

Reviews

The Anglo-Saxon Church. Papers on history, architecture and archaeology in honour of Dr H. M. Taylor. (C.B.A. Research Report, 60). Edited by L. A. S. Butler and R. K. Morris. 21 × 30 cm. xi + 226 pp., 144 figs. and pls. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1986. Price £25.00.

In the autumn of 1983 a number of distinguished historians and archaeologists, united by a common admiration of the work of Dr H. M. Taylor, met in Cambridge in a conference designed to do him honour. Twenty-two members, singly or conjointly, contributed papers which are now published in this volume. The result is a book distinguished by highly original research, wide learning, and illuminating photographs, maps and drawings — a book which should be of interest to every student of the ecclesiastical history and archaeology of Great Britain and Ireland.

Dr Taylor himself is a true polymath, justly renowned for the width, as well as the depth, of his interests. The Cambridge symposium therefore brought together scholars in three fields: historians; students of the architecture, decoration and furnishing of church buildings; and archaeologists. It is clearly impossible to define hard and fast boundaries between the three types of work — the cult of a saint was bound to influence the way in which his church was constructed and furnished, while the distribution of archaeological sites may indicate the growth of political power within a kingdom as well as the location of its religious communities. All that can be attempted in a brief review is to indicate, however inadequately, the subjects to which the contributors have applied such a wealth of learned exposition.

Among the historians, C. N. L. Brooke provides the historical background of Dr Taylor's life, and stresses, rightly, the seminal quality of his work, which is producing so rich a harvest among his friends and students. Martin Biddle (wearing on this occasion his historical rather than his archaeological hat), David Rollason, Lawrence Butler and Ian Wood all, in different ways, study the cult of saints, their relics and the festivals held in their honour, and show how these influenced the growth of churches, and reflected the beliefs and interests of early medieval society, in Western Europe as well as in pre-Conquest England. Philip Rahtz and Lorna Watts provide, in their account of a present-day pilgrimage to Lourdes and Santiago de Compostela, a most interesting study of the modern veneration accorded to holy places. Charles Thomas, in his paper on Christian origins, postulates the survival of a large number of wooden churches in post-Roman Britain, and suggests that British Christianity was a much more powerful force than Bede was prepared to admit. He also thinks that such wooden churches were copied in Ireland — an idea which is supported by the interesting essay contributed by Michael Hare and Ann Hamlin, who emphasize the comparatively late date of even the earliest of Irish stone churches. Olaf Olsen, studying the apparent lack of continuity between pagan and Christian holy places in Scandinavia, puts forward the eminently reasonable suggestion that pagan sacrificial feasts probably took the form of parties held in a chieftain's hall, which even a devout convert to the White Christ would hardly be willing to relinquish for pious uses.

Combining a documentary with an archaeological approach, Hugh Richmond studies the early churches of Northamptonshire, and suggests that further investigation may bring to light even more foundations dating from the Anglo-Saxon period. Richard Morris suggests a probable site for Alcuin's lost church of the Holy Wisdom in York, and Carolyn Heighway

and Richard Bryant trace the successive stages of the rebuilding of St Oswald's, Gloucester, back to a probable foundation in the time of Æthelflaed, Lady of the Mercians. Richard Gem's interesting study of the various periods of Anglo-Saxon architecture suggests a much more productive era of church-building in the 9th century than has previously been recognized. Warwick Rodwell, who stresses the importance of timber building in determining the forms of Anglo-Saxon architecture, provides a fascinating insight into the work of the masons themselves, from the erection of scaffolding to the problems encountered in building a tower made of flints.

Nor are the interiors of churches neglected. David Parsons, in his study of piscinas and ablution-drains, and their use as evidence for the siting of the altar, throws light upon the way in which priests disposed of such waste material as was too holy for the ordinary scrap-heap. Rosemary Cramp, from her unrivalled knowledge of early Northumbrian and Mercian churches and crosses, illustrates the strength of the native tradition in the field of sculpture and the more lasting articles of ecclesiastical furniture. Carol Heitz, in an essay on the iconography of architectural forms, turns to manuscript illuminations to depict the way in which representations of Christ's resurrection and of his ascension to the heavenly Jerusalem were symbolically presented to the faithful in the architecture and furnishings of the churches in which they worshipped. Finally, Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle, in her interpretation of Cenwalh's Old Minster at Winchester, now completely destroyed, and C.J. Brooke, in his use of 'remote sensing' to recover by photographic or electronic means architectural features not normally apparent to the human eye, take us to the frontiers of new developments in the study of very ancient buildings.

This is a very valuable collection of essays, and a worthy tribute to the man whose work as a scholar and teacher provided the inspiration which produced it.

ROSALIND HILL

An Anglo-Saxon Inhumation Cemetery at Sewerby, East Yorkshire (York University Archaeological Publications 4). By Susan M. Hirst. 21 × 30 cm. 172 pp., 89 figs., 10 pls., 14 tables, microfiche, colour microfiche. York: York University Department of Archaeology, 1985. Price: £17.00.

This is the first published report on a modern excavation of an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Yorkshire and as such is most welcome. Sewerby is famous, or rather notorious, for the double female burial in graves 41 and 49. Apparently the upper prone burial is that of an older woman buried alive, most probably as punishment for a crime, or so it is argued by Susan Hirst. Perhaps this woman was considered to have been responsible for the death of the rich young lady buried beneath her, whether directly by murder or indirectly by witchcraft. Debate on this issue will doubtless continue, and there are a number of still unpublished and recently excavated prone burials to consider, some of whom may also have been buried alive.

A foretaste of the analysis applied in the Sewerby report was provided by its author in her contribution to *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries* (Brit. Archaeol. Rep. Brit. Ser. 82, 1980) and this can now be related to the grave plans, inventories and the finds illustrations. She has chosen a simple but effective way of measuring relative social status in the cemetery based on counting the number of types of artefact in each grave. For the purposes of this exercise, only undisturbed graves which had been excavated by archaeologists were considered, giving a sample of just 39 from the 59 graves recorded. Even the total of 59 represents at best half or perhaps only a third of the complete cemetery, for the excavations of 1958–59 and 1974 did not define any limits to the cemetery. Nevertheless, this is a workable sample which can produce results of value, though not comparable to those which would be obtained from the

complete or near complete excavation of a community in death. Hirst demonstrates the types of approach which can provide the maximum information from such a cemetery sample, and excavators of similar sites should consider adopting her report as a model, from which they can develop their own contribution.

The printed text comes in four sections, each with its own notes at the end of the section. This is an arrangement which has drawbacks and it seems preferable to place all the notes together towards the end of the volume with a single running number sequence, if footnoting can no longer be afforded. The first section provides the regional context of the former East Riding in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. Next comes the location and excavation of the site, and thirdly the layout of the excavated cemetery and the evidence for burial practices, including a summary of the skeletal evidence. By far the longest section is the last with its discussion of the grave finds, considering especially their chronology and their value as indicators of relative social status. Line drawings of the grave finds and a few unstratified finds, the grave plans and a series of cemetery plans illustrating various distribution patterns are placed at the back of the volume, together with a small group of black and white plates. The remainder of the report is presented on microfiche following current HBMC policy. A standard fiche is divided into seven sections: a grave inventory (66 frames), an inventory of unstratified finds (1), a short metallurgical report (2), an inventory of the beads (17), an inventory of excavated features other than graves (8), an account of the colour photography of beads (3), and a bibliography with just 4 items (1). The last surely might have been incorporated into the printed bibliography.

To what extent does the use of microfiche represent a lowering of the standards to be found in the well-subsidized German excavation reports of contemporary Frankish and Alamannic cemeteries? The normal layout of such a report is a double volume with an introduction to the site and discussion of its excavation and the finds in its first volume, while a grave inventory and other catalogues share the second volume with line drawings and plates of the grave assemblages, plans, etc. Certainly it is important to keep down the price of a report, but it was probably a mistake to relegate the Sewerby grave inventory to the fiche. Such an inventory is a key element in any cemetery report and Table XIII with its basic list of the grave finds cannot be considered an adequate substitute. Anyone making serious use of the report will have to consider either getting a printout made from this section of the fiche, or else limiting their study to library opening hours. The 66 frames are of an A4 double spaced typescript, but if space-saving devices such as a smaller typeface, single spacing and double column had been adopted, I doubt if they would have taken up more than 20 pages of text and thus added only marginally to the final cost of the report. It should also be noted that a deliberate policy to illustrate only a selection of beads from each assemblage on figs. 33–58, based on a type series for the whole cemetery, means that these figures do not actually present a complete record of every artefact from each grave. Admittedly, some reconstructable strings of beads are fully illustrated on figs. 25–27 in the main text, but the need for a full grave inventory in the printed volume remains a valid one.

