

Reviews

Medieval Settlement and Economy North of the Lower Rhine: Archaeology and History of Kootwijk and the Veluwe (The Netherlands). By H. A. Heidinga. 244 pp., 84 figs., numerous pls. and 18 folding maps. Assen: van Gorcum for the A. E. van Giffen Instituut voor prae-en protohistorie (I.P.P.) Amsterdam, 1987.

Farm Life in a Carolingian Village. Edited by W. Groenman-van Waateringe and L. H. van Wijngaarden-Bakker. 129 pp., numerous figs. and pls. Assen: van Gorcum for the A. E. van Giffen Instituut voor prae-en protohistorie (I.P.P.) Amsterdam, 1987.

Early medieval settlement of the Veluwe was investigated by the I.P.P. between 1971 and 1981. This is a region of Pleistocene coversands in a triangle of land north of the Lower Rhine, west of the Ussel, and east of Utrecht in the Central Netherlands. The project was led by Heidinga and the archaeological report is based on his thesis, first prepared in Dutch in 1984, and now revised for this English publication. The environmental evidence is separately published in a smaller format under the editorships of Groenman-van Waateringe and van Wijngaarden-Bakker.

Six sites dating between the 2nd and 10th centuries A.D. in the Kootwijk area were partially excavated together with the 11th- to 12th-century site of Horst in another part of the Veluwe. The greater part of both volumes is, however, concerned with the almost entirely excavated site of Kootwijk 2, which dates from the 8th to 10th centuries. Here remarkable stratigraphic resolution is provided, because in the 10th century the site was inundated by sand blows which turned a substantial part of the Veluwe into a virtual desert. Not only the settlement but its fields with ploughmarks and fence lines have been remarkably preserved, are very well illustrated and have clearly been excavated with great skill. It began as a hamlet of six to eight farmhouses and developed into a village of twenty farmhouses together with barns and sunken huts, the latter mostly sterile of finds and interpreted as covered storage pits. There is detailed discussion of the chronology of house types and the site's relationship to present-day Kootwijk village, the earliest evidence for which appears to be 12th-century.

Sand blow between A.D. 950 and 1000 seems largely to have been caused by deforestation for which there is independent environmental evidence. Dune blow here is seen to be broadly contemporary, or perhaps a little earlier, than the major coastal sand inundations which led to the formation of the Younger Dunes. Heidinga presents a carefully argued case for a period of extreme drought in the 10th century. A large pool on the edge of the settlement shrank and then dried up; in later phases wells were sunk and arable fields encroached on the pool area. Watertable inferences from wells of different dates are used to reconstruct water levels and even precipitation over the occupation period, and this site-based evidence is then compared with other proxy climatic records from Europe and with the Greenland ice cores. Some, but by no means all, of these proxy records support the idea of a drier episode in the 10th century. The chronological precision of the various sources of climatic evidence required more critical examination, and in view of the need for the most precise possible chronology to facilitate comparison with historical records of climatic events it is regrettable that dendrochronological samples, though collected, were not analysed.

Discussion of the effects of climatic change on human behaviour on the Veluwe do have a somewhat over-deterministic flavour as the author acknowledges (p. 4). Here it is also pointed out that the report is 'not merely a list of data but a three-dimensional model'. It is based on the integration of archaeological and historical evidence in a geographical context.

The result is certainly more wide ranging and interesting to read than most excavation reports. It does not contain detailed descriptions of individual pits, postholes and structures; only a very few key artefacts are illustrated and these without detailed descriptions and sometimes without a scale. We are told, for example, that pottery rather than radiocarbon provides the most reliable key to the site's chronology but there is no specific discussion of the ceramics anywhere in this text. The report does not therefore provide a basis from which the conclusions can be subject to external critique and re-evaluation, nor is it spelt out where the original archive and finds may be consulted. These aspects do represent a serious weakness. Perhaps the cause of this is the work's hybrid nature, part excavation report and part doctoral thesis. In addition to the core information derived from the field programme itself and its direct archaeological and environmental analysis, a great deal of the historical context has been examined and woven into a narrative centring on the Veluwe and its place in the development of the society and economy of the Central Netherlands from the 4th to the 13th centuries and beyond. As such it forms part of a great and growing tradition of scholarship in north-western Europe which we in this country could well envy and emulate. It is the tradition of major sites, Odoorn, Wijster, Feddersen Wierde, Ezinge, Warendorf and others which have been comprehensively published and analysed within the context of certain dominant themes and within the time span of the Roman and medieval periods: the development of human living spaces, house, settlement and territory; the emergence of regional cultures in relationship to dimly documented tribal, even ethnic, polities; the peripheral growth of trade on the edges of the Frankish empire and its place in the establishment of the manor and the town; and the origins of the high medieval economy and social order. These form the substance of Part 3 in Heidinga's book.

Attempting to do all these things in a synthetic account is difficult enough, especially since, in these early historic periods, we have to wrestle with the inherent deficiencies in the documentary as well as the archaeological text. Adding the primary excavation data to this general synthesis merely compounds the problem, and there are clear signs in this volume that the author has had difficulties in binding these two elements together. Perhaps the most transparent example of this is the final chapter on roads and routeways where he produces a marvellous and convincing narrative about the ways in which people and things moved across this landscape and reconstructs from a wide variety of sources a conjectural map of the communications network *c.* 700. At the end of this account he tries to link this with the tracks found at Kootwijk 2, a settlement lying astride an important junction in this scheme, but has to admit almost total failure. The two simply refuse to bond together. Such blatant disjuncture between the general history and the specific archaeology is not, however, always the case and it is still our joint opinion that Heidinga has produced a lively account that consciously explores the meaning of what he has recovered from excavation. This, in general, is to be applauded and we would wish all producers of dull and grindingly factual reports to take note.

Getting at meaning is, however, fraught with danger as current philosophical debates in our subject constantly reveal. This is compounded when dealing with the Middle Ages where there is a great temptation to wander from documentary source to material culture and back again without being careful to employ proper critical analysis for each type of information. Heidinga, for example, does not pause to deal with the inherent problems of date, reliability and institutional motivation in the documents, in themselves matters of detail which are at least as important as the full examination of the pottery and small finds in substantiating assumptions and statements. Both forms of basic exegesis are crucially missing. These are broad points, but too often we also find that critical detail or analysis is absent. For example, on the complex subject of population size (pp. 171-72 and 175-77) figures are simply given without establishing how they were calculated or, more importantly given what was actually excavated, on what assumptions of household size and kin structure they were based. This is a problematic area fundamental to the debate on economic and social dynamics which has its own enormous literature, but which is not in any way discussed or even referenced.

Perhaps our criticism here is really a complaint about the structure of Heidinga's text in which there are, for example, sudden leaps into the 18th century and back to the 7th. They are exciting, but the reader has to work hard sometimes to know quite what point is being made. Also the same points, particularly conclusions, are constantly repeated or unnecessarily foreshadowed: about nuclear regions or the significance of the Herenhul as a central place or the importance of the iron industry, for example. Yet this is consciously done and perhaps the price we must pay for a vivid narrative which otherwise frees us from the tedium of the more methodical approach of stuffy scholarship.

It is a dangerous strategy, however, and must be well done, or at least better done in certain respects than it is in this book. Here one final criticism may be made. In dealing with material culture and particularly in dealing with its spatial, topographical and territorial implications, a comprehensive suite of diagrams and plans are basic needs. Heidinga's illustration of the site data such as house and settlement plans are exemplary, although mistakes occur, such as Fig. 16 which is not referred to in any part of the written text. When, however, it came to the wider landscape it was frequently difficult to discover the location of places and areas mentioned in the text. There were whole pages where place-names came in long strings, but which appeared on no map in the book. Constant reference was made, for example, to the Gelderse Vallei, an important area in the later development of the Veluwe, but it could be found on no map at all. On pp. 39-40 names of roads are used but not shown on a plan. The key figures should have been the three pull-out maps XV-XVII, but the first of them has not a single place-name on it, a particular problem on pp. 161-62. Such a book published in English for an international audience largely ignorant of the geography of the area does require more informative location maps. We suspect that this is another symptom of the conversion of a thesis into a book.

Turning to the environmental volume, the site was not ideal for the preservation of this evidence, waterlogged contexts being limited and bones were only preserved in some contexts. Investigations were aided by a previously published pollen diagram from 3 km away and this is supplemented by shorter sequences from the excavated area. Charred and waterlogged plant macrofossils are also reported, the seed types being well illustrated by photographs with an accompanying discussion of problems of identification. Other analyses include animal bones and phosphates. The report concludes with a detailed palaeoeconomic reconstruction by J. P. Pals which is closely based on the environmental evidence and helps to integrate it with the archaeology. At the beginning of the environmental report there is a nice little scene-setting outline of life and its problems on the site in the 10th century which might more logically have formed part of the conclusions.

Ecologists were involved in the project from the outset in the belief that culture and environment cannot be separated, and limitations of evidence and biases can be overcome by the interdisciplinary approach which has been so successfully promoted by the work of the I.P.P. on many projects. It is perhaps unfortunate that here the results are not presented in a single integrated format. The environmental volume does carefully relate the material to the archaeological contexts sampled but Heidinga's volume only contains occasional references to the environmental evidence and some of the points he makes do not seem to be fully supported by evidence presented in the environmental volume as the contributors make clear. Phosphate analysis does not support the archaeological assumption that the long houses comprised one-third house and the rest byre, nor are the phosphate values in the fields significantly different from those of undisturbed podsoils, suggesting that manuring was not practised despite the evidence, which is supported by the plant macrofossils, for intensive cultivation. Low phosphate values are unlikely to be due to the low pH as is suggested but to the predominantly sandy nature of the soils and their limited potential to fix phosphate (J. Crowther, pers. comm.). It is also argued in the archaeological report that the development of plaggen soils, widely attested from the 10th century, correlates with the increasing importance of rye and may in part have been a response to drought conditions. The macrofossil evidence does not, however, support the assumed increasing importance of rye. In view of the importance of the sedimentary sequence to Heidinga's thesis it is surprising

that these geoarchaeological aspects were not subject to any analytical investigation. The pond sediments might profitably have been examined and micromorphological work on the buried soils would have helped to resolve the manuring problem. The format of the two volumes is also quite different, the environmental volume contains full supporting information in terms of species lists and measurements in contrast to the much more selective presentation of the archaeological evidence.

These two volumes are very attractive accounts of a major project which is certainly essential reading for anybody with an interest in the early medieval rural settlements of north-west Europe. They contain important studies of buildings, settlements and their associated landscapes, and a rare, integrated overview of production in the early medieval economy, including both agriculture and specialist industry. The difficulties of providing basic information which might allow later reinterpretation and also of integrating the detailed cultural and environmental evidence within the context of a readable general account have not been fully resolved, but even so the works represent substantial achievements. Kootwijk is after all published and it also received proper palaeoenvironmental attention: this is more than can be said for most early medieval settlement excavations in Britain.

