicely balance general with more specialist works. And the decision to illustrate a work of this nature with accurate and responsible line-drawings is amply justified, not only on grounds of cost, but also in that the state of preservation of many monuments hampers clear photographic reproduction (as the other book under review tends to show). As for the text, this "little guide for beginners" is "remarkable alike for its lucidity and discretion", and, like the Rule of St Benedict, it almost conceals from those unfamiliar with the sources and contemporary literature of the subject, its authors' profound and sensitive scholarship. Only a double-take reveals the range of knowledge, historical and literary, geographical and onomastic,

archaeological and geological, that is distilled rather than paraded in Dr Hughes's fascinating, and frequently original, chapter on "Sites". Scarcely less admirable is the way in which Ann Hamlin has negotiated, rather than evaded, the turbulent currents of recent debate about the history of Irish ecclesiastical building in stone. Individual scholars will no doubt find points on which they disagree, and it might have been fairer, even wiser, given the present drift of study, to cite some of the alternative views on the origin and chronology of Irish high-cross sculpture. But the dating of the *Celi De* movement to the late *ninth* century is one of the very few slips awaiting correction in presumably inevitable further editions.

Otherwise, one's reservations are those which apply to the whole tradition of historical writing about early Irish Christianity: its perhaps unavoidable lack of the sort of concrete secular context which is supplied by the charters and *Libri Memoriales* of the English and continental Churches, and whose absence leaves a conceptual void between excessively lyrical and unjustifiably cynical assessment of the motives of those who littered Ireland with so many evocative monuments; the essentially static approach to the history of nearly seven centuries of ecclesiastical life, which almost conceals from the reader the fact that nearly all of what he will see, and many of what sources he is referred to, were produced not in the "Age of the Saints", where this book, like so many others, has its focus, but in the perhaps very different conditions of the post-Viking period, which has attracted little, if any, of the same attention; and finally, the writing of Irish ecclesiastical history in virtual isolation from that of the rest of Europe, which obscures, for example, many more similarities than this book would suggest between the spiritual impulses, secular contexts and even physical manifestations of early Irish and, for example, Merovingian monasticism. These, of course, are problems to which one could scarcely expect solutions in a book of this nature, and Dr Hughes was more aware of them than many have been.

But they raise more serious difficulties for Siân Victory's book on *The Celtic Church in Wales*. Despite the unfortunate absence of maps, and rather sparse illustration, this book also appears to have the tourist in mind, including as it does another list of places to see, a short bibliography and a relatively simple scholarly apparatus. But further to this, it apparently aims to provide the sort of general account of early Welsh Christianity which has long been needed, and to which Dr Hughes was turning her attention before her lamented death. A chapter on the historical background is followed by others on the Christian sites, Church organization, the Church within society, Church economy, and cultural achievements. The book is clearly based on close familiarity with the Welsh saint's lives and of Nash-Williams's *corpus* of inscriptions, as well as acquaintance with the sites discussed. Unfortunately, there are very many more obvious errors than in *The Modern Traveller* . . . (there is less excuse for a 9th-century King Athelstan than for 9th-century *Celi De*); and, unfortunately too, in spite of an obvious and acknowledged debt to Dr Hughes, this book really belongs to the tradition of loving chronicles, largely based on saints' lives, of the idiosyncracies of "The Celtic Church" in all its splendid isolation. It is no mere quibble to object to the use of the term "Celtic Church", since this presupposes both a coherent and self-conscious ecclesiastical entity for which there is no evidence in either part of the whole of the Celtic world, and a set of features common and unique to Celtic Christians, which, if they existed, need more discriminating identification than they receive here or in many other works: the author shows a significant *contrast* with Ireland in the survival of Welsh episcopal organization, and hereditary succession to abbacies was a feature not only of Irish and Welsh but also of English and continental churches. Nor is it an Englishman's prejudice that jibs at the almost wholesale adoption in this book (unlike the other under review) of the "Celtic" interpretation of Hiberno-Saxon Art; if there is an Irish solution to the mystery of the Lichfield Gospels this has yet to be demonstrated, and there is quite enough work in the field to justify more doubt than is evident here. Above all, the drawbacks of the tradition discussed above are more unfortunate in a work of this scope. It is ignorance of the