To balance this negative aspect, full approval is offered here for the imaginative and cheap use of colour microfiche to reproduce 55 colour slides of glass beads from Sewerby. Leo Biek and Justine Bayley pioneered the use of colour microfiche to illustrate glass in their 1979 *World Archaeology* article and have done so here again. Their contribution is probably the most significant and interesting of the specialist reports in the Sewerby volume and should be consulted by anyone preparing a report on early Anglo-Saxon beads. This effective use of microfiche could be extended in the future to include a wide range of photographic illustrations, such as radiographs, which would normally be considered too expensive to print conventionally.

Turning from the format to the subject matter of the report, it is clear that the discussion of finds was prepared a few years before the eventual publication. The lack of reference to John Hines, *The Scandinavian Character of Anglian England* (Brit. Archaeol. Rep. Brit. Ser. 124, 1984) and to Heiko Steuwer's article on girdle hangers and keys in *Studien zur Sachsenforschung*, 3 (1982) are thus explained. This and the occasional instance when an accessible published

reference has been missed are understandable enough. Thus George Speake's opinion that the Occaney brooch pair provide good parallel for the Grave 24 penannular brooch is quoted, but not the published illustration of an Occaney brooch in his *Anglo-Saxon Animal Art* (1980), fig. 11. Susan Hirst is well aware that the case she makes for a 5th-century date for Graves 5 and 56 amounts to special pleading. Not only are the two graves located at opposite ends of the excavated area, but the pot in Grave 5 is not closely datable and the kidney-shaped buckle from Grave 56 belongs to a type which can be buried in the early 6th century as well as in the 5th. On the other hand, the graves of her phases 2, 3 and 4 do provide a plausible southwards shift of burial over time on the fig. 86 plan. The dates offered for phases 2 and 3 are derived from Hayo Vierck's 1977 paper on Anglian chronology (in *Archäologische Beiträge zur Chronologie der Völkerwanderungszeit*, eds. G. Kossack and J. Reichstein, pp. 42–52), but the precise limits of this dating scheme are less important than the relative sequence they represent in the 6th century. Phase 2 graves contain cruciform brooches of Groups II–IV and the two graves of phase 3 contain large relief bow brooches with bichrome ornament. Finally, there are the two adjacent phase 4 graves, 23 and 24, the latter with a Style II ornamented penannular brooch, which may well imply continuity of burial into the 7th century.

So in conclusion, this report ably fills a major gap and it is to be hoped that it will be supplemented in the not too distant future by the publication of two rather more recent excavations. One is of the extensive cemetery of West Heslerton in the Vale of Pickering directed by Dominic Powlesland, the other the near complete cemetery at Norton on Tees in neighbouring Cleveland under the direction of Steve Sherlock.

MARTIN G. WELCH

Excavations at Portway, Andover 1973–1975 (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph No. 4). By Alison M. Cook and Maxwell M. Dacre. 21 × 30 cm. 113 pp., 53 pp. figs., 17 b. & w. pls., 1 colour pl. Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1985. Price: £21.00.

This attractively produced volume is of considerable importance for the archaeology of Hampshire. Its first, and smaller, part deals with the location, survey and sectioning of the ring ditches of six Middle Bronze-Age round barrows and the excavation of substantial lengths of an apparently Iron-Age linear ditch. Those excavations located an Anglo-Saxon cemetery of 69 inhumations and a maximum of 87 cremations, with artefact dating suggesting use of the site from the late 5th or early 6th century throughout the 6th century. (A second cemetery of 7th-century date *c.* 800 m. to the west is not reported here). The cemetery is amply reported and there are specialist reports on the human remains (C. Wells and J. Henderson), glass beads and the composition of copper-alloy objects (J. Bayley), textiles (E. Crowfoot), annular and quoit brooches (B. M. Ager) and pot stamps (T. Briscoe). There is also a discussion of the cemetery plan and methods of burial (10 pp.) and of the grave goods (33 pp.).

The warning that the discussion is deliberately abridged appears not to apply to the grave goods section: this is a conventional report emphasizing grave goods and chronology. Abridgement is more evident, however, in the cemetery discussion and two important matters have received short shrift. First, whether this is a virtually complete cemetery as claimed. Cook suggests cremations at least are under-represented since there is obvious plough damage; furthermore it is not clear from the plan that a large enough margin of negative ground was excavated to be sure that the limits of the cemetery had indeed been reached (e.g. in the SE.) and it would have helped to see a plan showing the subsequent factory development in relation to the cemetery. More importantly the argument that the linear ditch forms the E. boundary seems faulty. It hinges on evidence for recutting of the

ditch (A) in the area of the cemetery and, at the S. end of the cemetery, a complete realignment further east (ditch B) at a point where ditch A had widened out into a sump and completely silted up. Dacre's conclusions on the relationship between ditch and cemetery are assumed by Cook and the evidence for the dating of the ditch is not presented fully (though a future, separate, re-evaluation is promised). However, from the evidence given it is difficult to justify the leap from p. 13 column 1, where ditch B is dated to the late Roman or Saxon period (though with no evidence for it being Saxon), to p. 13 column 2 where it is argued that no bank can have survived into the Saxon period or ditch B would not have been recut so far east of the original line. The finding of Anglo-Saxon pottery and six burials in the fill is taken as further evidence of the importance of the ditch to the Anglo-Saxons and of its being still open. Yet the sherds lie within the uppermost ditch fill, which is interpreted as being the result of solifluction during a long period of ploughing and, to judge from the sections, the graves were dug from about the same level: all suggesting a very nearly silted-up, rather than an open, ditch. Thus it appears more likely that ditch B was dug in Roman times on a deliberately different alignment to avoid the wet area of the former sump. At the same time the original bank was perhaps removed in the area west of ditch B as no longer being on the correct alignment. Hence when the Anglo-Saxons chose this as a cemetery site the surviving bank at the NE. end of the site provided a natural obstacle to grave digging and thus the boundary to the site, while at the SE. end no such obstacle existed and graves/cremation pits were dug up to the edge of ditch A in places, between the two ditches, some in the fill of ditch B (attractive because of the easier digging) and indeed one grave at least was dug east of ditch B. Thus, instead of being forced to suggest that the single grave east of the ditch belonged to a different Saxon settlement (*sic!*), we might conclude that the boundary was still known to the Anglo-Saxons as a surviving bank to the north and a largely silted ditch in the south, but that it was not so significant a boundary that it could not be encroached upon and indeed crossed. Clearly a much more detailed exposition of the evidence is required to justify the claim of continuity of land boundary/territory made here.

There are some further points which suggest a lack of time and/or overall editing. For example, there are missing headings, references not uniformly updated, typographical errors (p. 77 line 7 should surely read penannular not annular), and no description in the inventory of grave 3, objects 3 and 4. Figure 26 would have meant much more if the graves in each column had been arranged in order of (e.g.) earliest possible date, rather than in numerical order. In the finds section not enough attention has perhaps been given to some of the simpler objects. Several unidentified bronze clips (4/3, 33/12-16 and 59/3) plus the objects suggested as being attached to a coffin lining in grave 41 (41/9) are almost certainly repair fittings from wooden vessels (e.g. S. M. Hirst, *An Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Sewerby, East Yorkshire* (1985), 94 [reviewed, above]). Amongst the items discussed under 'girdle groups' and assumed to have been in bags/purses are a number of what appear from the illustrations to be parts of iron brooches: for example grave 19 object 3, a ?iron penannular brooch; grave 32 object 8, an annular brooch, and object 5, a brooch pin; grave 44 object 50, an annular brooch with remains of a pin; grave 67 object 7, a corroded and damaged brooch pin. If the drawings are misleading they should have been corrected; if not at least a possible identification could have been added (and further examination of objects and X-radiographs would probably have clarified the position).