DAVID AUSTIN and MARTIN BELL

A Saxon Bed Burial on Swallowcliffe Down. By George Speake. 21 × 29 cm. vii + 135 pp., 97 figs. and pls. London: English Heritage, 1989. ISBN 185074-211-1. Price: £18.00 pb.

An early Bronze Age barrow on Swallowcliffe Down, Wiltshire, was excavated by Major L. Vatcher and Mrs Faith de M. Vatcher in 1966. A secondary Anglo-Saxon burial had usurped the place of the original burial, and, although robbed in the chest area, it still contained a bewildering array of personal possessions. Preparation of a report was delayed, and after the death of Mrs Vatcher in 1978 the task was taken over by George Speake. In the resultant volume there are descriptions of the site, the excavation and the finds, followed by charter evidence and conclusions. The descriptions and discussions are exhaustive, and of value to the serious student or specialist. The value to this select band of readers would have been greater had the arrangement followed the accustomed pattern of separation of description, discussion and illustration, but one follows the other for each object in turn with accompanying illustrations of objects from the grave and also other objects from elsewhere for comparison, sometimes confusingly included in the same figure.

From the evidence of the bones and remaining objects it may be seen that the occupant was a rich young woman, for the surviving remains show that the haul acquired by the robbers from the chest area must have amply repaid the effort of digging. She was accompanied by a wood and leather satchel with metal fittings and an elaborately decorated plaque, as well as by an iron pan/skillet, an iron-bound and a bronze-bound bucket. By the left femur there was also a maple-wood casket with bronze fittings which contained a silver spoon, four silver safety-pin brooches, a tinned bronze strap mount, two beads, an iron rod, two knives, a comb and a bronze spherical object, for most of which late 7th-century parallels can be found. When in 1976 I was given the opportunity to comment on the grave goods before conservation, the only object comparable with the silvered bronze spherical object was perceived to be the bronze sphere in a Viking woman's grave of c. A.D. 850 found at Vinjum, Aurland, Norway. The elaborate spiral and zoomorphic decoration of the Norwegian find is clearly Celtic, and establishes an origin similar to that declared by the enamelled decoration on the Swallowcliffe handle. It was realized that the two hemispheres of thin sheet metal soldered together were not suitable for a suggested use as a censer for these receptacles were necessarily made of cast bronze to withstand heat, and a function as an altar water sprinkler was concluded. For this reason analogies with censers, continental bronze capsules, crystal balls and perforated spoons do not seem sufficiently relevant to require the lengthy

commentaries accorded to them in this volume. As with the contemporary hanging bowls, also initially of Celtic origin which made frequent appearances in Anglo-Saxon graves, it was no doubt in the first place one of a production line of altar equipment manufactured in monastic workshops for Christian use with holy water. In fact the hanging bowls seem intended to contain, and the sprinklers to dispense, holy water. Both were probably intended for ecclesiastical use in the first place, and the large number of hanging bowls in Anglo-Saxon graves shows that they were acquired by wealthy customers, and one may surmise that holy water to go with them could also be obtained.

A parallel not quoted is one other very similar object found at Felmingham, Norfolk, which probably performed the same function at an earlier date. It is similar in size, 217 mm long compared with 200 mm, and construction, two hemispheres being mounted on a handle expanding in four lobes at the junction with the sphere and in a ring at the other end. Differences are that the handle is not hollow, it is attached on the join of the hemispheres, and instead of the perforations there is a single hole (Gilbert, *Bull. Board Celtic Studs.* xxviii (1980), 159-87; Boon, *Antiq. J.*, LXIII (1983), 363-65). This was included in the famous 3rd-century group of Romano-British sacred objects, and may have functioned as a water sprinkler rather than as a rattle as has been suggested; a water container was also to hand as the hoard was deposited in a lidded terracotta copy of a sacred metal cauldron. It seems likely that the Swallowcliffe sprinkler represents not only the continuance through centuries of the manufacture of a ritual bronze object by Celtic craftsmen, together with improvements in its design, but also the adoption into the Christian religion of yet another earlier pagan custom.

There is a welcome contribution by Mrs Guido on the large polychrome bead, with a list of most of the comparable examples, unfortunately not accompanied by illustrations. Neither the drawing of the Swallowcliffe bead nor the photograph with transmitted light shows the construction of the reticella cable, both giving the impression instead of a zigzag trail, the self-colour part of the twist not appearing as distinct from the body of the bead. In discussing the possible iron spindle Speake comments on the absence of a spindle whorl in the grave, and does not consider this bead for that purpose, in spite of its suitable shape and size. However, in view of the fact that it was not found in the casket but in a disturbed part of the grave (possibly from the chest area) it does seem more likely that its function was ornamental or amuletic. The possibility of manufacture of these beads in England as well as the Valsgärde type of glass bowl has been suggested elsewhere. The two palm cups are an established type, but are unusual in that, in common with a cup in a burial at Cow Lowe, Derbyshire, the rim has been reheated until solid after being rolled.

A series of cleats, eyelets and nails betray the existence of a body container with handles for carrying which here, and in some other Anglo-Saxon graves, can be interpreted as a bed; the reconstruction suggested of a lattice-work base is convincing. There was probably a variety of body containers used for transport and display before burial: beds, biers, coffins (lidded or lidless) and stretchers, but information from the older excavations is not very detailed. Speake's suggestion of a curved wagon shape for the Sutton Hoo ship burial container would explain the curvature of the cleats, but it has to be rejected as the cleats fell with the shaft of the nails pointing downwards. If they were outside a wagon they would have fallen on the nail head side, and if they were on the inside the curvature of the iron plates would have been in the opposite direction.

The author's special interest in ornament comes to the fore in the full discussion of the scrolls and interlace on the plaque on the satchel. There are also comparisons with the remains of other probable Anglo-Saxon satchels, but it would have been illuminating to compare it with the well-preserved and closely dated leather satchel found in grave 2268 at Krefeld-Gellep, Germany, for this was of like size and was also found with silver strap fittings and was fastened in the same way with a strap passing through a buckle-framed hole in the lid. Finally, evidence from Anglo-Saxon charters is used to suggest that not only is the name of the barrow known: *Posses hlaewe* = Poss's tumulus, but that there may be a connection between the man's name *Poss*, the O.E. word *pusa*, a bag or scrip, and the satchel in the grave. Prudence, however, required the author to reject some of these seductive ideas.

This monograph shows how the publication of old excavations is worthwhile, and it is to be hoped that more will see the light of day. Familiar names of people who have contributed to the volume in one way or another lend additional quality to the report, among them Stuart Piggott who repeated his Sutton Hoo experience by planning some of the finds, Mike Corfield who directed their conservation, Elisabeth Crowfoot who reported on the textiles, and Jim Thorn who produced the meticulous drawings of the finds.

VERA I. EVISON

Maritime Celts, Frisians and Saxons. Edited by Sean McGrail. (C.B.A. Research Report, 71). 21 × 29 cm. x + 140 pp., 99 figs., 5 tables. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1990. ISBN 0-906780-93-4. Price £27.00 pb.

This volume is a collection of papers resulting from a conference held in 1988 to 'promote discussion of the maritime and riverine aspects of the southern North Sea and Channel region from c. 300 B.C. to c. A.D. 800'. Chronologically it stays mostly within these limits, but spatially it is in fact rather more wide-ranging, taking in the seas around Scandinavia and going as far south as Lake Neuchatel as well. My overall impression is that these papers are all competent pieces of work in their relevant fields, and that they do all in some way relate to the theme.

The first two papers outline the complexities involved in reconstructing sea-level and coastline changes. These are rather technical, even though written for the general reader, but the point is clearly conveyed that there is no simple answer to the question as to what, at any time in the past, a specific piece of coastline might have been like. Drawing a solid line around some contour line (as Carver does in the penultimate paper in this volume) and suggesting it may approximate to a past coastline is clearly no more than an exercise: far more needs to be done at any location to see how things really were, and to produce the kinds of maps for England which Tooley shows have already been achieved in the Netherlands. This is a field where, as the authors say, collaboration between archaeologists and geographers could be extremely fruitful for both. The paper on the identification of the Iron Age landing place at Hengistbury Head shows how such co-operation can work on the small scale.

The next seven papers, on boats and waterborne traffic from the late Iron Age and Roman periods, may, together with Crumlin-Pedersen's paper on Scandinavian boats and Filmer-Sankey's paper on Snape, form the core of the book for most readers. The editor, Sean McGrail, provides an overview of boats and boatmanship, ranging widely over a great variety of types of evidence and types of boat, traditions of boat-building, trade routes and navigation, harbours and landing places. The other papers are more detailed. Some of the material is new: Margaret Rule's account of her excavation of a Roman boat which sank off Guernsey, and William Filmer-Sankey's account of his painstaking excavation of a log-boat in sandy soil at Snape, which raises the unnerving possibility of a 'ghostly navy of hitherto unnoticed sandy stains' (Carver, p. 117). The cemetery at Slusegard on Bornholm is probably new to many English readers. It was rich in boat burials rather like the Snape boat, very different from the famous Viking period ship burials. There are also accounts of fragmentary boats rescued from ancient riverbeds in Holland. It is tantalizing to have such a brief summary of de Weerd's discussion of the Netherlands boats, since he disagrees with other authors as to their antecedents. It clearly would be interesting to know how far Mediterranean and northern boat-building traditions influenced each other, and how far the use of the name 'Romano-Celtic' can be justified. Marsden reassesses a ship found at Blackfriars and reminds us that the last resting place of a ship, of all artefact types, need not be near its place of origin. Dendrochronology allows Beat Arnold to show how the logboats from Lake Neuchatel were made in an extraordinary way, more akin to sculpture than boat building as it developed in later centuries. As well as Slusegard, Crumlin-Pedersen turns his attention to Nydam, where apparently not one but four boats were discovered in 1863 on the

eve of the Danish-Prussian war. One of them remains hidden in the bog to this day, at a secret location known only to the Danish national museum, and so may yet one day come to light. Gustav Milne's paper on maritime traffic between the Rhine and Roman Britain arises logically from his work on the London waterfront. He emphasizes the likelihood of transshipment of cargoes, rather than simple trade of goods from one port to another.