European context that prompts the altogether excessive awareness of the Easter controversy in this book, since the fact that there was apparently a blazing Paschal row in the Frankish Church in about 740 makes the Welsh seem rather less behind the times. And it is this awareness of the Easter issue which leads to repeated references to the isolation of the Welsh Church; but how then are we to account for the evident Frankish influence on the style and content of "Nennius" and Asser? There are, in fact, many good reasons for supposing that Welsh contact with western Gaul survived from the period when it transmitted the E. Mediterranean monastic influences and the E. Mediterranean pottery of which Siân Victory is well aware, up to and beyond the Alfredian period when a group of Breton, Cornish and Welsh manuscripts throw new light on Alfred's interest in Asser. Again it is probably true as the author claims that the Welsh evidence will never permit such detailed study of its early Church as the Irish, and the necessary sense of chronological development, especially, may be unattainable. But, as regards the integration of church and society, we do at least have some, perhaps many, charters. Even in a work pitched at this level it is hard to understand the author's apparent failure to take account of the seminal paper by Wendy Davies on the *Book of Llandaff* (*English Historical Review*, 88 (1973), 335–51) or of recent research into Welsh kingship and institutions, not least because these imply (quite apart from the possibilities of Anglo-Saxon influence) a more ordered, even a more Romanized, government than this book's pages on restless Celtic warlords would suggest. Any future study of the Church in early Welsh society which is to dig beneath the sparkling but chronologically flat surface of the hagiographical evidence will have to reckon with these considerations. Meanwhile, in view of the difficulties of the evidence and the absence of fore-runners, it would be ungenerous not to emphasize that Siân Victory has written a readable and often thought-provoking book, which brings early Welsh Christianity at least a little more clearly into view.

PATRICK WORMALD

Beckery Chapel, Glastonbury, 1967–8. By Philip Rahtz and Susan Hirst. 94 pp., 11 pls., 29 figs. Glastonbury: Glastonbury Antiquarian Society, 1974. Price £2.10.

Beckery is a promontory thrust out into the marshes on the W. side of the 'island' of Glastonbury. It was the site of a medieval chapel traditionally associated with the Irish St Brigid and preserving relics of her reputed stay at Glastonbury. The site was first explored in 1887–8, when the plans of two successive chapels were recovered. The excavations described in the present report were carried out for the Chalice Well Trust as part of a programme of archaeological research at Glastonbury.

The area surrounding the chapel, together with an extension NW., was completely stripped and trenches were carried down the slopes of the hill; the 'Priest's House' north-east of the chapel, which had been located and planned in 1887–8, was not re-excavated, though a trench was cut across the site to correlate the remains with the general sequence.

The excavation was carefully planned and meticulously executed. The record of the structures discovered is clearly set out and the objects brought to light are fully described. But the interpretation is vitiated by a failure fully to appreciate the character and value of the historical evidence available. The paragraph concerning 'legendary material' (p. 9) opens: 'William of Malmesbury writing *c.* 1135 . . .'. The reference is to *de antiquitate Glastoniensis ecclesiae*, as appears from the bibliography, and a footnote states 'Robinson (1921) (i.e. J. Armitage Robinson, *Somerset Historical Essays*) believed that these details are not reliably to be associated with William of Malmesbury'. This can only be described as naive; it fails to appreciate the cogency of Armitage Robinson's

arguments, which have not been successfully challenged. It is therefore definitely misleading to state (p. 11) 'William of Malmesbury does in fact provide the earliest reliable references to Beckery'. Similarly the three pre-Conquest charters cited are all classed as 'doubtful'. Robinson (see Sawyer, 227) considered that Cenwalh's charter of 670 preserved 'fragments of an original charter of the 7th century which has undergone more than one modification' and Finberg claimed an authentic basis. Of the other two (Sawyer, 250 and 783) the authorities cited by Sawyer are unanimous: 'spurious' with one variation, 'forgery'. In view of these opinions it is difficult to know why the third charter (Sawyer, 783) is considered to have 'parts . . . which may be genuine' (p. 10) and cited as evidence that 'Chapel II may thus have been the chapel possibly referred to in 971' (p. 43).

Three successive periods are recognized by the excavators. The first is represented by a cemetery with oriented burials and a series of post-holes and ditches. Some of the latter within the area of the later chapel are interpreted as a timber chapel or tomb-shrine associated with Grave 18, for which a radio-carbon date in the 8th century is suggested. The community was predominantly male, 'which historically implies that it was a monastery'.