If it is now thought financially impossible and academically undesirable (because of the inevitable delays) to produce full cemetery reports on the German model, then it is to be hoped that future work concentrates on publishing the basic and supporting data accurately. Undoubtedly the model should be the third Spong Hill report (*The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham. Part III: Catalogue of Inhumations* (E. Anglian Archaeol., 21). By C. Hills, K. Penn, and R. Rickett (1984)), with its excellent nine-page discussion usefully summarizing, and briefly commenting upon, the cemetery data which form the bulk of the volume.

The Archaeology of York: Fascicules published for the York Archaeological Trust by the Council for British Archaeology. All 19 × 25 cm.

2/1 R. B. Dobson and Sara Donaghey, *The History of Clementhorpe Nunnery* (1984). 40 pp., 6 pls. Price: £4.95.

8/1 Joan Moulden and Dominic Tweddle, *Anglo-Scandinavian Settlement South-West of the Ouse* (1986). 72 pp., 8 pls. Price: £7.95.

14/5 H. K. Kenward *et al.*, *Environmental Evidence from a Roman Well and Anglian Pits in the Legionary Fortress* (1986). 47 pp., 1 fiche. Price: £6.50.

15/1 T. P. O'Connor, *Selected Groups of Bones from Skeldergate and Walmgate* (1984). 60 pp., 2 pls. Price: £5.75.

17/3 Arthur MacGregor, *Anglo-Scandinavian Finds from Lloyds Bank, Pavement, and Other Sites* (1982). 174 pp., 6 pls. Price: £6.50.

17/4 Dominic Tweddle, *Finds from Parliament Street and Other Sites in the City Centre* (1986). 107 pp., 14 pls. Price: £9.95.

18/1 E. J. E. Pirie, *Post-Roman Coins from York Excavations 1971-81* (1986). 83 pp., 20 pls. Price: £9.50.

The policy of publishing fascicules of this kind, rather than site reports or thematic monographs, was decided on early in the York Archaeological Trust's life. The fascicules are parts of nineteen volumes, each of which deals with an archaeological or historical theme relevant to York. These include period studies (e.g. *Anglo-Scandinavian York*), area studies (e.g. *The Colonia*), aspects of a period (e.g. *The Roman Cemeteries*), volumes relating to the environment, finds principles and methods, and historical (i.e. written) sources.

Fascicules are a convenient way of making available particular aspects or parts of each volume as the material is ready, rather than waiting for the whole. There was earlier perhaps a tendency to publish in hard print in individual fascicules more than would have been included in a single volume produced at one time; but the use of microfiche and other methods will increasingly be used to keep down costs. Even so when the last fascicule of the last volume finally appears (and what a day that will be!) there will be a formidable shelf-length of *The Archaeology of York*, which will be no more than such an important city and its splendid archaeologists warrant. Twenty-two fascicules have now been published, and these eight are among the most recent. Several dozen more are in preparation.

Excavations at Clementhorpe Nunnery provided Professor Dobson and Sara Donaghey with the opportunity not only to review the detailed history of this area of York, but to consider the estates and economy of such a minor house in Yorkshire. There is a possibility of an earlier church on the site in Anglo-Scandinavian times, itself partly constructed on the foundation of a ruined Roman town-house. The nunnery was founded in the 1130s by Archbishop Thurstan and was dissolved in 1536. This fascicule is full of racy stories about nuns and others, and provides an excellent case-study on the aspects of a site which archaeology cannot illumine.

Moulden and Tweddle, in the first fascicule of *Anglo-Scandinavian York*, provide the background to all discoveries south-west of the River Ouse: the Roman background, the earlier archaeology, a catalogue of sites and discoveries, and the summary results of excavations at Skeldergate, Bishophill and Clementhorpe. This publication (together with the Lloyds Bank site, below) pave the way for Richard Hall's great Coppergate studies, and help to put into perspective the important recent discovery of Eoferwic, the Anglian settlement of York, by Richard Kemp at the Redfearn Glass site. This is very much a case where new discoveries outstrip earlier discussions.

The Trust was responsible for the foundation of the Environmental Archaeology Laboratory (E.A.U.) in the University of York; this is now one of the best-equipped and staffed of such organizations in Britain. The waterlogged and deep deposits provide them with a mass of material of very diverse kinds, indeed more than anyone could possibly examine. Decisions have to be made about what is worth detailed analysis, what can be

systematically sampled, and what can (even with regret) be discarded. The staff of the E.A.U. are prolific publishers, mostly of short papers in scientific journals, outside the scope of *The Archaeology of York*. Wider aspects of the environment of York have already appeared in the fascicule series (Vol. 14, 1-4); this new one (14/5) deals with the first substantial plant and insect assemblages from Roman deposits within the fortress, and samples from Anglian deposits in the same area (the Bedern). The Roman material came from a timber-lined well; it includes over 150 different plant taxa, many mosses, algae, and over 200 species of insect; bones of animals (including dog and mouse) and sea and freshwater fish. These finds are relevant in some cases to changing climate, but they are especially informative on the wide diversity of habitats, not all of which of course need have been in or near York. There is a very good discussion of site-formation process: how all this material found its way into the well. Evidence directly related to human activity includes grain and grain-pests; fruit and nuts, and items probably related to faeces.

The range of material examined over the years by the E.A.U. now allows detailed comparison of deposits in York of different periods, and between York and other sites. In this fascicule direct comparison can be made between the Roman well assemblage and that from Anglian pits on the same site. The latter suggests a 'waste-ground environment' within the fortress area. There is 'nothing to suggest urban life'. The site had perhaps become marshy due to the failure of the Roman sewer system. Such evidence is highly evocative of the changes in this part of York and the perennial debate on 'urban continuity'.

Animal bones are numerous and important in the archaeology of York, and so they have a separate volume, of which Terry O'Connor's new fascicule is the first part. The material is from excavations in Skeldergate and Walmgate. Discussions on the archaeological contexts are followed by an interesting section on the principles of sampling and analysis. The bones discussed are of all periods, and range from a group from a Roman well at Skeldergate to a late medieval cess-pit on the same site. Cattle and sheep form the major topics for discussion, but there are also pigs and dogs, and an astonishing variety of birds, including a turkey, first imported to Britain in the 1520s from North America. Fish again include both fresh- and salt-water species. One of the most interesting groups is a massive deposit of sheep feet from late 17th-/early 18th-century pits. That was derived from sheepskin working on an industrial scale, the skins arriving with parts of the feet still attached.

MacGregor's and Tweddle's fascicules are the third and fourth in the volume dealing with *Small Finds*. The first of these is concerned wholly with finds of the Anglo-Scandinavian period from various sites; these include Lloyds Bank in Pavement (1972-73), which first demonstrated the great depth (up to 9.15 m) and richness of this area, leading to larger explorations close by in Coppergate. Here then is a preview of the range of Anglo-Scandinavian artefacts which were to pour forth from the ground in later years. A large part of this fascicule is on textiles of animal fibre and fleece, and a silk fragment. There are discussions of spinning, 'counts', 'systems', and weaves; the preservation of the material in this condition is still rare in pre-Conquest contexts except as mineral replacements on metal grave goods. There is an excellent section too synthesizing the evidence of workshop practice. 'The premises on the Lloyds Bank site', says MacGregor, 'were pervaded by the stench of decomposing flesh and stomach-turning de-hairing solutions, and must have been among the most squalid in York'. In spite of this, the area exhibited commercial contact on a wide scale, with imports from Shetland, Norway, the Rhineland and the Mediterranean.

Tweddle's fascicule has taken the opportunity to bring together a diverse collection of finds from the city centre sites; most materials are represented. Of especial interest are the finds associated with 12th-century glass bead and ring manufacture at Parliament Street; and wooden and leather artefacts again characteristic of York's high organic preservation.