The remaining papers relate less specifically to boats, and deal with the later period. They cover a wide range of topics. Stephane Lebecq and Detlev Ellmers examine the existence and activities of Frisians. Ian Wood suggests we have exaggerated the part played by the Saxons in piracy and elsewhere, and proposes instead a Frankish domination of the southern North Sea. Maybe the most thought-provoking of this group is the paper by Martin Carver on pre-Viking traffic in the North Sea. Looking at distance in terms of the time it would take to travel, either by sea or land, does appear to show why East Anglia might have had more in common, culturally, with parts of Scandinavia than with south-western England. And it is surely worth questioning accepted wisdom as to the possibility of substantial direct sailings between eastern England and Scandinavia in the days before Viking raids.

This is a valuable collection, which will clearly be a useful starting point for discussion of maritime archaeology in the later prehistoric/early medieval periods. Yet somehow I did not come away with a clear overall picture of the subject. This is partly a problem inherent in collections of papers, partly specific to this topic, which still suffers from inadequate and scattered evidence. When the precise constructional details of a very small number of surviving boats are sometimes still in question, it is difficult to get very far in establishing the evolution of boat-building traditions. Also, there is a division between specialized papers on coastlines and boats on the one hand, not always easy for the non-specialist to appreciate, and the more general papers on the other. Perhaps the chronological divide between Roman and early medieval is not entirely successfully overcome either. But it clearly is important both to establish boat technology through careful examination of each and every surviving boat and to put those boats in the wider context of the societies who used them, to say nothing of geography and oceanography, so all these topics do have a place here. So this can be seen as a pioneering work, with clear pointers to future work in this field.

C. M. HILLS

Bækkegård and Glasergård: Two Cemeteries from the Late Iron Age on Bornholm. (Arkæologiske studier VIII). By Lars Jørgensen. 21 × 30 cm. 176 pp., 65 figs., 31 pls. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1990. Price: Dkr. 200,00.

This handsome publication (in English with a Danish summary) describes two cemeteries on the island of Bornholm in the Baltic, dated to A.D. 530–850, and excavated 1876–80, 1890–91 and 1986. The first site, Bækkegård, with some 165 graves, is the largest Late Iron Age cemetery to be excavated on Bornholm. Some 230 m to the south-east was the site of Glasergård, a much smaller cemetery, but containing at least six graves of particularly wealthy character. The report describes the history of investigation of both sites, and provides a full catalogue of the grave-goods, with illustrations. The bulk of the volume, however, is concerned with the wider issues raised by the interpretation of the cemeteries. As a case study of what can be done with old data it reminds one of Clarke's Glastonbury analysis.

Although skeletons did not survive, graves are sexed on the basis of the grave-goods. They are dated on the basis of the female grave-goods, male graves being assigned the date of the nearest neighbouring female grave. Although this sounds dangerous, the resulting phases do seem to correlate with a proposed artefact typology based on the width of seax blades. Three family plots are identified, making it possible to study burial practice within a single family during a period of c. 200 years. Within each generation it is suggested that there was a

'primary spouse', with whom rich grave-goods would be buried. There is a ratio of female to male primary spouses of 3:1, but we are told that this is due to the lower life expectancy of women, and the fact that the family only signified status with the first death. The relative wealth of graves is based purely on wealth scores, of course, which really makes it impossible to compare burials which do not share the same possible range of grave-goods. The scores are based on the rarity of items; thus a type that occurs in only one grave makes that a very high status grave. This leads to some very artificial and arbitrary results, such that a bead-string spacer is the highest value object which can be placed in a female grave, ten times more valuable than a beaked fibula, for example. To rest arguments about changes in inheritance systems on such foundations is courageous, if not foolhardy.

The interpretation of the cemeteries is then placed in the context of settlement patterns on Bornholm, and of the island's social development from the Early Iron Age to the Viking Age, and here I found the arguments more convincing. From the 6th to 8th centuries A.D. high agricultural yields created the basis for the foundation of a central power with an attached warrior aristocracy. It is argued that from A.D. 530–630 the expenditure of resources in the graves of the elite is evidence of a highly competitive situation. Changes in the region's power structure made it necessary to signal the recently acquired status of an innovating elite group, with links in Merovingian Gaul. Then, from the late 7th century onwards, standardization of grave-goods is evidence for reduced competition and increased stability, linked with the emergence of a kingdom on Bornholm and the consolidation of a class structure dependent upon it.

This volume takes us a long way further forward than the simple cataloguing of individual graves, and whether or not one accepts the interpretations reached, it provides a challenging example of what can be done with old cemetery data. Its publication should be welcomed with enthusiasm.

JULIAN RICHARDS

Vivre au Moyen Age. 30 ans d'archéologie médiévale en Alsace. Edited by Bernadette Schnitzler. 26 × 28 cm. 523 pp., 561 figs., 16 pls. Strassburg: Les Musees de la ville Strasbourg, 1990. Price: 320 F.

Located in the centre of Europe, bordering the Rhine between France and Germany, the frontier region of Alsace has been the stage for some of the most momentous political and military events of the medieval and modern eras. Since the Roman occupation and subsequent Frankish settlement the area has been subject to territorial dispute by Carolingian dukes, Holy Roman Emperors and finally by the warring nation states of France and Germany. Strassburg's status as a Free Imperial city during the Middle Ages, however, ensured its political and economic security as the region's capital and its rise as a major commercial and manufacturing centre. Today the city, despite the destruction of the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), is renowned for its fine Gothic cathedral and churches and medieval to post-medieval vernacular architecture.

That said, little is still known (at least here) about the social and economic development of the region as a whole, and less still about the past daily lives of its inhabitants, of whatever social class. An exhibition and accompanying catalogue, conceived and executed as part of the French Year of Archaeology (1990), is an attempt by local historians and archaeologists in Alsace to redress the balance of knowledge for the medieval to early modern period. It is especially refreshing to note that there is an equal emphasis on recent archaeological work both in Strassburg and in its hinterland, particularly in provincial towns such as Colmar. In scope the catalogue covers the last 30 years of archaeology in Alsace from the Migration period to the early modern era.

Preceding the extensive object catalogue section, the volume consists of over 70 essays (by over 30 individual contributors) grouped into five major thematic sections: the archaeo-

logy of towns, rural settlement, castle excavations, funerary archaeology, and the archaeology of mining. The chapter on towns comprises essays on the fortifications and town walls of Strassburg and Colmar, and the organization of urban space. It also includes individual discussions of the Strassburg bone-working industry, its importance as a commercial centre, its ceramic sequence, and analyses of the contents of latrines recently excavated in the city. This introductory section is followed by a review of rural archaeology in the region containing a study of demographic trends and a survey of vernacular architecture in the Upper Rhineland.

The section on medieval castle archaeology contains a number of interim excavation reports and studies of stone quarry sites, water supplies and an extensive article on castle heating systems, the primary evidence for the latter provided by ceramic stove-tile finds. Individual case-studies of church excavations and architectural studies, and a discussion of cemeteries and funerary practices make up the chapter on Alsatian ecclesiastical and funerary archaeology. The final chapter on mining (coal, silver, and cobalt among others) includes essays on extraction sites and methods, processing workshops and an examination of the lifestyle of the late medieval and 16th-century miner through the wide range of domestic items recovered from mine and associated settlement excavations. In view of the recently discovered mid 15th-century coal mine at Coleorton, Leicestershire (*The Independent*, 30 March 1991), this chapter is of particular relevance to archaeologists in Britain working on the history of the early extraction industries.

The catalogue section, comprising almost one third of the entire volume, contains 413 individual entries grouped according to the five main chapter headings. Pottery, both vessels and tiles, and glass finds predominate, although worked bone, clay pipes, leather, treen and a wide range of ferrous and non-ferrous metalwork are well represented. In terms of the wide spectrum of archaeological finds the volume will prove of equal value to the researcher as a number of comparable medieval and later finds monographs from the Continent (e.g. *Opravingen in Amsterdam* (1977) or *Funde aus dem mittelalterlichen Nürnberg* (1984)). However, in the absence of the final excavation reports, the finds are generally presented out of context and lack any precise or refined dating information. One glaring omission of note is the absence of any environmental material, despite the inclusion of reports on latrine contents from town excavations.

Considering the range and quantity of material published here, the reviewer would still question the somewhat variable level of description allocated to individual finds. This is particularly noticeable with the ceramic entries which would benefit considerably from a standard system of ware or fabric codes. Moreover, questions about the origin of some of the 'imported' luxury wares remain unanswered (e.g. Cat. 1.119). The general quality of ceramic and glass illustrations is patchy but adequate in the main. Incidentally, it is a relief to see stove-tiles illustrated with profile and section drawings, which are so vital for the study of tile-stove construction and technological developments.

Apart from these misgivings about the uneven nature the catalogue section, perhaps inevitable when 34 individual specialists are involved, the volume provides an eagerly awaited and up-to-date introduction to the material culture of medieval and later Alsace. Doubtless this publication will prove to be an important work of reference in European medieval and early post-medieval archaeology for many years to come.

DAVID R. M. GAIMSTER

Saxon London: an Archaeological Investigation. By Alan Vince. 16 × 24 cm. xii + 164 pp., 76 figs. and pls. London: Seaby, 1990. ISBN 185264-0197. Price: £16.50 hb.

Over the last two decades archaeology has revolutionized our knowledge of London during the six or seven centuries before the Norman Conquest. Dr Vince has made a key contribution to that process, organizing and giving intelligible shape to a disparate mass of

material taken from the ground. In this short book, the first of a projected series, he gives us an overview of the period in his characteristically straightforward style.

From two sequences of chronological ('history') and thematic ('aspects') chapters the main outlines of the story can be unfolded. Between about A.D. 400 and A.D. 600 there is little, if any, evidence for settlement or activity in the city and its immediate environs. Then, between the 7th and 9th centuries, there was a large trading settlement along the Strand, to the west and upstream of the former Roman city, which now seems to have housed little more than episcopal and, probably, royal establishments. The extra-mural settlement especially flourished during the 8th century. It was a powerful economic force, and was characterized by trading links with East Anglia, Kent, the Rhineland, and the valley of the Meuse, although direct evidence on the fundamental character of the trade is lacking. On present interpretations of the material remains, 9th-century London experienced a recession, although some other evidence points to the continuing profitability of the London markets. There followed, probably under King Alfred in the 880s, a dramatic restoration of settlement and marketing in the protected space within the Roman walls, although the details and timing of the process by which the intra-mural settlement succeeded the suburban one are far from clear. Over the following century London, while evidently important among English towns, seems not to have enjoyed its former role in international commerce, and evidence for the city's trade beyond its immediate hinterland points to regular contacts with the Upper Thames Valley. From the later 10th century onwards there are signs of rapid growth, with renewed participation in an overseas trading system which resembled that of the 8th century. Within the city walls it is possible to identify some streets which seem to have been laid out in the 880s, and some others which were added to that system in the later 10th century and afterwards. The development of quays and landing places began in that later period, at least on the downstream side of the bridge, where the revived overseas trade may initially have been concentrated. A notable feature of the 11th century was the foundation of parish churches and cemeteries, presumably a sign of increasing population and wealth. Settlement seems to have been denser and more extensive in the western part of the city, but the archaeological evidence for the renewal of suburban growth is inconclusive.