Period II is marked by a small chapel with a nave and chancel, which on the basis of the plan and construction could be late Saxon or Norman. On the basis of comparison with Cheddar, the earlier dating is preferred. But there is no reliable evidence for the existence of a chapel on Beckery before the 12th century, the date of the voussoir found loose on the site.

Period III is marked by a rectangular chapel rather larger than its predecessor. That it represents the building repaired by Abbot John of Taunton (ob. 1291) is borne out both by the character of the building and the tiles, some of which were found *in situ* in 1887–8. The Priest's House is of this date.

The discovery of an early cemetery and associated features is an important addition to our knowledge of the ecclesiastical complex on the 'island' of Glastonbury, though its significance remains obscure. The report includes a valuable record of the numerous loose finds from the site. The *corpus* of late Saxon to early post-Conquest pottery is particularly useful and will serve for comparison with the larger and better authenticated series from Cheddar.

C. A. RALEGH RADFORD

Excavations in King's Lynn 1963–1970. By Helen Clarke and Alan Carter. 24 × 18 cm. xvi + 482 pp., 198 figs., 10 pls. Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series, no. 7, 1977. Price £12.50.

This welcome new monograph in the Society's already proven series comes to us as Volume II of the King's Lynn Archaeological Survey. It is very unlike its predecessor, Vanessa Parker's *The Making of King's Lynn* (Phillimore, 1971), nor will it resemble its projected successor, the third and final volume of the Survey, which is to include the historical material no more than lightly treated in the first two volumes, and which is promised shortly as a British Academy publication under the editorship of Dorothy Owen. These volumes, it must be said, are not to be seen as a set in the conventional sense of that word. Yet together, when complete, they will have established King's Lynn as one of the more comprehensively studied of Europe's lesser ports, making of this, as it is already, a singularly impressive achievement.

Supported by a generous subvention from the D.o.E., and very reasonably priced in consequence, this meticulously edited volume, showing Ann Morley's expert hand, begins with a brief introduction by Helen Clarke. It then moves immediately to the

excavations, both major and minor, which Dr Clarke and Alan Carter directed at Lynn through the greater part of the 1960s. In the current convention, the excavation reports are followed here by two important chapters on the finds, including Gerald Dunning's valuable self-contained discussion of stone mortars. Another chapter treats the animal and plant remains from medieval Lynn, and the whole is rounded off by a thematically-divided chapter of discussion and conclusions.

Although the plates are few and are oddly divided in relation to the text they should support, the line-drawings, with few exceptions, are of high quality, reinforcing that impression of uncompromising professionalism which cannot fail to occur to every reader. And, indeed, there is much in this weighty volume to recommend it. Most particularly, the placing of King's Lynn on a waterlogged site, with the quayside advanced constantly by reclamation, has created conditions ideal both for the preservation and the recovery of wood and of leather, as well as of other organic materials. Of course, it created difficulties too, as the excavators repeatedly complain in their reports, and perhaps this is one good reason why the photographic cover is so deficient. Nevertheless, at this distance in time, the rewards very obviously outweigh the disadvantages. In the finds reports there are outstandingly useful sections on the wood and leather objects from the town. And while plant remains are passed over surprisingly rapidly, the commentaries on the bone (especially the fish bone) from medieval Lynn will certainly be of value as much to the economic historian as to the archaeologist.

Unquestionably, we may now expect to find King's Lynn in every textbook account of medieval England. Moreover, it will deserve its place there not for the finds alone, impressive though they are, but for the view this volume gives, especially in its useful concluding essays, of the expansion, the economy, the defence and the trade of this thriving seafaring community. If I have a complaint to make — and I make it obviously reluctantly, for it shows up an inadequacy of my own — it is simply that I found important sections of this book all but impossible to use. The two authors and excavators, in compiling their reports, have adopted different techniques of exposition, and one cannot blame them for this. Nevertheless, I found Helen Clarke's tables, admirably consistent though they were, at least as difficult to follow as Alan Carter's text, the Rahtzian complexity of which I cannot resist illustrating by a sample taken at random: "A mixed organic loam, D554, above D519a replaced D553 E. of bank D.F295, but like D553 merged into a dirty pebbly silt loam, D573, beyond the S. end of the bank" (p. 56). Confusingly, too, whereas Dr Clarke has made a point of not showing layer numbers on her sections, Mr Carter quite obviously depends upon them; nor is either author prepared to discuss in plain language the relative significance of each site. We are told a lot, at the opening of this volume, of the qualities of the late Eleanora Carus-Wilson, a historian of high distinction, uncompromising in her scholarship, who was herself a great prop of the Survey. Yet Professor Carus-Wilson, as was immediately obvious in all her writings, never forgot the needs and limitations of her audience. She could not possibly have written like this!