Pirie's fascicule is the first in the *Coins* volume; it deals with the extremely important currency and other related items of the post-Roman centuries from 25 sites. A large part of the fascicule is a catalogue of all coins, ranging from the primary *scettas* through the later Anglo-Saxon and Viking issues into the medieval period and beyond, ending with George VI; the catalogue includes not only this British series, but also coins, jettons and

weights from France, Spain, the Low Countries and Germany. Of exceptional interest to numismatists and the general reader is full publication, in advance of the main excavation reports, of the evidence for Anglo-Scandinavian minting at Coppergate (the hole with the mint in it — or not far away!). This includes dies and trial pieces and associated debris. The die, for the striking of a St Peter's penny, is of course a unique and remarkable find, and is reproduced here in a colour plate of superb quality.

All seven fascicules exhibit the usual high quality of editing and typography we have come to expect from the combined skills of staff of the Trust and its publisher, the Council for British Archaeology.

PHILIP RAHTZ

Excavations in Norwich 1971-78, Part II (East Anglian Archaeol. Rep. 26). 21 × 29 cm. xiv + 274 pp. + 9 microfiche, numerous figs. and pls. Norwich: Norwich Survey, 1985. Price: £23.00.

Excavations within the North-East Bailey of Norwich Castle, 1979 (East Anglian Archaeol. Rep. 28). 21 × 30 cm. vi + 73 pp. + 1 microfiche, numerous figs. and pls. Gressenhall: Norfolk Archaeological Unit, 1985. Price: £8.95.

These two attractively-produced reports, the work of the Norwich Survey and the Norfolk Archeological Unit respectively, describe two important archaeological projects of the 1970s in Norwich. More are in the pipeline.

The first volume (Report 26) comprises accounts of five excavations in close proximity on the north bank of the Wensum, that is in that unknown zone which may comprise Saxon settlement, later taken by the city walls: two large sites (Pottergate and Alms Lane) and three less useful excavations, treated together and forming a third report, around Botolph Street. One of the small sites is consigned totally to microfiche. Environmental evidence is studied from the two major sites (though the faunal study is only at a provisional stage), and documentary evidence in all three; one site on Botolph Street had a standing building, of uncertain but post-medieval date, until demolition in 1976. Summaries of significant pottery and small finds (dress fittings, personal implements, domestic fittings and furnishings, building ironwork, tools, objects of trade or commerce) are included, with larger catalogues in microfiche. Each site report (the three minor sites being taken together) concludes with a useful synthesis, illustrated in the case of Alms Lane with clear, if occasionally smokey, aerial reconstructions. The microfiche contains, in general, detailed stratigraphic matrices, concordances and tables showing both dating evidence and incidence of material such as tiles by area and period, some site drawings (which work satisfactorily) and occasional specialist photographs (which do not).

On the Pottergate site the main focus of interest is a group of small houses destroyed in the fire of 1507; a time-capsule site especially important for the ceramics and kitchen artefacts recovered from the cellars beneath the rear of the houses, which are analysed in functional groups. The impression gained is one of considerable wealth (window-glass, terracotta plaque) in this peripheral, though intra-mural, zone north of the river. The reconstructions, carefully argued, furnish useful examples of 15th-century house-forms which are paralleled in London and other towns.

At Alms Lane, 25 medieval buildings, many of several phases, were recorded to a high standard. Property boundaries were fixed by about 1300. Buildings include a 14th-century brewhouse, its facilities studied in detail; and several 16th-century house plans, including a lobby-entrance house (A5ii) at right angles behind the street range. Rebuilding was comparatively frequent, even in this peripheral zone of town: on one property (A), seven major rebuildings in the period 1400-1600 — one every 30 years. Botanical remains 'revealed differences between households of apparently different social position' (more to be associated with the functions of the various areas, perhaps), whereas faunal remains were homogeneous

across the properties. The fish were almost all marine species; and this is the same on other Norwich sites. Both sites demonstrate a major change in rubbish disposal practices in the late 17th century which has consequences for the archaeological record: the residual element in excavated pottery fragments stays at about 50 per cent for six periods covering *c.* 1400–1720, but thereafter comprises about 12 per cent because nearly all the contemporary material was carted off site.

There is much to relish in this volume, and I offer some minor criticisms because it will clearly be taken as one model for the production of multi-period urban archaeological reports. Firstly, while the presentation of complicated stratigraphic evidence is done well, there is no longer a need for pull-out sections. In the Alms Lane report the earliest period-plan covers three periods and includes only cut features, not layers, including a 0.4 m high bank; some of the cut features are not described in the text. For the later periods, up to four building phases are shown on the same plan (Fig. 5).

Secondly, use of documentary evidence: in the Pottergate and Alms Lane reports this is woven into the archaeological results with dexterity, though the documents tend to refer to owners and the archaeology to occupiers. The longest rehearsal of documentary evidence, with impressive pull-outs, is however for the Botolph Street sites, and here no attempt is made to show any detailed connections between archaeological and documentary evidence. Thus the value of the latter is severely diminished. In the Alms Lane report, labels for tenements derived from documentary evidence are used in the excavation report without introduction, being explained nearly 100 pages later. Because the buildings are numbered within tenements (A1, B3, etc.) the reader finds himself being nudged into accepting continuity of boundaries from the earliest period. Following the arguments is difficult when A and A/C are tenements, but A3 is a building. I would suggest instead that the buildings should be numbered in proposed chronological (when possible, stratigraphic) order over the whole site, and then allocated to properties when the documentary evidence has been considered.

Thirdly, the report prompts the question, should a complex urban site be published like this? Although there are no Level III reports as such, some material has been placed in microfiche. Has the right balance been struck? This reviewer has doubts when after many pages of scrappy evidence from the Botolph Street sites, Carter concludes there is only one building 'about which anything sensible can be said.' There are also references to further corpora volumes for small finds (p. 6), clay pipes (p. 139) and faunal assemblages (p. 221) from Norwich, which indicate both that Norwich is following other major cities in its treatment of finds, and that much of the finds analysis in these reports may have to be repeated.

The report on a late Saxon timber church and cemetery of about 170 burials discovered beneath the 11th-century bailey of Norwich Castle in 1979 (Report 28) is generally organized on the same principles, though these are not explained as in Report 26. The excavation report is followed by reports on the artefacts, pottery, human bones and environmental material, with a small amount of microfiche containing supporting lists. The evidence is clearly and carefully presented (of the three successive Buildings A–C, the first two can only be called churches because of their association with other material, rather than their intrinsic design), though one period-plan lacks a caption and a sequence of summary plans of the whole site would have been useful to illustrate the discussion. There is no excavation matrix even though six periods are proposed. The skeletal analysis reveals a high proportion of deaths in childhood, evidence of dietary deficiency, especially vitamin D deficiency leading to rickets; and among the anecdotal evidence which often enlivens skeleton reports, apparent evidence that some men used their teeth as cutting tools. A short environmental report is difficult to assess and might have been better placed in microfiche.

The report is valuable for its discussion of timber churches, especially since few others have been excavated, and for brief discussion of the possible social variations exhibited in the late Saxon graveyard. The report ends with an assessment of the archaeological opportunities in the castle area, and makes the point that such isolated investigations only achieve true

significance within a continuing programme of urban research in Norwich. These two reports are sound contributions to that necessary programme.

JOHN SCHOFIELD

Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England. Edited by Jeremy Haslam. 19 cm × 25 cm. 430 pp., 129 figs. Chichester: Philimore and Co., 1984. Price: £20.00.

This substantial but rather indigestible compendium is the result of an ambitious project by the editor to 'gather together . . . the results of some of the most recent work in the development of early medieval towns in southern England'. He hoped to provide the general synthesis which is needed. The content will certainly be of use to those engaged in historical, archaeological and topographical study of this wide subject, though more at a local than at a national level. It has to be judged both on the basis of the individual contributions, which are of a variable standard but do succeed in making much evidence easily accessible, and as a general work. Over ten years ago, Martin Biddle's discussion of pre-Conquest urban development in England (in D. M. Wilson (ed.), *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*) was recognized by that author to represent of necessity only an interim statement. This collection may prove of even more ephemeral value. It has two main flaws.

The editor has made a worthy attempt to gather together a comprehensive set of papers, but the unevenness and differing approaches of the various contributions, and the delays with which some were received (to the obvious annoyance of at least one author), have to some extent thwarted his purpose. Such is the pace of work in this field that several sections (Southampton, London and Bath among them) are already in need of substantial revision.