Virtually the whole of that story, with its important implications for economic and political history generally, can be told from the archaeological evidence alone, despite its patchy distribution and its incomplete state of analysis. But, as with so much writing on London's archaeology, the reader is left hungry for a fuller and more rigorous (especially concerning chronology) account of the discoveries and their setting. In this particular case, the need to provide a popular, summary account may have obliged the author (wrongly, in my view) to cover the non-archaeological evidence too, thus leaving inadequate space for the account of the material remains. Dr Vince's text comes alive when he discusses sites and artefacts (especially pottery and coins), but he is heavy-handed, repetitive, and far from sure in his handling of the documentary and topographical evidence.

This forced compression of the archaeological description is probably the underlying cause of the confusion and the internal contradictions evident, for example, in the dating and location of the earliest settlements in and around London (pp. 11, 18, 131; Figs. 18, 67), or the shift from the Strand to the city (pp. 24-25). A further problem with the book, however, concerns the lack of a wider view which might have clarified its basic structure — a problem which perhaps derives from the nature of London's archaeology overall. Thus, the findings are not related to any general model of London's development, which would provide both some internal check on the arguments used and make it possible to deploy evidence from later periods in interpreting this one. London is clearly placed neither as an English city nor as a participant in the economic life of north-western Europe, both topics on which there has been a good deal of writing in recent years. In the absence of this wider context, remarks such as those on the demography of the city (p. 149) or its impact on the countryside (p. 155) are at best jejune. Worst of all, given the attention devoted to documentary sources, is the failure to provide a clear account of the changing character of London's geo-political relationship with the English kingdoms.

Nevertheless, this is an attractive book which brings important new material and ideas together in one place. It is well produced (despite a copy editor who had problems with both Old English and French names) and has clear maps and plans. One hopes that in the near future Dr Vince will have the opportunity to address at greater length the archaeological issues raised by this text.

DEREK KEENE

The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland. By Nancy Edwards. 19 × 24 cm. xiii + 226 pp., 95 figs. and pls. London: Batsford, 1990. ISBN 0-7134-5367-2. Price: £35.00 hb.

A general volume which deals with the archaeological material from Ireland in the period from the 5th to 12th centuries has been much needed, and this finely produced book intends to fill this gap. Using recent excavation and survey results as well as the better known major sites and finds, Nancy Edwards provides a series of circumspect and balanced reviews within a set of thematic chapter headings. As a rule, documentary evidence is not used, though at various points information is taken from the secular laws, Annals, saints' lives and other literature.

The first chapter of the book deals with the Roman impact, but it is all too brief. The antecedents of the early medieval period are tantalizingly hinted at but no more; it must be granted that the Iron Age is truly the Dark Age of Ireland, but is surely not as dark as it seems here.

The chapter on ring-forts offers a contrast with the first, as so many sites are known and over 100 have been excavated to varying extent and quality. A wide range of material from excavation and survey is laid out in considerable detail. There is little sparkle here, however; for example, the rehearsal of the various arguments concerning ring-fort dating seems laboured. Perhaps valuable to a university student as a crib for the main viewpoints, for the general reader the final conclusions hardly justify the space taken up. The other settlement forms are something of a catalogue, with crannogs dominating discussion; promontory forts, the royal sites of Knowth and Clogher, and open sites are also mentioned. It is not thought possible to attempt any consideration of relationships between these.

Two chapters cover production; agriculture is outlined in one and craft, exchange and trade in the other. In the case of agriculture, the range of evidence from field systems to faunal remains, and carbonized grains to water-powered mills are described, but no conclusions offered. The physical landscape and climate are seen as playing a major controlling part in production, but no regional differences can be ascertained. With crafts, each is briefly described by material used. Mundane artefacts largely dominate discussion, with stone carving and fine metal artefacts being saved for the art chapter.

The church is very visible archaeologically in early medieval Ireland. Although Nancy Edwards does not like the term 'early Christian' to describe the period, a large amount of the material which survives is ecclesiastical. Churches, round towers, high crosses, grave slabs and burial grounds are all well attested, and are elegantly summarized. The artefacts in metal, stone and vellum which were produced for, and often by, the church are discussed in the art chapter, together with secular material. This is the best part of the book, with Nancy Edwards at ease with her material. Despite over a page on 'problems' at the beginning, there are many positive statements and we are presented with a good spread of material. The later manuscripts and metalwork indicate a revived patronage and production which, whilst not of the quality perhaps of the 7th-9th centuries, indicates a broad range of external influences on the Irish artistic output. With regard to origins of motifs, styles and techniques, Nancy Edwards is wisely guarded.

The Vikings are given a chapter of their own, but this is tacked on at the end of the book. The hoards, burials, towns and very limited other settlement is covered, but there is no section on interaction with the Irish, which would have integrated it more successfully with

the rest of the volume. It might have been better if the Viking material had been spread within the thematic chapters, because they all cover the period both before and after the Viking impact. However, we are given little insight into the effects of these invaders.

This book will be much consulted by university students, and will find a market with the general reader. It is a mine of up-to-date information on sites and objects. However, many major issues are not addressed: the development of the church and its contribution to craft specialization, production and internal trade, the question of indigenous urban development, the formation of major dynasties and their effects on centres of power, the changes in external trade and exchange links, all figure little. The price of the book is quite high for personal purchases, but Batsford should be encouraged to produce a paperback edition. The line illustrations are of a high standard, there are few printing mistakes, and generally the black and white plates incorporated within the text have reproduced well.

Whilst it may not fire the imagination, or provide much in the way of explanation, this book is an accurate, safe and sober review of the material culture evidence, and Nancy Edwards should be congratulated on providing this.

HAROLD MYTUM

Anglo-Scandinavian Pottery from Coppergate (Archaeology of York XVI/5). By A. J. Mainman. 19 × 24 cm. 165 pp., 87 figs., 7 pls. London: Council for British Archaeology for York Archaeological Trust, 1990. ISBN 0-906780-89-6. Price: £18.00 pb.

This volume deals with a collection of almost 35,000 sherds of Anglo-Scandinavian pottery from 16–22 Coppergate spanning the period from the mid 9th century to the mid to late 11th century. It follows the previous York Fascicule format, although the full-colour wraparound cover is an innovation. Colour also appears within the volume, on Plates XXIV and XXV which illustrate the extremely interesting and prolific York Early Glazed ware.

Over the years one has heard enough about the ceramics from Coppergate to make their publication an eagerly awaited event. In particular, the evidence for mid Saxon and Anglian pottery is presented in a clear manner and it is, for the first time, possible to evaluate it. There are ten sherds of Ipswich ware and a further eight of Ipswich-type, six sherds of Maxey-type ware and a further ten of miscellaneous mid Saxon types, including sherds of a reduced greyware spouted pitcher with burnished lattice decoration. Such decoration is a feature of late 9th- to early 10th-century pottery produced in Lincoln (Adams Gilmour 1988, Fig. 27 No. 1) but the rim form is completely without parallel there. In the main, these types are found in the early, Anglian settlement at Fishergate and there is therefore some reason to suppose that they are residual from a period of occupation which has left no stratigraphic trace on the site, as Mainman has suggested. The sherds, where illustrated, seem to be small and quite possibly brought onto the site as part of an Anglian period manuring scatter or as dumping in the Anglo-Scandinavian period. Neither possibility is mooted, nor is there sufficient evidence given in the text to allow the reader to form any opinion. Two groups of Handmade wares are also recognized. Handmade ware Type 1 is represented by 89 sand tempered sherds from globular cooking pots with everted rims. Because of its absence from Fishergate and its early stratigraphic position Mainman places the manufacture of this ware in the late 9th century. The manufacturing technique seems to be the main reason for calling this ware 'Anglian' and one waits with interest the publication of the Fishergate assemblage to see local parallels for this form. Type 2 has little visible temper and no diagnostic sherds. As on many urban sites there is also a collection of small scraps which might or might not date to the mid 9th century or earlier.

These mid Saxon and potentially mid Saxon sherds are numerically insignificant, even in the earliest period, when compared with sherds of York ware, the wheelthrown, presumably kiln-fired ware which accounts for the majority of sherds found in mid 9th- to mid 10th-century levels in York. We are told that Period 3 represents activity of more than one phase but whether there is any possibility of assigning pottery to separate phases within

Period 3 and, if so, whether York ware is present in the same frequency throughout, is unclear from the text.

Another aspect of the Coppergate assemblage of interest is that associated with glass-making. In *The Viking Dig*, Richard Hall describes a Period 3 glass-working furnace (Hall 1984, 43-44, Figs. 42, 43, 44, 45) and this furnace is referred to by Mainman (p. 382). However, the sherds associated with it are not described on pages 469 to 476, unless they are those which 'could be residual Roman examples'. Furthermore, glassworking vessels are stated to appear first on the site in Period 4B, dated to the mid 10th century. Despite this puzzling omission the crucibles which are published are remarkable and include Stamford ware vessels of open bowl form. This form is rare in Stamford ware, although there is a comparable dish or bowl from Lincoln (Adams Gilmour 1988, Fig. 42 No. 14). It therefore seems that these vessels, like the metalworking crucibles, were imported from Stamford specifically for use in glassworking.

The Early Glazed wares from Coppergate, mentioned in passing above, are another remarkable collection. Before this publication there were no pre-Conquest glazed wares published from York, except Stamford ware. Coppergate has produced 355 sherds. This substantial collection is impressive in its size (Hereford, by comparison, could only muster a dozen sherds and London a similar number) and can be divided into five main types. As Mainman makes clear, there are more sherds of pre-Conquest, non-Stamford glazed ware from Coppergate than from the rest of the British Isles put together. This leads her to hint, not unreasonably, that at least the most common of her types, EG Type 1, is of local manufacture. However, the huge size of the Coppergate assemblage must be remembered and the 355 Early Glazed sherds form just 1 per cent of the total collection. Nevertheless, as Mainman states, there may well be a connection between this production of high quality, highly decorated pottery and the contemporary production of glazed floor tiles and of lead glass objects. Now that a large body of material exists it will be possible to take the study further through the use of scientific characterization techniques.