What we wait for in this volume, and what we never get, is that rounded view of the archaeology of King's Lynn in which the sites might be seen in their total context and from which conclusions, however tentative, might be drawn. No doubt, the scientific approach to archaeological reporting has its virtues, and many of these are quite admirably displayed in this volume. But there surely comes a time when an individual judgement, if arrived at through experience and with due reason, does more service than a retreat into scholarly caution. In the King's Lynn finds reports, which every archaeologist will rightly resort to as a quarry of his own, the decision has been taken to date objects usually by context alone, within the four broad periods defined by Dr Clarke in her introduction. Yet one effect of this strategy has been to place identical Saintonge polychrome sherds in two quite different dating brackets, one of them decidedly too late (pp. 228–9), while another consequence, further on in the text, has been to put a bottleneck back into Period III (*c.* 1350–1500) which belongs in the 18th century (p. 311).

If this is the way forward in archaeological reporting, it is clearly time for some of us to get off. However, let me come clean: I am far from sure that I know myself of any better road.

COLIN PLATT

Medieval Pottery from Broadgate East, Lincoln 1973. (Lincoln Archaeological Trust Monograph XVII — 1.) By Lauren Adams. 21 × 29.5 cm. 54 pp., 22 figs. London: C.B.A. for Lincoln Archaeological Trust, 1977. Price £3.80.

Extensive excavations within our historic town centres over the last ten years have produced vast quantities of cultural material which, once processed and published, may well change many long-held opinions, not least in the field of medieval pottery studies. This monograph, the first in what promises to be a very revealing series, deals with particular aspects of the late Saxon and medieval pottery industry of Lincoln, but has wider implications than its title suggests. It also marks the introduction of Lauren Adams to the study of English medieval pottery.

The choice of such a site on which to base an extensive series of pottery studies is not as strange as its seems. Dr Adams was first concerned to tie her research to previous work in Lincoln, and to fill gaps in the pottery-series that was already established, before starting work on major sites, and she is to be commended on such an approach. Effectively, she has produced a basic type and fabric series for Lincoln from the late 10th century to the mid-15th century which, whilst it will obviously be modified and extended by future work, must remain the basis of any research, and provides an extensive bibliography and *critique* for the rest of the E. Midlands. In her own words, she wanted to produce 'a preliminary assessment of the problems' and this she has more than done. Others would do well to follow this example.

This monograph is not written in the current quasi-scientific and statistical *argot* with which the field of medieval pottery studies is at present beset, but this should not impair its value. It is rare to find a pottery report which is both well written and full of useful detail to the point of actually being readable, but Dr Adams has been able to combine both these aspects and produce a report in which attention to detail and accuracy are exceptional.

Dr Adams has attempted to define a fabric series for Lincoln which is, perhaps, a little simplistic, and which will need to be expanded. For example, her *sandy wares* category contains at least three Thetford-type wares which are reasonably distinctive, and she perhaps over-emphasizes the importance of Torksey ware. Her Lincoln ware is also possibly divisible into a number of discrete fabrics, and considerably more could have been said about the splash-glazed wares. However, these are all relatively minor points, and do not detract from Lauren Adams's work.

One major detraction, for which Dr Adams herself deserves no criticism, is the editorial decision to publish the Lincoln excavations as a series of fascicules. Here we have an excellent discussion of a series of pottery groups published almost totally out of context, with only the slightest reference to the buildings that the pottery comes from, or to any associated finds. As a result, it is difficult for anyone to consider the pottery objectively until many other fascicules have been written. As the site records must have been extensively worked over to produce the pottery groupings, it would have taken little further effort to produce a conventional report on the site. I suspect that current fashion dictates otherwise. One or two other editorial follies should be noted, particularly in view of the high unit cost of the monograph. Principal amongst these is the extensive waste of page space, with some pages at best only half used. For instance, the location plan ought to have been reduced and combined with the site plan, and many of the

pottery plates could have been more economically arranged. The two tables at the end could have effectively been set in much smaller type.