This is not the place to review the self-contained local surveys in detail: local journals should see to that. But some comments are in order. Several of the chapters are based on the 'implications' surveys prepared in the 1970s in connection with programmes of rescue archaeology. Some include detailed accounts of every possible place that might be considered 'urban' in nature, while others are more dismissive of weaker candidates, through lack of evidence. The chapter on Kent by Tatton-Brown is a typically bold attempt to make sense of a little-known area. That on Surrey is almost an apology that so little information is to hand. Haslam's own chapters, on Wiltshire and Devon, are thorough and well illustrated presentations. The same may be said of the Dorset and Somerset contributions, while that on Hampshire suffers from the decision to exclude detailed treatments of Winchester and Southampton, the latter being discussed separately. Several theories recur — the format makes for such repetition — and some of them are listed by the editor in his Introduction (p. xvi) as characteristics which formed a basis, but not a guarantee, for subsequent growth into a town.

The editor's job has not been eased by the fact that some contributions (e.g. Kent) follow the traditional historical approach, while others (e.g. Berkshire) were written in the enthusiastic afterglow of Hodges's 1977 paper (in *ROB*), later developed into *Dark Age Economics* (1982). Similarly, differing definitions of urban status are employed, although the editor has his own views on this matter. Both approaches have their value, of course, but we are a long way from producing sufficient data to validate or contradict Hodges's hypotheses: rather they are there to be tested. At present, the two schools are, like superpowers, acutely aware of each other's existence, but not reconciled.

Although Haslam's introductory remarks (pp. xi–xvii) do constitute a sensible guide to some of the problems and make some judicious suggestions for the direction of future work, they are not comprehensive enough. There is here little recognition of some notable advances on the Continent: for instance the message of Brühl's work on the Gallic *civitates* and results from excavations at Tours and some Italian sites ought to have been taken into account in proposing models for what happened at former Roman sites. The evidence from 'Northern European trading centres' tends not to be studied on its own account, but to be subsumed

under Hodges's hypothetical framework. It must be admitted that the editor has not succeeded in synthesizing the content into a unified whole. It would require a *tour de force* to order such intractable material into an acceptable 'conceptual framework'.

Moreover the geographical restriction of the book's scope means that recent discoveries of national significance in several towns in the Midlands and the North are not taken into account; this diminishes the book's overall value. Interestingly, the editor has subsequently included these in his much shorter *Early Medieval Towns in Britain* (1985), but that does not make up for the absence here of say, Bristol, where we need to see more publication, or of Winchester, a site of fundamental importance for this period.

The editor's introductory survey does well to insist on placing towns in the wider settlement hierarchy (research in this field is still in its infancy), to question the recent tendency to concentrate exclusively on the significance of markets and of exchange mechanisms, to point out the long and complicated development which many settlements experienced, and to explore the blurred distinction between urban, non-urban, and 'proto-urban' status. There are many unresolved questions. What influence did the conversion and the growth of the church have on urbanization? To what extent were settlements of this period under royal control? Because of the limited scope of the book, the Vikings do not loom as large as they should: their presence stimulated much urban growth, directly and indirectly. One clear conclusion to be drawn from this panoply of data is, ironically, that we need better evidence in larger samples, and as a basis for obtaining it an evaluation of where that evidence best survives.

In summary, this is a useful and well-referenced source book, with many good plans and maps. A few photographs, even if only aerial views, would have enhanced the presentation. Yet it is far from the 'general synthesis' for which the editor hoped. It will be some time before this aim is realized.

M. J. JONES

Brucato. Histoire et archéologie d'un habitat médiéval en Sicile (Collection de l'École Française de Rome 78). By Jean-Marie Pesez *et al.* 22 × 28 cm. 2 vols., 827 pp., 246 figs., 164 pls. Rome: École Française de Rome, 1984. Price: 720 francs.

This impressive publication contains much more than a full report on an excavation by a French team of a medieval settlement on a rocky hilltop in NW. Sicily. The introductory and concluding chapters offer a full interpretation of the site's significance for the material culture of Sicily, and its importance for understanding rural settlements in the western Mediterranean and indeed throughout western Europe.

A hilltop with traces of fortifications and buildings called Castellaccio now marks the site of Brucato. On the slopes of the hill, known as Mura Pregne, is another large area of the former settlement, now partly destroyed by quarrying. Brucato lay only a few kilometres from the coast, and the nearest town was Termini, situated about 30 km east of Palermo. Brucato was settled in prehistoric times, followed by an apparent hiatus until the 10th century A.D. In the 11th and 12th centuries (the Arabo-Norman period) intense occupation developed on the lower slopes. After an apparent decline, a new settlement was established on the hilltop of Castellaccio in the late 13th century, and this was the area on which excavation was concentrated.

Soon after 1300 contemporaries called Brucato a *terra* — that is, a settlement of intermediate status, larger than a hamlet or *casale*, and enclosed with walls, but lesser in importance than a *castello*. Eleven houses have been excavated, 33 are visible as earthworks or ruins, and there may have been another 30, suggesting that the population could have exceeded 200. It had an urban appearance, being densely built up around the castle, and on one side of the settlement geometrically planned rows of houses were laid out along a main street. The houses were either of one or two rooms, measuring from 5 m × 6 m to as much as

6 m × 9 m externally. Their walls were of stone, built with clay packing, of one storey, with earth floors and low-pitched tiled roofs. They were entered by a single door from the street. The outer room contained the open hearth and was intensely used, while the inner room served as a store and sleeping quarters.

The pottery includes a variety of forms, mostly of Sicilian manufacture, but with imports from the Italian mainland, as far afield as Pisa. The absence of Spanish wares suggests a strong easterly orientation in Sicily's commercial and cultural contacts. There were 157 coins, mostly dated between 1282 and 1350, and 1,800 small finds, including pieces of sickle blade, a sheep bell, horse-shoes, weapons, locks and keys, personal ornaments such as brooches and buckles, mortars, querns, and fragments of glass vessels. Bone studies indicate the expected predominance of sheep and goats, with both cattle and pigs also in quantity, but the proportion of bones from wild species (27 per cent) suggests a surprisingly important role for hunting in the local economy. The staples of wheat and barley, judging from the botanical evidence, were supplemented with legumes (chick peas, beans and lentils) as well as many types of fruit.

The end of Brucato came with dramatic speed. Chronicles describe the siege of the Angevin garrison and the site's eventual capture by an Aragonese army in 1338. This is reflected in the archaeology, by the scatter of small plates from the defenders' armour, the stones from the siege engines, and dozens of arrow heads and crossbow bolts, some of them with points bent by impact against stone walls. The victorious troops systematically sacked the village, seizing valuables and smashing pots before burning the houses. They even killed cats and dogs, leaving the corpses to rot in the street. A small-scale reoccupation was followed by another act of destruction, perhaps in the outbreak of fighting of the 1350s, and as this came after the Black Death there was no local impetus for populating the settlement anew. The lands of the village were taken over by the townsmen of Termini, and continued to be productive, at one time as a sheep pasture when a shepherd built a cabin among the ruins, and later in the Middle Ages as an area of sugar cane plantations.

This publication illustrates both the weaknesses and the strengths of medieval archaeology as practised by the French. The main deficiencies lie in the standard of fieldwork. Although the excavations took place in 1972–75, the open-area technique was still being adopted hesitantly, and balks were left in some of the ten-metre squares. The digging was very untidy by N. European standards, as is revealed by an embarrassingly large number of site photographs, which all too often show poorly-cleaned structures without scales. There is no evidence of a sampling strategy, so that the bulk of the excavation took place in four squares and additional trenches on the hilltop, and the single *sondage* H17 provides the only evidence of the earlier settlement on the slope. Here we must make allowances for the disruption of the excavation programme in 1974 by the tragic accidental death of two members of the team, and by thefts and 'menaces' serious enough to drive the excavators from the site. The inadequacies in the collection of data are offset by the high quality of the analysis. Some may find the high-flown language and philosophizing a source of irritation, but some of the methods used and the ideas that emerge should make British archaeologists sit up and take notice. Areas of enquiry are carefully separated and analysed before being incorporated into the synthesis of interpretation. The documentary evidence is treated fully (with complete transcripts) in an early chapter, and influences, but does not dominate, the subsequent interpretations. An excellent chapter on ethnography demonstrates the value of comparing the excavated houses with those in later Sicilian settlements. Finds occupy more space, and are analysed with more care, than readers of British excavation reports have come to expect, and the thoroughness produces useful results. The find-spots of pottery and objects are plotted so precisely that the functions of different parts of the houses can be identified, such as the areas for food preparation, eating and storage. The distribution of bones was recorded so that variations in the proportions of wild species in different houses could be measured, suggesting inequalities in the living standards or at least the tastes of the inhabitants. Horns and antlers were found burnt near doorways, as if at the time of the destruction of 1338 they were fixed on the wooden lintels, perhaps for decoration or more

likely in connection with local folklore beliefs. Measurements of bone fragments and research into the butchering techniques show that meat was invariably cut into small pieces (70 to 110 mm long as a maximum) in order to fit cooking pots. This leads to the conclusion that meat was boiled rather than roasted.