Lastly, one must mention the Coppergate imports (or, if one does not accept Mainman's case for the source of the Early Glazed wares, the other Coppergate imports). There are six sherds of Tating/black-burnished wares of the type known from mid Saxon sites such as Hamwic, Ipswich and Lundenwic/the Strand. These are either residual from the earliest, Period 3, occupation or may have been imported to the site as sherds. Two sherds of Badorf ware may be contemporary, although there is slight evidence from London and King's Lynn that these vessels were still imported in the late 11th century or later. A handful of unattributable but probably imported sherds was also found, including a further four sherds (from one vessel) tentatively identified as a mid Saxon period import. Thus, there are perhaps 12 imports in a residual collection of c. 188 mid Saxon period sherds (some of which may actually be of late 9th-century date). By contrast, there are 108 sherds of Anglo-Scandinavian period imports, mostly of Pingsdorf ware, out of a total of c. 35,000 sherds. This gives a frequency of 0.3 per cent (compared with a figure of c. 5 per cent for contemporary London). The reality of this decline will become clearer once the Fishergate collection is also in print.

In summary, there is no question but that this is a major contribution to the study of 9th- to 11th-century pottery. Indeed, in terms of both quantity and quality it is difficult to see circumstances in which as impressive a sequence of pottery from a site in the British Isles will again be available for study. As always with the York Archaeological Trust, one eagerly awaits the next instalment.

ALAN VINCE

Anglo-Saxon Settlements. Edited by Della Hooke. 19 × 25 cm. xiv + 319 pp., 59 figs. and pls. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988. ISBN 0-631-15454-x. Price: £40.00 hb.

This well produced book is a collection of fourteen papers from the 1986 Institute of British Geographers' seminar on 'The Historical Geography of Early Medieval Settlement'.

The title is a little misleading, for the subject is in fact the Anglo-Saxon landscape, but it is still a very valuable review of many of the themes which are at the forefront of current research. Four papers provide a useful if brief overview of urban settlement. They consider the process and chronology of urbanization, the integration of urban and rural systems as demonstrated by Hamwic, the pattern of urban settlement as seen in Kent, and concludes with a review of the character of one site, York. With the rural landscape the coverage is less balanced. Surprisingly there is little effective analysis of the settlements themselves as opposed to studies of settlement patterns. The one exception is Blair's paper on the minster church; an excellent review which combines the study of the wider administrative and landscape patterns with a detailed analysis of the place of the church within the topography of individual settlements. The geographical coverage of the volume is also uneven, the majority of the studies coming from the south and east of England, but the presence of several continental papers does reflect the degree to which Anglo-Saxon settlement studies draw upon and contribute to European research. As Hodges argues, England was an integral part of the European social and economic system and it is notable that the processes of urbanization, settlement nucleation, and of settlement and field system planning found in England are mirrored in Europe.

The sheer quantity and range of information presented in this volume shows the enormous leap forward which has occurred since the subject was reviewed in the 1973 Oxford Symposium (T. Rowley (ed.), *Anglo Saxon Settlement and Landscape*, B.A.R. 6 (1974)). The authors include geographers, historians, and archaeologists, demonstrating the healthy and dynamic nature of the subject where the complementary potentials of the various disciplines, often applied together by a single author, interact to provide numerous avenues for research. It is sad to see that place-name specialists have not responded as effectively to this exciting situation. The main paper here focuses around criticism of the use by non-specialists of place-name evidence and defence of theories based on correlations with 1960s archaeology. Despite vastly more evidence, archaeologists now recognize how inadequate our database is and how carefully patterns should be interpreted, yet we still find place-name scholars building hypotheses on patterns of correlation with archaeological data over distances of five or ten miles. It is because place-name specialists have failed to grasp the new challenges that others have used their evidence. Thus we find it is a geographer and an archaeologist who point the way forward: with Hooke's excellent characterization of regional landscapes from Saxon charter bounds and, in a very small but ultimately very important way, Hall's demonstration of direct and very local linkage of archaeological evidence with, for example, 'cote' and 'wick' place-names.

Most notable for its absence from this volume is any contribution from large-scale excavation to the study of rural as opposed to urban settlement. In most respects this is a 'survey' volume and the conceptual framework is that of the landscape historian rather than the excavator. The seminar came too early for the results of the Raunds Area Project which was conceived within a similar landscape framework, but the absence of excavation evidence perhaps reflects wider barriers between survey and excavation. This is unfortunate, for the survey approach should provide the hypotheses and wider strategy within which excavation can most effectively take place — as with Blair's request for archaeologists to take up the challenges he defines in 'minster towns'. It is no coincidence that in urban studies one sees a more balanced approach. Large-scale resourcing of urban projects has a long history and has generated a number of effective research teams in which a wide range of specialists have been integrated. Rural studies have tended to be driven by individuals and often through survey work. Large-scale funding of rural landscape projects is a far more recent phenomenon and, at least with the Raunds Project, has sadly failed to create the single, high-powered team or been given the strength and vision of direction that has characterized the successful urban projects.

Though there is a school of thought which would treat Saxon archaeology as though it were prehistory, the rewards of combined historical and archaeological study are so great as to outweigh the dangers. The continuity of the Saxon systems into the medieval underpins

much of the work in this volume, which draws upon medieval and post-medieval documentation to search for the tenurial and administrative frameworks within which the patterns represented by the archaeological remains are to be viewed. Thus Warner's and Blair's work enable individual settlements to be seen in their appropriate hierarchical position and spatial context. Similarly Hall's detailed mapping of the medieval agricultural landscape is of incalculable value for the future study of the late Saxon landscape. His demonstration of the way in which the administrative and taxation system was physically imposed into the landscape offers a major avenue for analysis. It is unfortunate that Hall gives too little detail in support of his arguments and fails to take full account of other published, especially local, work, so missing the unique opportunity his analysis offers for the widespread integration of the evidence for the fields with that of the settlements.

In such a dynamic field ideas may change rapidly. The process of settlement development from dispersed to nucleated in the mid Saxon period over much of England is now accepted and is clearly reflected in this volume. What was only just becoming available in 1986 was the evidence of a comprehensive replanning of the settlement, agricultural and administrative landscape over a large part of England in the late Saxon period, a replanning which can perhaps be compared to the patterns described by Nitz in Germany in Carolingian times. A central issue which the book does not therefore address is the potential dislocation that this apparent 'great replanning' represents for the technique, central to the work of many of the authors, of projecting patterns back in time. In the same way that the replanning of the Inclosure movement provides the need for Hall's mapping of the medieval landscape, so the replanning of the 10th century precludes analysis of many aspects of the earlier patterns on the basis of the medieval pattern. Hence, for example, we will find that the techniques employed elsewhere by Roberts to analyse medieval settlement cannot be applied before the late Saxon because 'tenements' do not apparently exist. It is no coincidence that it is Williamson, studying dispersed landscapes which apparently avoided the 'great replanning', who is able to demonstrate a continuity of the Iron Age field system, and to a degree patterns of settlement, right through into the medieval and modern landscape. In contrast, working in a context of nucleated settlement, both Hooke and Unwin find discontinuity, dismissing for example the supposed antiquity of townships.

This process of replanning only seems to have occurred in that part of England which was characterized in the medieval period by open fields and nucleated villages. Considerable effort and resources have been put into the study of the character and origins of the nucleated settlement landscapes in England and, although much remains to be done, a great deal has been achieved. The dispersed settlement landscapes are equally important. The understanding of why and how nucleated settlements and planned landscapes were created in some areas is only likely to be answered when they can be contrasted with landscapes where this did not occur. Unfortunately, to date, few resources have been put into the study of dispersed settlement patterns. This is reflected in the balance of the present volume, for only Williamson's paper tackles a dispersed settlement pattern. The study of nucleated landscapes must continue, but what is now required is a detailed research project on a dispersed landscape to complement the Wharram Percy and Raunds projects which are drawing to a close.

The general impression of Anglo-Saxon landscape studies conveyed by this book is that rapid advances will continue. For the problems of the early and mid Saxon periods there is far still to go, while in contrast for urban settlement an effective overview has already been established. Though it is not achieved in the current volume, an authoritative synthesis of the late Saxon transition, to a regularly planned landscape of villages and fields, may not be far away. This would represent a great step forward, explaining the creation of the dominant medieval landscape, matching the achievement of earlier landscape historians in unravelling the story of the dissolution of that medieval landscape through inclosure.

Continuity and Colonization: the Evolution of Kentish Settlement. By Alan Everitt. 16 × 24 cm. xxi + 426 pp., 16 maps, 15 tables. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986. ISBN 0-86054-610-1. Price: £47.50 hb.

The county of Kent in the extreme south-east corner of Britain has, in a relatively small area, an immensely rich mix of different types of landscape, and Alan Everitt's book is the first detailed historical analysis of these landscapes that has yet been produced. It is a large-scale work with much detailed topographical analysis and as such should be a fascinating study.

Sadly, it is in fact very disappointing. It builds on J. E. A. Jolliffe's pioneering study, *Pre-Feudal England: the Jutes* (1933), but, as the author is himself at pains to point out in the preface, his 'is not a study of the social and political institutions of Kent'. Everitt does, however, 'believe that the roots of these institutions may be traced in the early Jutish *regiones* which moulded the structure of Kentish settlement', and it is the choice of this starting point that sparked off the present writer's lack of enthusiasm.

In a book about the evolution of Kentish settlement 'from the end of the Romano-British period and the coming of the 'English' down to the 13th or 14th century' it is bizarre that virtually no medieval sources are used. The nearest we get to Anglo-Saxon charters, for example, are through Wallenberg's two place-name books. In fact Everitt's main sources are almost entirely post-medieval, consisting of Hasted's late 18th-century *History and Topographical Survey of Kent*, place-name evidence, and the Ordnance Survey 2½-inch maps, supplemented by a series of secondary sources, which are themselves often very out-of-date. For archaeology, for instance, G. J. Copley's and Ronald Jessup's now extremely dated books on the archaeology of south-east England are usually quoted, while for church dedications Frances Arnold-Forster's *Studies* of 1899 is the principal source. Equally, almost all references to church and other buildings cite only the first edition (1969) of John Newman's Kent volumes in the *Buildings of England* series. As a result none of Everitt's facts are reliable and he makes some extraordinary statements, for example (p. 181):

If the Roman colonization was the first major influence on local settlement, that of the church was undoubtedly the second, and to a remarkable extent it originally built upon Roman foundations. Most of the early Minster churches were established in Romano-British communities, and Roman brickwork and parts of Roman structures are incorporated in perhaps more parish churches in Kent than in any other county.

Roman bricks are indeed reused in quite a large number of churches, but in most cases these are post-Norman conquest buildings, and the reason is surely the lack of other building materials in much of the county and the survival until the 12th century of large numbers of ruins of Roman structures in the towns and forts as well as the arable areas. Roman bricks, like flints, were just picked up and used when required.