It is a shame that such a fine piece of work should be marred by editorial policy, or the lack of it, and it is to be hoped that the future publications of the Lincoln Archaeological Trust bear this in mind. All students of medieval pottery ought to look closely at this monograph and learn something from it. If more work of this quality were produced, the discipline of medieval pottery studies would be greatly enhanced. My only fear is that, as a pottery monograph with no other site details, it may only reach the already converted and not the medieval archaeologist at large.

GLYN COPPACK

An Historical Atlas of Scotland c.400–c.1600. Edited by Peter McNeill and Ranald Nicholson. 21 × 28 cm. 213 pp., 129 figs. St Andrews: Atlas Committee of the Conference of Scottish Medievalists, University of St Andrews, 1975. Price £2.50.

This volume provides a welcome and much needed addition to the list of reference books available on Scottish medieval history and the range of topics covered includes archaeological and place-name distributions, the political evolution of the various regions of Scotland, castles, wars, aspects of trades and, of course, ecclesiastical matters which take up a disproportionate one third of the volume. This, however, reflects the availability of mappable data and the scope of the volume should thus attract a far wider readership than only pure historians.

Every compiler of a topical atlas faces an agonizing problem in deciding whether to produce simply a volume of titled maps or whether to add a text to accompany them, knowing full well that the space available for text for each map will be so limited that it most likely ends up so simplified as to appear facile. The editors have successfully overcome this problem by introducing the atlas with ninety pages of small print in which each contributor provides an introduction either to a single map or to a small group of maps. These texts are each supplemented by a very useful basic bibliography. Read as a continuous narrative these provide a valuable and up-to-date concise history of Scotland, made more complete by the fact that the editors have added short linking sections in italics between the texts to cover gaps where there was no mappable material.

The second part of the volume contains 129 maps, produced to a more or less uniform cartographic style at A4 size. The maps are clear and easily interpreted. Indeed, it could be argued that the concept of one idea to one map is taken too far and that a distribution, for example, of four places (Map 62) is hardly worth a map. Combinations of items on a single map could be extremly useful for comparative purposes (e.g. Maps 84 and 85). Colour is used on only one map (Map 74) where the height of the land is shown as an orange brown shading. This could have been used to better advantage on other maps, and would not have added greatly to cost as the whole work is produced by offset litho techniques.

Man's activities throughout the medieval period were at least in part affected by the physical environment and it is disappointing to see only two maps devoted to aspects of the Scottish landscape. Map 1 claims to show physical features while in fact only showing the height of the land and Map 2 attempts very inaccurately to divide Scotland into areas of best, medium and harsh land. Surely it would have been more valuable to produce maps giving basic information on climate, soils, distribution of forests, bogs, and marshes and similar limiting factors to human activity. These criticisms are minor, however, in relation to the value of the volume as a whole which is an essential addition to the libraries of all Scottish historians and immediately begs the question, "Who is to map the next three hundred years?".

ALAN SMALL

An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Glamorgan. Vol. 1: *Pre-Norman* — Part 1, *The Stone and Bronze Ages*; Part 2, *The Iron Age and Roman Occupation*; Part 3, *The Early Christian Period.* Cardiff: H.M.S.O. for Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales. Prices £9.50, £9.50 and £7.00 respectively.

This is the first Welsh Royal Commission *Inventory* to depart from the traditional grouping of sites and buildings of all types and periods by parishes. Under the new system, sites of a type are grouped together, each of the resulting sections being preceded by a general discussion. This arrangement has obvious advantages, making possible volumes (or parts in this case) devoted to single chronological periods, which are easier to handle and use, can be produced more rapidly, and are better value for money for the specialist. It is intended to complete the Glamorgan *Inventory* in four further volumes, which will deal with ecclesiastical buildings, castles and other defensive works, domestic buildings, and industrial and other late structures.

Glamorgan, especially its coastal plain (the 'Vale'), whose light soils and easy terrain have attracted settlement from earliest times, is rich in antiquities. This essential feature of the county's settlement history is graphically illustrated throughout the volume by the plotting of distributions on the same excellent coloured base-map, based on earlier published soil studies, which shows impervious, semi-permeable and freely drained soils with an over-printed hatching to indicate relief. Readers of this journal will most require an appraisal of Part 3, *The Early Christian Period*, although, as will emerge, they should beware of confining themselves to that part alone.