In a thoughtful conclusion H. Bresc integrates the results of the Brucato excavation into historical research into Sicily's social and economic development. He argues that the rise of Brucato is typical of the early stages of the development of the 'agri-town' (the Italian phrase is *città rurale*) initially in response to military threats and later when *latifundia* were beginning to expand and to organize their workforce in large settlements. Brucato's decline does not imply a failure of the settlement-type, because fluid and unstable settlements were a Sicilian characteristic. In summing up the material culture of the site, the observation is made that some elements, such as unmortared stone foundations or the small luxuries of copper-alloy dress ornaments, are found throughout 14th-century Europe, while others are found only in the Mediterranean, like 'perched', fortified, semi-urban settlements, or peasant houses with tiled roofs. Peculiar to Brucato or at least Sicily are such features as the variety of pottery utensils that included plates and bowls for use at table, or the high proportion of meat obtained from hunting. On the same comparative note, it must be said that the inhabitants of Brucato look distinctly poorer than their contemporaries in England, even if we allow that the houses would be less cramped than they appear at first because the menfolk would spend much of the year away living in cabins in remote fields and pastures. The numbers of coins may give the medieval Sicilians the appearance of prosperity, until we remember that one type found at Brucato had a spending power of less than one thirtieth of an English penny.

This book deserves to be read widely, both because of the interest of its subject, and because methods and interpretations have implications for all medieval archaeologists. The book itself, to touch on modern material culture, is a splendid artefact, long enough to allow discussion of details and to elaborate arguments, and packed with illustrations, all printed on high quality paper. In some countries, evidently, academic research receives adequate financial support.

CHRISTOPHER DYER

Drevnyaya Rus. Gorod, zamok, selo (Arkheologiya SSSR). Edited by B. A. Kolchin. 22 × 29 cm. 431 pp., 171 b. & w. pls., 8 colour pls. Moscow: Nauka, 1985. Price: 7 roubles 30 kopecks (£13.50 in Britain).

In 1981 the USSR Academy of Science Institute of Archaeology published the first in a series of volumes dealing with the archaeology of the Soviet Union from the earliest times to the Middle Ages. Fortunately for medieval studies the series is not appearing in periodic order and recently the first of the two volumes dealing with medieval Rus was published. The book (the title translates as *Ancient Rus. Town, castle, village*) covers the period from the 9th to the 14th century in the area known historically as Rus. This, for the purposes of the book, stretches from the Polish border area in the west to the junction of the river Oka with the Volga in the east, from the area south of Kiev in the Ukraine to the southern shore of Lake Ladoga in the north. It excludes the Baltic states which will be dealt with in a third volume in the series.

The volume is far superior, with its glossy paper and clear, crisp illustrations, to the usual Soviet archaeological publications seen in the West. Its British price although well above the Soviet published price makes it worth buying for its illustrations alone. Indeed, it would be a shame if an inability to read Russian (there is no foreign language summary) deterred anyone from looking into this book; the illustrations will be a source for everyone interested in medieval archeology. The editor is well known for his work at Novgorod and all the other contributors are established authorities in their subject. Chapters 1 and 2 deal with the archaeological study of ancient Rus, the sources and methods of research; chapter 3 with

settlements: fortified and unfortified settlements, towns, major towns, and castles; chapter 4 with structures: dwellings, architecture, fortifications, engineering constructions; chapter 5 with the rural economy: farming, hunting, fishing; chapter 6 with craft: metallurgy, wood-, bone- and leather-working, spinning and weaving, the production of pottery (but not pottery itself), and mechanical aids used in crafts; chapter 7 with weapons; chapter 8 with the monetary system; chapter 9 with seals; and chapter 10 with international connections: Eastern and Byzantine trade, Scandinavia, connections with western Europe.

The study of fortified settlements appears to be of particular interest to Soviet archaeologists, and with good reason. Although the word *gorod* now means town or city, its meaning in the ancient Russian chronicles was less precise. B. Grekov pointed out in 1959, in his book *Kiev Rus*, that strongholds, places of refuge and the fortified manorial estates of landowners could also be called *gorod*. In many cases the *gorod* was the political centre of a large and densely populated area and attracted traders and craftspeople. In his present discussion of the concept of 'the ancient Russian town' Kuza, while mentioning the theory that towns and crafts are closely associated, is careful to remark that archaeology does not always provide support for this. At Novgorod only about 125 workshops, spanning the period from the 10th to the 15th century, have been found, in spite of excellent conditions for preservation and years of excavation; at Kiev about 30 have been found. It should be noted, however, that only 1.5–2 per cent of the area of each of these two enormous medieval towns has been excavated.

Novgorod has received particular attention in the West owing to M. W. Thompson's English summary of the excavations (1967). Work continues there, but a number of other towns have matched its preservation conditions, among them Smolensk, Polotsk, and the part of Kiev known as Podol. Podol is the lower part of the town, on the bank of the Dnieper, and here dwellings and workshops of the 10th to 12th centuries have been found. Jewellers, glassmakers, woodworkers and many others carried on their trades, leaving behind not only moulds, crucibles and waste material but, occasionally, their tools as well. The excavations at Podol should not be seen as more important or spectacular than work being carried out in other Russian towns, but Kiev does emerge as a town whose history stretches back perhaps to the 6th century, and certainly to the 8th or 9th, and as such is of some importance in the study of urban origins.

Chapter 10, dealing with international connections, will probably contain little that is new to Scandinavian specialists, although two maps showing the distribution of objects may be of interest. Those concerned with later trade contacts with western Europe will be pleased to see the subject not only broached, but continued for two of the quite substantial pages. The distinctive glass intaglios used as amulet-seals by 9th- and 10th-century Friesland merchants enable their trade routes to be traced. It emerges from this and the study of German silver denarii found in hoards that German merchants may have been trading with Rus via a direct route from the South Baltic.

There are occasional printing errors; the absence of part of the key to the symbols used on a distribution map (plate 162) makes its information useless. The volume, however, is a significant contribution to medieval archaeology and it is to be hoped that volume two, which deals with culture and everyday life, will not be long in appearing.

LYNNE KEYS

Bone Antler Ivory and Horn. The technology of skeletal materials since the Roman period. By Arthur MacGregor. 19 × 25 cm. 245 pp., 110 figs. and pls. London: Croom Helm, 1985. Price: £35.00.

Arthur MacGregor is to be congratulated on this critical, clear and readable study, a comprehensive review of artefacts made of skeletal materials from excavations in northern Europe and the British Isles.

Studies of artefacts have been confined in the past to typological studies of single categories, or to more general surveys in excavation reports, but in both cases they have been severely restricted by chronological divisions. Thus MacGregor's multi-period approach is most welcome. A. Roes's study of bone and antler objects from the Frisian terp mounds (1963) attempted this sort of coverage, though on a smaller geographical scale, but its usefulness is limited by dating problems and other shortcomings.

Despite the fact that the title and introduction rather ambiguously define the subject as 'skeletal material *since* the Roman period', the book includes much Roman material, a particularly valuable asset in view of the way residual artefacts occur in later contexts, especially in urban excavations.