In discussing the well-known early lists of churches in *Domesday Monachorum*, Everitt only appears to have read Professor Douglas's 1944 introduction to the text. Much very important post-war historical work by Professor Barlow (*The English Church, 1000-1066* (1963), for example) and Professor Brooks (*The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (1984)) seem to be unknown to him. This means that Everitt is often very muddled in his use of the word 'minster', and his chapter (8) on 'Ecclesiastical Development' is most unconvincing. The following chapter on 'Church-Dedications' is also very disappointing and largely based on Arnold-Foster, as already mentioned. No recent work on the Kentish royal saints seems to have been consulted, except the *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, so many details are wrong; St Thomas Becket is said to have died in 1180 (p. 256) and on p. 248 we read the extraordinarily muddled statement 'When Minster-in-Thanel was destroyed by the Danes in 1011, both St Augustine's Abbey and St Gregory's Priory claimed to have obtained possession of her body'. The chapter also contains many conclusions that are totally unacceptable. Everitt tries unconvincingly to prove continuity from the Roman period by finding links between the churches and pre-medieval features. So he makes much of 'primary churches' that are 'linked together by a striking network of prehistoric tracks and Roman roads', because of their 'location in Romano-Jutish settlements'.

In spite of all these criticisms, there is much in the book that is stimulating and interesting. Everitt's division of Kent into six main regions is excellent. He names these as the 'Foothills' north of the Downs, the high Downland, Holmesdale to the south, the Chartland on the Lower Greensand, the Weald and the Marshland. His chapter (3) on 'Regions and Pays' is a most useful geographical study. Once again, however, virtually all his sources are late medieval or later, so he draws conclusions about the marshland which are only really applicable to the 15th century onwards while the book is only supposed to deal with the period from c. 400 until c. 1300. In many ways it would have been better for the volume to have been entirely about the post-medieval landscape.

A major element of the book, which no doubt contributed to its high price tag, is the large number of carefully drawn maps based on the Ordnance Survey 2½-inch maps. Unfortunately any attempt to try to understand and use these maps shows that most, in fact, reveal very little. What is really needed is a series of maps synthesizing various landscape areas in Kent. Only the general map of the county (Map 2), which is based on the geological map, aims to do this, and one is tempted to ask why so much time and trouble was spent on drawing and publishing the others.

In summary this expensive tome, which promised much, is a sad disappointment. Kent is still waiting for its local medieval landscapes to be analysed in detail, and the question of whether there is continuity of settlement from the Roman period remains open.

TIM TATTON-BROWN

Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800. By Patrick Sims-Williams. 16 × 24 cm. xv + 448 pp., 1 map. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1990. ISBN 0-521-38325-0. Price: £40.00 hb.

Patrick Sims-Williams' primary interest in this book is the literary culture of the kingdoms of the Hwicce and the Magonsætan. At the heart of the book are painstaking reconstructions of the works available, the manuscripts produced and the works composed in what were essentially the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford. For an understanding of the Latin culture of the Old English church in the pre-Viking period, and for an exploration of that culture from a point of view not dominated by Bede, this book is essential reading. The kingdoms of the Hwicce and the Magonsætan emerge as having significant contacts not just with the rest of England, but also with the Roman and especially the Frankish world — although oddly enough Dr Sims-Williams sees one of the agents of those contacts, Wilfrid, in a less Frankish and more Roman and Benedictine light than does some current scholarship.

While the heart of the book is concerned with literary culture, Dr Sims-Williams also discusses the non-literary evidence for the kingdoms of the Hwicce and the Magonsætan. He deals with the geography of the kingdoms and their boundaries, sketching in the evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement. Not surprisingly the earliest Saxon burials lie almost exclusively in the eastern part of the kingdom of the Hwicce, with Bromfield (Salop.) as the one major exception in the territory of the Magonsætan. In general the Magonsætan present Dr Sims-Williams with greater difficulties than do the Hwicce. The archaeological evidence is sligher than that for the Hwicce, and even the apparent fixed point of the southern stretches of Offa's Dyke, which are taken to form the 8th-century boundary with the Welsh, may need reconsideration in the light of David Hill's current work.

The kingdom of the Magonsætan seems to share some characteristics with the Welsh kingdoms immediately to the west. Dr Sims-Williams is extremely sensitive to the possibility of British influence in this area, and he even proposes that the christianization of the Saxons in the territories which were later to form the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford could have been carried out by the indigenous British, who are carefully distinguished from the Welsh. It is an interesting and plausible proposition, although one would like to know how easily Welsh and British could be distinguished in the early 7th century, other than geographically.

The monasteries, which provide the central points for Dr Sims-Williams, are also discussed geographically, in terms of their siting and their endowments. They lie more

centrally than the early burials, on the good soils of the Severn and Avon terraces, although like the burials, they are to be found in the kingdom of the Hwicce, rather than that of the Magonsætan. In terms of their geographical situation, and their role in the culture of the area, they are seen as unifying factors. Unfortunately they have left little in the way of archaeological remains. Almost nothing is known about the plans of the early churches. More might be done with the sculpture. Dr Sims-Williams draws attention to the similarities between the pieces at Acton Beauchamp and Cropthorne. In general, however, Anglian sculpture is not drawn into the discussion: even to have had it listed and mapped would have been valuable, especially in the light of the importance given to Anglian sculpture in the context of Northumbrian monasticism. Nevertheless, in his discussion of the poetry associated with Milred of Worcester, Dr Sims-Williams does draw attention to an interest in inscriptions, and suggests that some early churches in the region would have boasted such inscriptions.

At the end of his book Dr Sims-Williams disarmingly says that his material has 'more secrets for sterner interrogators with shrewder questions'. Certainly there are questions here that are unanswered and unasked. Nevertheless, in reconstructing the literary culture of the kingdoms of the Hwicce and the Magonsætan, Dr Sims-Williams has established the cultural significance of the region. And although the archaeology is only sketched in, it has certainly not been ignored.

IAN WOOD

A Lost English County: Winchcombeshire in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries. By Julian Whybra. 15 × 24 cm. ix + 136 pp., 26 tables, 37 maps. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1990. ISBN 085115-500-6. Price: £35.00 hb.

This volume is among the first to appear in a new series, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon History*, which the publishers and their general editor, David Dumville, hope will 'allow and encourage exciting and worthwhile ventures in historical writing'. There is to be a special emphasis in the series on studies of primary sources (not least unjustly neglected ones) and on 'new methods of exploitation of sources in the service of historiography'. This new initiative, bringing a sister-series for the publishers' firmly established and respected *Studies in Celtic History*, is a most welcome one. If, however, the series is to succeed, future studies will need to be a lot more intellectually ambitious and stimulating than this discussion of Winchcombeshire.

Julian Whybra's main lines of enquiry will be familiar to every student of the west midlands in the late Saxon period. When did Winchcombeshire, together with the other midland shires, come into being? What was its exact geographical extent, and why in 1017 did Eadric Streona do away with it by merging it with Gloucestershire? Mr Whybra's main conclusions, too, will be familiar. Following the path first taken by C. S. Taylor, he suggests that the shires of the west midlands originated as the territories assigned to major burhs in the Reconquest period, but that they achieved a formal embodiment only in the first decade of the 11th century. He inclines finally to the view that after no more than a decade or so Winchcombeshire fell victim to one man's manoeuvres for power. Given the poverty of the traditional, written, sources these remain reasonable conclusions. In neither discussion, however, does the author use any non-documentary evidence or new forms of analysis — yet tired old problems like these cry out for a multi-disciplinary approach.

It is in the central section of his book that Mr Whybra seeks to break new ground. He pays particularly close attention to the earlier 11th-century part of what is usually called Hemming's Cartulary, to the relevant folios of Domesday Book, and to the County Hidage. This leads him to argue that Winchcombeshire and Gloucestershire had had twelve hundreds each and been assessed at 1,200 hides until, in the later 10th century, the creation of

the bishop of Worcester's triple hundred of Oswaldslow and of other ecclesiastical groupings distorted their neat dispositions.

This notion of an original regularity is one that is well worth testing. Mr Whybra's examination of his written sources overlooks no possible clue or nuance that might aid him in rediscovering the initial layout of Winchcombeshire. Over half of the book's 136 pages are devoted to tables — most of them lists of raw data — and to maps. None the less it needs much persistence and referring back to the sources (primary and secondary) to follow his arguments, many of which are stated densely and with insufficient concession made to readers whose knowledge of the study area and/or evidence does not match the author's. (But excessive length was plainly not the problem here: even in so short a book there is a great deal of unused page-space, while one notes that a subsequent volume in the series offers 440 pages for only £10 more.) Some arguments amount, moreover, to special pleading, such as those concerning the lands of Deerhurst and Tewkesbury (pp. 25–27), how ff. 47^r–57^r of 'Hemming's Cartulary' should properly be understood (ch. V), and about the alleged essential authenticity of Sawyer 731, the infamous '*Altitonantis*' charter (ch. VIII). Similar problems affect his much briefer search for an original Gloucestershire (ch. IX).

One leaves this book with two strong impressions. The first is that Mr Whybra is doubtless right in thinking that Winchcombeshire was originally much larger than the area mapped by Finberg and others, but that his reconstruction has too flimsy an evidential base and relies too heavily on heaped-up hypotheses. That is not to say that the 'problems of Winchcombeshire' can never be solved. On the contrary Mr Whybra's study shows that they probably can be, but that the full range of historical evidence available for the area will be needed, not just what is in the documentary sources.

The second lasting impression is that far too little has been achieved for the effort involved (the reader's as much as the author's). The book entirely begs the question of *why* it is worth finding out when and why Winchcombeshire came into being or how big it was. And we have to wait until the last page for the merest nod at the question of how much, if anything, the shire and its constituent hundreds owed to what had been there before the start of the 10th century. Yet at every turn Mr Whybra's analyses point up the importance of our being able to understand that earlier human topography. Problems such as this book tackles will not be solved in isolation: they must be set in their broader historical context and tackled with a much wider range of evidence.

STEVEN BASSETT

Wharram Percy Deserted Medieval Village. By Maurice Beresford and John Hurst. 19 × 25 cm. 144 pp., 100 figs. and pls., 13 colour pls. London: B. T. Batsford Ltd/English Heritage, 1990. ISBN 0-7134-6113-6 (hb), 0-7134-6114-4 (pb). Price: £19.95 hb, £10.95 pb.

Wharram Percy is the *locus classicus* of deserted medieval villages and has become of fundamental importance for rural settlement studies as a whole. The remarkable work undertaken there by the two authors over the last 40 years has been one of the outstanding achievements in British archaeology since the Second World War, and has transformed our understanding of rural settlement in a way that few other single projects can ever have achieved. Wharram is of worldwide renown to the *cognoscenti*; yet, compared with Stonehenge, Fishbourne or Fountains Abbey, the site itself has remained relatively little known and rarely visited by the public at large. The presentation of some of the results of the Wharram project in a concise, attractively-packaged, reasonably-priced format is, therefore, greatly to be welcomed.