Part 3 opens with a section on communications, which demonstrates the continuing use of the network of Roman military roads: the highway traversing the Vale between Cardiff and Loughor, from which at Cardiff and Neath roads strike N. along the main upland ridgeways towards Brecon. These were long-distance routes, and it is clear that they were supplemented in all areas by other long-established trackways. In the uplands these can be indicated by the presence of inscribed or cross-decorated stones, some on chapel sites whose origins are almost certainly earlier. In a number of cases the use of these routes in this period is indicated by the presence of cross-ridge dykes, described in a most valuable section. Three out of a total of twelve have small earthwork enclosures in their vicinity. All face N., and perhaps mark the limits of the upland grazing belonging to lowland estates.

With the exception of Dinas Powys, evidence for settlement is extremely rare, but even so domestic remains receive a somewhat perfunctory treatment in a brief statement of under three hundred words. Even Dinas Powys is not accorded a standard form of entry, but is given a very summary description, the buildings being described as 'probably founded on sleeper beams so that the walls have left no trace', with no indication that the excavation report sets out good reasons for thinking that they were of stone. Readers are referred to Part 1 for an account of the evidence for the dark age occupation of the Lesser Garth and Minchin Hole caves, but not to Culver Hole or Bacon Hole, both of which have produced important objects of the period.

There follows an admirable section on early monastic sites, including Burry Holms, where the evidence is derived from the Commission's own notable excavation. No structures associated with these establishments exist above ground, their identification depending on literary sources, place-names or the presence of significant concentrations of stone memorials.

Early Christian monuments form by far the largest class of remains dealt with, accounting for 148 out of the book's 175 entries, and taking up 29 out of its 30 plates. This is a notable survey, and the first major discussion of any Welsh group of these monuments since the publication of Nash Williams's *corpus* over a quarter of a century ago. Since then there have been several new finds, all of which (to 1975) are described. In addition two lost inscriptions, known only from early transcriptions, are published and discussed. Much care has been devoted to the study of the inscriptions, including the

scrupulous re-drawing of several of the more obscure ones, which has lead to some minor corrections (nos. 841, 926, 907, 935). Good use has been made of Edward Lhuyd's notes and sketches in the Stowe MS to show that two of Nash Williams's fragments (his nos. 210 and 250) are parts of the same cross (no. 903), reputedly found in a hill-top cist, while other Lhuyd sketches indicate the original forms of incomplete crosses from Merthyr Mawr and Llandough (nos. 927 and 938). Both England and the Irish Sea area can be seen to have contributed to the sculptural traditions represented. Of particular interest are the twelve 'panelled-cross' slabs, the only group that can be claimed to represent a sustained development amounting to the work of a local school. Several cultural strands can be seen in this group, particularly in its later, hybrid monuments (nos. 924 and 925), notably a southern Scottish element seen in a slab from Margam (no. 910), which is strikingly like some of the 9th-century Whithorn cross-slabs, though this is not the only southern Scottish element noted. Standing apart from the stones of the earlier tradition are the *Inventory*'s Class G, twenty-eight headstones and grave-stones of the 11th and 12th century, a class little more than sampled by Nash Williams, many of which have not been previously noticed. Outside the Christian tradition is the remarkable pagan cult site at Castellau, with its carved heads, here published for the first time (no. 992).

Each part is good to look at and a pleasure to use, though a heavier type-face for the entry headings would have made for easier reference, as would references to items on the plates by their inventory numbers instead of by letters needing further decoding. The plates in Parts 1 and 2 are of an extremely high standard, and include many out-standing aerial views; those in Part 3 are sometimes wanting in clarity, partly because, unlike the others, they are printed on matt paper.

The chronological arrangement of the volume is to be welcomed, though anomalies can arise where types of site span more than one period: e.g. the 'smaller univallate forts' described and discussed in the context of the Iron Age in Part 2 include Dinas Powys, while under 'later earthworks' in the same section there is a brief survey of ring-work castles, which might be missed by the unwary. Individual sites occupied over more than one period present a further difficulty: the intention is to describe the features of a site relevant to the period of a volume, but this has not always been achieved, as we have seen. There is a danger in trying to pack chronological boxes too neatly: it would have been convenient, for instance, to have included in the early Christian monument entries details of the chapel sites, later though they might be, at or near which nos. 842, 850, 881 and 892 were found, and also details of the circular earthworks — *are* they bronze age cairns? — associated with nos. 848 and 903 (as was done in the case of no. 842). But these are minor matters when weighed against the advantages of the new arrangement.