Two chapters on raw materials and mechanical properties precede those on manufacturing and the typological review. While not endorsing wholeheartedly the dust-jacket's assertion that 'the book assumes no prior knowledge', I found the scientific information in the first two chapters clearly presented, with terminology helpfully explained in diagrams. MacGregor's thesis is that a study of the technical qualities of the raw materials and the manufacturing details reveals not only the craftsmanship involved but also the functions of particular artefacts. Mechanical properties dictated the choice of particular materials, as did the availability of specific bones (chapter 3). Historical circumstances, such as the reservation of deer for the aristocracy's use in the medieval period, influenced availability, while seasonal variations also played their part.

Chapter 4 debates the important distinctions between handicraft and industry, between simpler implements made by the user as required, and an organized, professional industry using a wide range of specialized tools. On the basis of new research (especially on finds from Hedeby and Lund), MacGregor traces the development from itinerant seasonal work to permanent workshops. All too often in studies of artefacts the technical details of manufacture are ignored, or misunderstood. MacGregor devotes a chapter (5) to a survey of tools based on analysis of tool-marks left on surviving artefacts.

The typological review (chapter 6) is underlaid and informed by the technological chapters preceding it. MacGregor addresses himself specifically to details of technology and manufacture, rather than to 'aesthetic matters'. He explains how different mechanical properties dictated the use of specific bones and antler for combs, and how the natural shape of a particular bone was exploited for certain artefacts (for example, pig fibula pins). It is to MacGregor's credit that the review never reads like a list despite the sparse text, dense references and subdivisions into categories. This is partly due to the contemporary insights gleaned from documentary sources such as Alcuin's warm letter of thanks for the gift of an elaborate comb in which he offers 'as many thanks as the present has teeth'. MacGregor discusses a wide range of artefacts from recent excavations, and also introduces much current research such as radio-carbon analysis of the ivory used for Saxon bag-rings (p. 40).

Given the range of objects covered, and the encyclopaedic references, it is perhaps inevitable that there are omissions, or points needing further expansion, such as the runic inscription on the 'lucet' from Lund (pp. 176, 193), which receives no mention but which might have helped solve MacGregor's doubts as to its function. Some categorical statements also prompt questions, or require modification: for example, were parchment prickers not used in domestic as well as ecclesiastical contexts (p. 124), were sledges not used for carrying supplies as well as for leisure (pp. 144-46), and surely there are *bone* needles in medieval contexts (p. 193)?

It is a pity that a number of spelling errors and other minor infelicities were not spotted during proof-reading (Brønsted instead of Brøndsted, p. 105, and incidentally, this is omitted from the bibliography altogether; Streeter instead of Streeten throughout). Figures 56 and 68 have been transposed. A reference to figure 27 on p. 141 should in fact read figure 71. Though the figures are mostly excellent, figure 101 is over-reduced to the point of illegibility. In general, the layout is pleasing, as is the combination of photographs and drawings, and the text relating to illustrations is easy to locate. The index, including specialist terms, obviates the need for a glossary, and notes are placed conveniently at the end of each chapter. The lack

of page numbers in the bibliographic references is frustrating, though obviously dictated by the demands of space.

The book ends rather abruptly without drawing conclusions about the choice of skeletal materials as opposed to metal or wood, or considering the suitability, availability and relative costs of the different materials. Fleeting references to bone originals used to prepare moulds for metal artefacts (pins, p. 113), to bone copying metal prototypes (spoons, pp. 182–83) and to the rare survival of wooden examples (p. 183) give us glimpses of this debate. One could do with more! The decline of the bone and horn industry (with notable exceptions) as mass-production in metal, glass and even paper took over the supply of cheap, everyday items is surely one of the characteristics of the early post-medieval period, and such a trend might have bearing on Henig's observations (*Post-Medieval Archaeol.*, xix, 207) about the relative lack of post-medieval material in the typological review.

However, this is perhaps the subject of another book, and in no way detracts from the value of this study which has already become the standard work of reference for museums, archaeological units and universities. It is to be hoped that studies of artefacts will, in future, concern themselves with technology as much as with typology, and that they will look beyond the conventional restrictions of chronology, as MacGregor's does. *Interpretation* of artefactual evidence, whether the focus is on one material, or several, is surely the way forward for finds research.

SUE MARGESON

The Bayeux Tapestry: the complete tapestry in colour with introduction, description and commentary. By David M. Wilson. 27 × 35 cm. 234 pp. including 73 pp. of colour pls. Other figs. and pls. London: Thames & Hudson, 1985. Price: £45.00.

How does one review a volume of this sort? Indeed, of what sort? — the uniqueness of the source itself means that any publication of it is equally individualistic. We have had several English published versions of the Tapestry, for example in *English Historical Documents*, vol. II (1953) and by the Phaidon Press (1959, 1965). What, then does this new version have to offer? The most obvious answer is that it offers the best reproduction of the Tapestry so far available. Here we have no compromise: the whole embroidery (as it survives) in full colour at a size just over half that of the original. The photographs were taken in natural lighting conditions during the rehanging of the Tapestry in 1982–83. This, together with the generous scale of reproduction, enables the reader/viewer to appreciate the Tapestry as both document and artefact. It tells its own story in every sense — not only the story its designer intended to tell, but also the subsequent story of damage and repair. But for many readers of this journal it will not be the narrative which draws the attention so much as the wealth of detail on buildings, ships, costume, tools and armour. As a fundamental source for 11th-century physical culture the Tapestry is without parallel, and this new publication makes its evidence more striking than ever. Size and splendour of reproduction does not, of course, always make difficult things easier to interpret, and some episodes in the narrative, as well as some details of the depictions, remain enigmatic. Unfortunately the pagination involves one or two crucial scenes being divided so that the reader has to turn back and forth to view the full scene. The central event (at the very least, a central event) in the whole story, Harold's oath at Bayeux, is divided between plates 25 and 26, while the building of Hastings castle is divided between plates 49 and 50. Clearly, the scenes had to be divided somewhere, but these two instances may be a source of irritation for historian and archaeologist respectively. Similarly, the division of the first-floor hall at Bosham, plates 3–4, will be a disappointment to students of buildings. These are relatively minor quibbles. We must be grateful for such a splendid reproduction of so rich a source.

The volume is not, however, simply a presentation of the Tapestry itself. We are offered an Introduction in which are discussed the physical construction of the embroidery (wool on

linen), its history and background, and its relationship to other sources for the Norman Conquest. We have here a useful summary of up-to-date thinking on these matters. A worthwhile and successful feature of the volume is that (both here and later on) the editor's commentary provides a self-contained synthesis of a wide range of published work, yet with full reference to the latter (over 300 end notes) which the interested reader may pursue. At the end of the volume we have the Latin inscriptions and their English translation, a detailed commentary on the content of the plates (reproduced again here at small scale in black and white), together with discussions of the Tapestry's narrative, its style and its depiction of contemporary physical culture.

This edition has been lightly criticized elsewhere in terms of its rendering of the Tapestry's text (R. I. Page, review in *Antiquity*, 60 (1986), 156–57). Apart from the occasional unfortunate divisions of certain scenes, readers can hardly quibble at the physical presentation of the Tapestry itself. It permits an easier consideration of the design and physical content than any previously available edition. Thanks to the size of reproduction even the techniques of the embroidery itself are in full view, and places where repairs and joins in the linen occur are pointed out. The edition most commonly used until now by English readers, that edited by Sir Frank Stenton for the Phaidon Press, had only a handful of large colour plates. In this respect the present volume is a significant step forward. The commentary (pp. 174–95) will be particularly helpful to readers of this journal since it draws attention to archaeological finds comparable with items depicted on the Tapestry: drinking horns, horse-trappings, wood-carving, reliquaries, barrels, and wood-working and other tools. Full reference is given to alternative interpretations of various scenes and details. Both here and in the concluding discussions, the constant reference to publications (with a further 20 years of development since Stenton's edition) makes the volume not simply a guide to the Tapestry but also to several aspects of the archaeology of the period. Here we have a most useful summary of materials relating to the textiles, manuscripts and sculpture which provide the artistic background for the Tapestry. There is a very sensible discussion of the building evidence, from which the reader can trace the development of ideas on this difficult topic. The particularly knotty problems of the castle depictions are also treated with common sense. Furniture, costume, arms and armour, ships — all receive the same helpful treatment.