The book can be read at several levels. It is concerned as much with 'how it was done' as 'what was found out'. It describes the almost accidental origins of the project at a time when medieval field research was virtually restricted to the architectural study of upstanding remains of castles, monasteries, churches and manor houses, and the excavation of humbler

dwellings seemed to have little to offer. As a factual summary of the results of the excavations since 1950, it covers the examination of the medieval peasant houses, the two manor houses, the parish church and cemetery, the mill and fishpond, the successive medieval and post-medieval parsonage houses and the short-lived 18th-century farmstead. Of equal interest is the description of the evolution in the archaeologists' perception and interpretation of the site over 40 years. The book records the changing aims and techniques of research as the project developed and increased resources slowly became available, from the time of Beresford's initial basic search for house wall foundations and evidence of the date of desertion. Wharram was the scene of many important innovations, particularly the first employment on a medieval site in England of open-area excavation by Hurst and Golson in 1953 to facilitate the recovery of complete house plans; it also saw one of the earliest complete excavations of an English parish church. As the project progressed it raised new questions: it broadened to embrace surveys of the wider medieval landscape, including the study of the village plan, the field system, and the entire settlement pattern in Wharram and the neighbouring townships; and it deepened to examine, at the further end of the time-scale, the Anglian, Romano-British and prehistoric underlay, and in more recent times the post-depopulation use of the landscape right through to the modern presentation of the site as a monument for public access. Wharram set the standard for inter-disciplinary projects, and the book reflects the pioneering success of the project itself in blending such disparate skills as excavation, earthwork survey, field-walking, documentary research, aerial photography, architectural drawing and geophysical survey.

The definitive publications on Wharram are somewhat inconveniently dispersed including volumes in this Society's Monograph Series, University of York Archaeological Publications and British Archaeological Reports. Even those who know the site well will, therefore, find this briefer general synthesis of value. However, the publishers tell us that it is intended for a wide readership, and it must therefore be judged on how well it fulfils this aim.

Will it catch the eye of the casual browser in a bookshop? The all-important first impression is good: the cover design is clear and bold, with an attractive colour photograph of the roofless church and millpond. This is the fourth volume to be published in the Batsford/English Heritage series, and it follows the now familiar format of text integrated with line drawings, half-tone and full colour plates. The text is every bit as fluent and readable as we would expect of these two authors. The academic content is leavened with some enjoyable human touches, including some incidental vignettes of the personalities who made such a contribution in the early years. The line drawings are models of clarity (although fig. 93 lacks a scale), and the quality of reproduction of half-tone plates is usually adequate, although a few of the more uniform-toned of the aerial photographs have suffered a little in the printing process. The colour plates, which include two aerial photographs, five views of excavations in progress and three reconstruction drawings, are a welcome bonus. The glossary will be important to the layman, and while this is generally helpful, its organization and contents occasionally leave a little to be desired. Modern town dwellers puzzled by the words 'hogget' or 'wether' will not find these listed alphabetically, and may not immediately think of looking up the word 'sheep'. Will the definition of 'rector' as 'incumbent whose tithes have not been alienated' be widely understood? Under the entry 'tithes', the term 'small tithes' is mentioned without being explained. The Domesday 'bovate' is described as a 'fraction of a carucate', but we are given no idea whether it represents a large or small proportion. These are, however, minor quibbles. The keying of the glossary entries wherever possible to illustrations elsewhere in the volume is helpful. There is a useful guide to further reading and a sound, functional index.

The distillation of 40 years' work in a way that shows the layman something of the meticulous quality of the research while conveying also a sense of fascination and excitement as the story of Wharram unfolded cannot have been an easy task; yet it has succeeded admirably. Both authors and publishers are to be congratulated warmly on this valuable and welcome addition to the series.

JAMES BOND

D. Austin, G. A. M. Gerrard and T. A. P. Greeves, 'Tin and Agriculture in the Middle Ages and Beyond: Landscape Archaeology in St Neot Parish, Cornwall', *Cornish Archaeology*, 28 (1989), pp. 5-251.

The vast upland areas of Britain have tended to receive rather shoddy treatment at the hands of economic and social historians. To the modern mind, moorland and heathland equals wasteland, and this prejudice has seeped into historical assumptions about the economic importance and performance of the uplands. Too often the preference has been for simplistic models of expansion and decline, which suppose a linear relationship between agriculture and population. Hence it might be assumed that the economy of Bodmin moor 'prospered' as population rose in the 12th and 13th centuries, and 'suffered' as the demographic tide turned in the 14th, and that patterns of land-use and settlement reflected this. This traditional model assumes the primacy of grain production in determining economic well-being, and tends to consider agriculture and settlement separately from other local activities, such as mining.

The decision by the South West Water Authority to flood the St Neots valley on Bodmin enabled archaeologists to analyse the agricultural and industrial remains of an upland area, and by extension to test some of the easy assumptions about the upland economy. As such areas are invariably poorly represented in extant documentation, the role of the archaeologist is especially important, and, in this case, there is additional support from an assortment of geographers, geologists and palaeohydrologists. The result is an impressive and wide-ranging landscape study.

The authors reject simplistic models of development, and prefer to regard the Bodmin economy as a complex structure. Specifically, they correctly emphasize the impact of institutional factors on the landscape. In the early Saxon period the upland wastes were subject to communal rights, and agriculture was essentially transhumant. Pastoralism dominated on the rough pastures, supplemented periodically by arable farming and tin-streaming. The archaeological imprints of this regime are indistinct, but building types, tin mining technologies and the nature of field-arrangements all suggest intermittent exploitation.

From the late Saxon period, the exploitation of Bodmin's upland wastes was reorganized. They were drawn into a nascent manorial system and hence increasingly exploited by private farmers, in contrast to Dartmoor where communal rights remained. It was this change in land organization, as much as climatic improvement and a general rise in corn prices, which both encouraged and dictated the nature of permanent settlement in the uplands. The longhouse was introduced from the lowlands, and eight farm complexes emerged in the upper St Neots valley in the 13th century. Intensive arable cultivation between 1200 and 1400 is confirmed by scientific analysis of ridge and furrow preserved by a protective layer of peat. Of particular interest are the signs of soil exhaustion, due to intensive cropping, which are revealed by soil analysis of these fields. In the late Middle Ages, the evidence indicates the desertion of farmsteads and a reversion to a pastoral monoculture.

The establishment of permanent settlements provided a local supply of semi-skilled labour for tin mining. The archaeological evidence does provide useful details about the technical aspects of mining, from simple tin-streaming to sophisticated wet stamping mills set in large complexes and drawing upon a specialized labour force. However, this type of evidence is unable to date the various periods of mining activity accurately. Unfortunately, this means that one crucial aspect of Bodmin's landscape history — the precise relationship between farming, settlement and tin mining in the high Middle Ages — remains uncertain.

This is an unashamedly technical study, and certain aspects of the soil and pollen analyses, and the hydraulic reconstruction of the leat systems, will deter unscientific historians, however keen they may be. This is, perhaps, an unavoidable aspect of the best multi-disciplinary studies. However, the failure of specialists to write clearly and precisely, in a manner which is easily comprehensible to all readers, is entirely avoidable. The introductory chapter is written in a turgid style, partly through an addiction to uncomfortable phrases such as 'fundamental landscape relationships': can Bodmin's economy really be described as

a 'complexly textured dialogue'? Furthermore, the annotation here is patchy. For traditional models of the upland economy, readers are blithely referred to Postan and Bolton's textbooks on medieval England, but no page references are given. In contrast, however, the concluding chapter is admirably clear and concise, and highly readable.

This is clearly an important study, meticulously undertaken and with an acute and salutary awareness of its limitations. With this as a role model, the landscape history of the uplands is in imminent danger of receiving proper attention.

MARK BAILEY

Medieval Rural Settlement in North-East England (Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland Research Report, 2). Edited by B. E. Vyner. 20 × 25 cm. vii + 150 pp., 55 figs., 23 pls. Durham: A. & A.S.D. & N., 1990. Price: £12.75 pb.

This volume publishes the papers presented at a dayschool in 1989 in memory of the former Deputy County Librarian for Cleveland, Leslie Still. Alan Pallister demonstrates the importance of Still's work in the development of settlement archaeology in the Tees valley. Leslie Still occupied a key position in the middle ground between professional archaeologists and enthusiastic amateurs. I have pleasant personal memories of Still from his first involvement in the documentary evidence for Swainston D.M.V. in 1957, to his excavations at Red Hall moat and West Hartburn D.M.V. in the 1960s. Still's identification of the Dalton-on-Tees moats as a fishpond complex was a notable advance demonstrated at the 1971 Middlesbrough conference which led to the formation of the Moated Sites Research Group.

Blaise Vyner illustrates the air photographic evidence for medieval settlement and land-use in the lower Tees valley. Barry Harrison discusses new settlement in the North Yorkshire Moors, using documentary evidence to suggest that much 12th- and 13th-century assarting, far from being casual and piecemeal, was, on major medieval estates, a planned campaign with marginal land reclaimed in advance of letting by the lord's agents. Robin Daniels surveys the moorland fringe township of Kilton showing how a castle, a nucleated village, and a number of scattered farms were imposed on a pattern of dispersed settlement. This failed after little more than 100 years but the landscape was reorganized, in the post-medieval period, with a second attempt at nucleation. This was again unsuccessful and the landscape was finally consolidated in the mid 19th century with a return to the original pattern of dispersed settlement. This study is of considerable importance as it shows abortive attempts at nucleation in a fringe area and confirms Barry Harrison's thesis that scattered settlements could be as much the result of planning as nucleated villages. It is work like this, in areas where there is both dispersed and nucleated settlement, that the subject will be taken forward to understand the complexities of the full range of medieval settlement patterns and development.

Alan Pallister completes the excavation report of Still's work at the D.M.V. of West Hartburn. Stuart Wrathmell then discusses possible reconstructions of the buildings suggesting, as he has at Wharram Percy, that they can be reinterpreted as substantial cruck buildings rather than the flimsy houses originally suggested. This interpretation is supported by the artefacts which included spurs, a stirrup and a bit suggesting that the occupier was quite prosperous. David Heslop and Alan Aberg report on the 1970s rescue excavations at the D.M.V. of Tollesby where two house platforms were investigated. Good evidence was obtained for a medieval long-house with many similarities to West Hartburn. Again a rowel spur suggests a yeoman farmer rather than a simple cottager. Similar evidence can be produced from Wharram Percy and other D.M.V.s, suggesting that there should be a reassessment of the status of the late medieval peasant on many sites.