J. M. LEWIS

Techniques of Archaeological Excavation. By P. Barker. 25 × 19 cm. 279 pp., 86 illustrations, end-papers. Batsford, 1977. Price Hardback £8.95, Paperback £4.75.

In his preface, Mr Barker confesses that his book has 'a somewhat autobiographical air'. He has no need to apologize, for this is largely its strength. Mr Barker is well known to medieval scholars as a meticulous, fastidious and thoughtful excavator of timber buildings, especially those of an evanescent character. The book he has written reflects both his technical skills and the thought which he devotes to all his work, both at the trowel-point, and at the widest levels. To the archaeological public at large, he is best known as the founding Secretary of the Rescue Trust for British Archaeology. Consonant with this, his book is informed by a reasoned concern for salvage archaeology and for the needs of very large-scale excavations.

There is, however, another of the author's self-deprecatory comments which is very much to the point. In the introductory chapter, he says 'This book does not pretend to be the *Compleat Excavator*'. It is important that beginners in archaeology, who may well seize on it as a comprehensive manual of techniques, should appreciate the weight of this disclaimer. Barker makes no attempt to cover the whole range of the archaeological problems and relevant techniques which arise even in Britain. He is particularly weak on the excavation of masonry structures. Even within his chosen fields, he is often content to refer the reader to existing publications, whenever they cover the topic adequately. Because he is not aiming to be all-embracing, his greatest strength lies in his little asides, often of a wry and intimate nature. Here we can often visualize the precise circumstances or dilemma which provoked a particular comment.

If one has reservations about the book, they concern the possible effect of its bitter-sweet flavour on an absolute novice. In fact, a would-be beginner of real sensibility would never dare disturb the ground at all after reading Barker: he would be too much aware of the myriad ways in which the excavator destroys his evidence. By the same token, this is the best possible manual to present to the confident undergraduate who feels, at the end of his second summer in the field, that he knows all the answers and is quite ready to take over from the director.

Barker's overall emphasis is on open-area excavation. In this respect, he reflects very well the extent to which, in Britain, it has been the medievalists who have developed the 'planum' method of excavation, originally pioneered on iron age sites in Scandinavia and the Low Countries. But while we might dismiss as pathetic many continental attempts to reconstruct a stratigraphic section from an open excavation, Barker rightly emphasizes that a credible and comprehensible section must be published at the end of the day. To this end, he discusses, at a quite unusual level of intensity, the art of trowelling. His analysis of the dissection of small features is also first rate, especially because he is not afraid to point out that a buried feature is not immutable: it shifts and slumps and weathers underground.

His emphasis on the veridical section is based, of course, on his belief that the vertical sequence is the necessary key to structural and cultural development and to chronology. The core of the book, a chapter on interpretation — which means essentially stratigraphic interpretation — is quite excellent. The reader is led gently through the simplest kind of formal stratigraphic analysis to the intricacies of the Winchester–Harris matrix. This introduction to schematic stratification is safe even for a tyro, because it is embedded in a book richly furnished with verisimilitudinous section drawings. Barker also introduces suitable horror stories about stratigraphically misplaced finds. But his outstanding contribution on stratification is his lucid and logical exposition of the principles of the *terminus post quem* and the *terminus ante quem*: probably the finest statement of these principles in an English-language manual of archaeology.

In this, as elsewhere, Barker judiciously blends well-founded conventional wisdom with more recent concepts and techniques. He is well aware of the traditions and development of excavational archaeology in western Europe, as his end-papers show: Pitt Rivers's plan of Rotherly at the front, van Es's of Wijster at the back. Nevertheless, the book as a whole could only have been written in the context of large-scale salvage excavations over the past decade. This is well reflected by the frontispiece, which shows the excavation of the baths basilica at Wroxeter. Correspondingly, the sub-chapter on site organization deals not only with logistics and discipline, but also with the legal requirements of safety, with cost effectiveness, and with 'providing an optimum micro-climate'. This means sheltering both the dig and the diggers, so that excavation can become an all-weather process. We may contrast Wheeler's offer of 'a bucket of hot tea on a wet day'.

Necessarily, a full chapter is devoted to rescue and salvage excavation. This must have been extremely painful to write, for Barker would not take it amiss to be described as one of the most unhurried directors in the game: one who likes to expose a single

layer each season, and then spends the winter thinking about it. Who, therefore, could be more aware of the problems posed by emergency excavations conducted against a tight time schedule? Who could write with greater sensitivity about these problems? Barker's suggestions on the appropriate techniques and safeguards deserve to be followed. More than that: his whole discussion of the rescue dilemma must be pondered, and deeply, by all concerned with salvage archaeology in Britain — not least in the medieval field.