The debt to work done for the Stenton edition is often clear (and fully acknowledged). But the up-dating of the discussions and full reference to recent literature help make this volume not only the best presentation of the most famous artefact of the Anglo-Norman world, but also an invaluable guide to a number of allied areas of medieval archaeology.

ROBERT A. HIGHAM

Exploration of a Drowned Landscape: Archaeology and History of the Isles of Scilly. By Charles Thomas. 19 × 25 cm. 320 pp., 86 figs., 46 pls., 5 tables. London: Batsford, 1985. Price: £19.95.

I am sure that I will be doing no disservice to Professor Thomas if I say that this book is the carefully welded result of four separate pieces of scholarship about these fascinating and elusive islands lying beyond the end of England. I was privileged to hear one part (chapters 1 and 2) as the 1978 O'Donnell Lecture given in the University of Wales. With its central theme of an island sinking into the Western Seas, the former outline of which was betrayed by the distribution of Cornish place-names (notably -porth) and inter-tidal remains of ancient agriculture and settlement, the lecture was a delight to its mostly Celtic audience. As I remember it now, but not as Professor Thomas records (p. 14), this heady brew was also spiced with veiled references to ancient deity and connections between Sulis Minerva, the island name and the enigmatic Roman remains on the eastern island of Nornour, all of which form the central core of chapter 6. At least two of the other three elements were also the subject of major public lectures at Truro (chapters 3 to 5 on the early prehistory) and Oxford

(chapters 7 and 8 on early and later Christianity), while the two final chapters are essays on the earthy reality of one small island's history contrasted with an exploration of how Tennyson created (or re-created?) Scilly's romantic vanishing-point, Lyonesse.

The book, therefore, is not a seamless text on the history of the Isles of Scilly nor indeed does it lay claim to being one. Its major gaps are almost the whole of later prehistory and the secular history and archaeology of the Middle Ages and later. These are topics to which the author will, I hope, return at another time. What is there may best be considered in its separate elements, but not before noting one or two general points. The overall tone of the book hovers, at times uneasily, between full academic and popular, and I found myself wondering at times for what audience it was ultimately intended. Given its pedigree as substantially three major but public lectures, this might be explicable, but there are, periodically through the course of it, sections where some basic methodologies are explained, arresting the flow of a particular idea or description. So we pause to learn some of the principles of toponymy and linguistics (opening of chapter 2), the basics of palynology (pp. 69–70) or the rudiments of Dark-Age imported pottery (pp. 194–97). This mixes curiously sometimes with very detailed and technical data. The effect is a somewhat episodic presentation of information in which it is not always possible to be clear where the reader is being led. I was, therefore, vaguely dissatisfied by the time I reached the end of chapter 7 on early Christianity, because I felt that the central thesis had been underplayed and rather lost among the pieces of information and laymen's explanations. The thesis in itself is important not just to the Isles of Scilly themselves, but also more widely. The early religious sites should be seen, it argues, not in the context of the isolated islands as they are today, but rather in the context of the unsubmerged island mass of Ennoer. In other words they were part of a larger and well-populated landscape, integrated into the religious life and needs of the rural community rather than belonging to the eremitic and otherworldly tradition so often attributed to the 'Celtic Church'.

Perhaps, however, the most obvious example of the problems caused by having two audiences is the very first chapter which is unfortunately so critical to the core themes of the book. In it Thomas attempts to establish that the granitic batholith which is the Scilly Isles has been subject to such eustatic and isostatic adjustment that in the very recent geological past it has slowly but perceptibly slipped below the waves. The demonstration of this theory is, however, a very complex and technical matter, and a confusing number of terms and methodologies have to be introduced very rapidly to the reader from models to the establishment of Ordnance Data and from tidal terminology (bewilderingly abbreviated) to radiocarbon. This was not helped by several of the maps in this and the following chapter which showed the reconstructed islands, but which did not make clear what contours or isobaths were being represented (esp. figs. 4 and 9, and 10a and 10b). Indeed one drawing to represent different phases of the submergence all in one place would have been so useful.

Perhaps this is to carp too much, but the reviewer has a difficulty: if the book has two audiences, on the success of which is he to judge it? On the level of presenting a complex subject to an intelligent and interested lay public it must be rated a success. Its humanistic and stylish text contains a masterly blend of description, narrative, analysis, enthusiasm, love and more than a touch of island mysticism. To cast Thomas as Prospero may be a touch extreme, but he makes a good stab at conjuring his isle from the deep and there is often a hint of 'noises, sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not'. Yet if we are to judge this text as a piece of scholarship, one must first say that it contains much of substance and some important accounts such as the early exploitation of the landscape and the very fine analysis of the evolution of settlement on the tiny island of Samson (chapter 9). Next, however, one must say that much of it is highly speculative and there is not always full justification for, or testing of, some of the hypotheses offered. For example, it was difficult to understand the criteria by which certain early settlement sites and cairns were designated as 'founder' (pp. 102–05), and this was fundamental to the spatial model presented to support the theory that the first communities comprised a segmentary society. Again (p. 60) there is reference to Sulpicius Severus and his account of two bishops exiled to a place 'beyond Britain' called, by

a 'preferable reading', Sylina. Why it is preferable and what the alternatives may be are not examined, but clearly the form and the identification are speculative. Only a hint of these uncertainties survives in a further use (p. 149) of the same reference and by page 173 there is no doubt at all that the two bishops *were* the first Christians on the island. This name in this form, however, is also used as an essential link to the Celtic goddess, Sulis, celebrated at Bath, and the further speculation that the site at Nornour, with its high quantity of Roman metalwork, may be somehow connected with another major cult centre of hers. This shift from speculation to certainty is apparent at other places in the book and is the product of linear hypothesis formation without systematic testing. Many archaeologists let the model become the proof of their argument rather than the test-bed of the data, and I would include myself in that, so it should not detract from my final verdict that this well-produced book is a stylish essay on a fascinating subject. We must hope that the author, unlike Prospero, will return to these islands again in print.

DAVID AUSTIN

Short Reviews

The English Settlements. By J. N. L. Myres. 15 × 22 cm. xxxii + 248 pp., 17 figs. and maps. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986. Price: £15.00.

Fifty years ago a remarkable volume appeared, volume 1 in the Oxford History of England, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, known to successive generations simply as 'Collingwood and Myres'. For reasons intelligible on academic grounds as well as personal it was the only joint venture in the whole series. Collingwood, firm-minded though he was on Arthur, had no wish to discuss the coming of the English in detail and Sir Frank Stenton, busy on *Anglo-Saxon England*, was unhappy to take the story back beyond the Conversion to Christianity. The general editor solved his problem in masterly style by asking the then young scholar, J. N. L. Myres, to contribute chapters that would make good the gap between the end of Roman Britain and the arrival of St Augustine in Kent. Collingwood's *Roman Britain* was replaced by Peter Salway's in 1981, and now, in what must be an exceedingly rare if not unique occasion, Myres has brought out his section as an independent volume, *The English Settlements*. The result is a new work, though not, happily, in spite of the publisher's claim, an *entirely* new work. For Myres is the same man and his thought and central ideas such as the contrast between Gaul and Britain in the matter of urban and villa survival, though by no means rigid and inflexible, remain steadfast and powerful, buttressed by all available evidence and especially by the evidence of coinage, language dominance, and place-names. It is as hard now as it was in 1936 to quarrel with his conclusion (p. 217) that 'The language, institutions, culture, and material resources of the Romanized population virtually disappeared and their actual numbers must have been drastically reduced by war, flight, disease, and economic disaster'. Yet emphasis on general consistency must not give a false impression. There are new riches to be won from this volume. Over the last half-century Myres has himself contributed mightily to the scholarly understanding of the period, notably by his magisterial studies of the pottery. He has also kept abreast through articles and reviews of all that is going on in the field in Britain and in Europe, and especially in the work of the German scholars. The old virtues that made the choice of author in 1936 so appropriate are still there and include a splendid clarity of style, firm yet modest judgement, and a superb eye for country and feeling for countryside. It is a delight to welcome this new distinguished contribution to an old and distinguished series.

H. R. LOYN