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The following publications have also been received:

Gloucestershire: Vol. 1. *Iron Age and Romano-British Monuments in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds.* 22 × 28 cm. 157 pp., frontisp. + 68 pls., numerous figs., 4 maps. London: H.M.S.O. for Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), 1977. Price £25.00.

Aus der Sammlung des Seminars für Ur- und Frühgeschichte des Universität Munster (Munstersche Beiträge zur Ur-und Frühgeschichte, Veroffentlichungen des Seminars für Ur- und Frühgeschichte des Westfälischen Wilhelm-Universität, Münster, vol. 9). Edited by Karl J. Narr. 21 × 29.5 cm., 209 pp., numerous figs. Hildesheim, 1976. Price 29.80 DM.

Anglo-Saxon Coins in the National Museum of Wales. By D. W. Dykes. 18.5 × 24.5 cm. 31 pp., numerous figs. Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1977. Price 70p plus postage.

Llantrithyd: a ring-work in S. Glamorgan. By Cardiff Archaeological Society (various contributors). 21 × 29.5 cm. 81 pp., 2 pls., numerous figs. Cardiff: Cardiff Archaeological Society, 1977. Price £3.00 plus postage from Staff Tutor in Archaeology, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University College, Cardiff, 38 and 40 Park Place, Cardiff CF1 3BB.

'West Bromwich Manor House' (extracted from *Transactions of the S. Staffordshire Archaeol. & Hist. Soc.*, XVII (1975–6). By S. R. Jones. 18.5 × 24 cm. 63 pp., 26 pls., 15 figs. Price £2.50 from J. W. Whiston, 58 Wednesbury Road, Walsall, W. Midlands WS1 3RS.

The Southampton Terrier of 1454 (Southampton Records Series, XV). Edited by L. A. Burgess. 15.5 × 24.5 cm. 172 pp. London: H.M.S.O. for Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1976. Price £3.00 subscribers, £5.00 institutions.

The Town of Stamford. 22.5 × 28.5 cm. 182 pp., frontisp. + 163 pls., 212 figs., 1 map. London: H.M.S.O. for Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), 1977. Price £25.00.

Godmanchester (Cambridge town, gown and country, vol. 18). By H. J. M. Green. 15 × 21 cm. 48 pp., 21 figs. Cambridge: Oleander Press, 1977. Price £1.30.

Medieval Cambridgeshire (Cambridge town, gown and country, vol. 15). By H. C. Darby. 15 × 21 cm. 48 pp., 13 figs. Cambridge: Oleander Press, 1976. Price £1.30.

Rural Settlement in Britain. By Brian K. Roberts. 14 × 22.5 cm. 221 pp., 48 figs. Folkestone: Dawson, Archon Books, 1977. Price £6.00.

Rare Brass Rubbings from the Ashmolean Collection. By J. Bertram. 14 × 21.5 cm. Unnumbered pp., 17 figs. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1977. Price 75p.

Notes on Brass Rubbing. 7th edition. Revised by H. W. Catling. 14 × 21.5 cm. 89 pp., 10 figs. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1976. Price 75p.

Lexikon des Mittelalters, vol. 1, fascicule 1, Aachen–Ägypten. 18.5 × 27.5 cm. 112 pp. München and Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1977. Subscription price (valid until completion of vol. 1) 32 DM. Linen covers for each volume, *c.* 18 DM.

Approaches to Archaeology. By Peter Fowler. 19 × 25 cm. 203 pp., numerous pls. and figs. London: A. & C. Black, 1977. Price £6.50.

The Common Fields of Culture. By Axel Steensberg. 15.5 × 22.5 cm. 110 pp., numerous figs. Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1976. Price 54.80 D.kr.

From Viking Ship to Victory. 21 × 14.5 cm. 48 pp., numerous figs. London: H.M.S.O. for Trustees of the National Maritime Museum, 1977. Price 75p.

Ex Horreo; IPP 1951–1976. Edited by B. L. van Beek, R. W. Brandt and W. Groenman-van Waateringe. 20 × 27 cm. 302 pp., numerous figs. Amsterdam: Albert Egges van Giffen Instituut voor Prae- en Protohistorie, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1977. Price 45 D.fl.