Brian Roberts discusses medieval nucleated settlement in the north of England by investigating back lanes and tofts. A look at the landscape, plans, documents, and an attempt

at a chronology, confirm the complexities of studying nucleated settlements already shown by Roberts in his publications over the last 20 years. More comparative research is required in other parts of the country before firm conclusions can be suggested, but this is a useful step forward. Peter Ryder surveys fortified medieval and sub-medieval buildings in the north-east of England. This usefully rounds off the volume by looking higher up the social scale than most of the other buildings discussed. It is a pity that figures 1 and 3 are transposed, making a nonsense of the text.

David Austin draws the volume together with a retrospect, summary and prospect. Austin is certainly right to suggest that, 'to advance settlement studies in the north-east, we now need projects conceived with proper research designs', but he is overcritical of earlier work as just collecting data. This is very much the way new subjects develop until the foundations are laid. In the first generation of medieval rural settlement studies there is no doubt that too much emphasis was placed on nucleated villages but this volume leads the way in demonstrating how this can now be expanded into the study of the total landscape. Blaise Vynner is to be congratulated for editing this volume, and the A. & A.S.D. & N. for publishing, within a year, a well produced and easy to read volume with clear illustrations. This demonstration of the importance to medieval studies of the seminal work in the north-east is a very fitting memorial to Leslie Still and all the work that he did over the years.

J. G. HURST

Norton Priory: The Archaeology of a Medieval Religious House. By Patrick Greene. 23 × 28 cm. xii + 167 pp., 100 figs. and pls. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1989. ISBN 0-521-33054-8. Price: £35.00 hb.

Norton Priory, Cheshire, was an Augustinian house founded in 1134 when an existing community moved there from Runcorn, four miles to the west. This may have been an attempt to escape from the pressures of urban life, pressures that finally caught up with the site when it was included in 1964 in the designated area of Runcorn New Town. By 1970 road works had destroyed without record all evidence of the mill, the outer gatehouse and at least part of the outer court. Then, following exploratory work by Hugh Thompson, the New Town Development Corporation invited Patrick Greene to carry out a six-month excavation. Six months became twelve years, and this book is one fruit of that research. Meanwhile the site has been developed as a tourist attraction, currently getting some 24,000 visitors a year, and Greene has gone on to win the Museum of the Year Award as the Director of the Manchester Museum of Science and Technology.

This is not a narrowly academic book, and certainly not a conventional archaeological report: those who wish to question or reinterpret the excavator's findings will have to turn elsewhere. Non-specialists will find some of it (particularly the architectural descriptions) hard going, and it is sometimes difficult to work out what readership the author and publisher had in mind. Since not many visitors will want to buy such a detailed account, perhaps the intention was to repay a debt to the local community who, corporately and individually, have supported the project so generously and enthusiastically over the years: an appropriate and attractive way of bringing one aspect of the project to a conclusion, but no substitute for a full report.

The book proper divides into two sections. Each of the first four chapters is a largely self-contained essay about a different aspect of the priory's history. One considers endowments and patronage, and puts Norton into the context of other Augustinian houses, something in which Greene (like the rest of us) relies heavily on David Robinson's exhaustive *B.A.R.* survey published in 1980. Then there is a chapter of landscape history, working back from the present and giving far more detail about the post-Dissolution history of the site than any other part of the book. Then comes a chapter of medieval economic history, and finally a narrative in which finance and litigation are inevitably given prominence at the expense of the less well recorded aspects of the community's history.

The second half of the book, also four chapters long, is an extended architectural history of the church and claustral buildings up to the Dissolution. It is, like all good architectural history, based on an effective and illuminating interweaving of archaeological and documentary evidence. The first permanent phase of buildings, an aisleless cruciform church and a small cloister, appears to date from the mid to late 12th century. No sooner was it complete, or largely so, then both church and cloister were enlarged, the west and south claustral ranges being taken down and rebuilt. In 1236 a fire gutted the choir, transepts and at least part of the cloister. Greene argues that a fine mid 13th-century cloister arcade carried on clustered shafts represents rebuilding after this fire; in the apparent absence of any direct evidence for an earlier fire damaged arcade, it seems equally possible that the enlargement of the cloister (of which the construction of the arcade would normally have been the final phase) was still in progress when the fire struck. The 13th-century arcade is associated with some fine sculptural detail, the affinities of which are usefully discussed. The church was further extended around 1300, and around the same time the eastern arm of the church was given a sophisticated mosaic tile pavement comparable to those at Prior Crauden's Chapel, Ely, and Warden Abbey, Bedfordshire. In the late 14th century the priory became an abbey, and with its new status apparently gained a more than life-size statue of St Christopher. This survived the Dissolution, and can be seen standing in the outer court in the Bucks' print of 1727. Greene's discussion of the significance of this is surprisingly brief. Also tantalizing is a passing reference to a multangular building, described as possibly 15th-century, south of the warming room.

Finally, just before the Dissolution, Norton, like so many English houses from Fountains to Forde, seems to have been in the throes of a major rebuilding campaign. The evidence for the glazing-in of the cloister gives us an interesting new example of early 16th-century architectural innovation: the description in the text is not entirely clear, talking confusingly of a 'facing' on the garth side of the arcade, and interpretation is again hampered by the lack of adequate plans. But there appears to be a seven-bay arcade on each side with the central bay projecting into the garth as a small square-sided oriel. An obvious parallel to this system of projecting central bays (not discussed by Greene) is Cloister Green Court at Hampton Court, demolished by Wren to make way for his new state apartments. On the garth side of the arcade was a low stone plinth, canted out around the central projection. Greene tentatively puts forward the suggestion that this may have formed the rim of an ornamental pond or basin. If he is right, and the idea is attractive in more than one sense, we appear to have a late Gothic *impluvium* without, surely, any obvious precedent or parallel.

Disappointingly, given the promise of the earlier chapter on landscape, the account stops abruptly at 1536, with only the most cursory of references to the later history of the site. Given all the work done over the last ten years on the archaeology of country houses, not least by Paul Drury on the development of Audley End from Walden Abbey, and given Maurice Howard's study of early Tudor country houses, published in 1987, it is a matter for regret that the way the later house was adapted and evolved from the monastic buildings is never addressed, even though we know from Greene's lectures that the evidence was fully recorded.

Apart from this, my only serious criticisms must be laid at the door of the publisher rather than the author. There are exactly 100 illustrations (not counting the frontispiece) including both photographs and line drawings. This looks suspiciously like an artificial limit, and is far too low for a book of this sort. There are no plans showing the location of the post-Dissolution buildings in relation to the excavated remains, though their relationship is referred to more than once in the text. There are no separate interpretation plans covering any periods later than the 13th century, and the one plan showing the whole medieval development sequence is so complex that it is impossible to disentangle. There is an important discussion of the geometry of the early 12th-century church (arguing for Norton as another example of the Roman foot found at Bordesley and elsewhere) which cries out for a drawing, but which has to make do with two pages of densely argued text and tables. And the production is unacceptably careless. There are too many spelling mistakes ('dateable' keeps cropping up), line illustrations have broken up, half-tones are washed out. In the review

copy one of the gatherings had been perforated down the middle of the text by the stitching needle.

But the book is full of good things. In the discussion of the foundation, Greene lights on the distinction between those Augustinian houses that, like Runcorn, began as regularizations of pre-Conquest minsters, and those (perhaps like the refoundation at Norton) influenced by the 12th-century movement towards seclusion and austerity. He brings out the continuing relationship between a monastic house and its patrons, even if the motive behind a benefaction was often far more complex than 'the usual concern of a medieval magnate for his soul'. And in Greene's vivid account of Sir Piers Dutton and the bizarre events surrounding the Dissolution we are presented with yet another psychopathic hanger-on of that totalitarian aberration known as the Tudor court — a subject on which a great deal more can still be written.

J. J. WEST

Medieval Fortifications. By John R. Kenyon. 17 × 25 cm. xvi + 233 pp., figs., pls. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990. ISBN 0-7185-1392-4. Price: £14.95 pb.

The first of a new series entitled *The Archaeology of Medieval Britain* (series editor Helen Clarke), this volume is a most welcome addition to the literature on an ever-popular field. Too many castle authors have attempted too wide a coverage, and more specific treatments (M. W. Thompson's recent *The Decline of the Castle* has been another welcome contribution in this respect) deserve encouragement. What John Kenyon gives us is a view of his subject, from the 11th to the 15th centuries, through the medium of excavation. No one could have been better placed than he, assiduous compiler of the C.B.A.'s fortifications bibliographies, to undertake this task, and the bibliography contained in this book is itself no minor contribution to the subject. Nevertheless, a word of warning is necessary: in view of its contents, the title is perhaps a little misleading. The potential reader might well think he or she was opening a book which *does* cover all aspects of the subject, and would need to consult another source on the standing architecture in order to acquire a rounded view. Although the author makes the position clear in his Introduction, this small problem might easily have been resolved by the use of a sub-title. The aim of the series as a whole, 'to explain and underline the importance of archaeology in the interpretation of an historic period' is, of course, wholly laudable.

All authors have to make choices in the organization of their material. This subject could have been treated chronologically, regionally, through case-studies, and no doubt in other ways. The author has made a perfectly valid choice: to provide a thematic analysis. Hence, the various components of castle design — elements of defence and of domestic accommodation and support — are given separate treatment. This approach has many merits. It ensures that major structures — keeps, gates, towers, bridges, halls and lodgings — are adequately described and illustrated. It also ensures that important, but oft-neglected, aspects such as kitchens, chapels and water-supplies, are given full consideration. It has also allowed the inclusion of a chapter — surely innovatory in the castle literature — on 'castle life', including building operations, military and domestic small finds, and environmental evidence. But the approach has one important drawback, in that the castles themselves are dismembered and scattered in various parts of the volume: it is quite difficult to gain an overall impression of what any one place was actually like *in toto*. As the author himself points out, the reader must use the index to reassemble a site. So plentifully illustrated (and to a high standard) is the work that it seems ungrateful to ask for more. But one way of counteracting this sense of dismemberment might have been to include a few more site plans. The results of some excavations are incorporated fully in various chapters, but the absence of a plan reduces the effect for the reader.

Another choice facing any archaeological author is whether or not to use material as yet published only in interim form. Such is the quantity of excavations whose full publication has

not appeared that, in reality, it is difficult for an author to avoid them. Some castles excavated more than 20 years ago have still not seen the fully printed light of day. In using interim material, the author has taken the risk of anticipating excavators' final conclusions which may differ from their provisional ones. But the immediate gain for the reader, in having such a wealth of information between two covers, more than outweighs this potential difficulty.

Generally, the author follows the interpretation offered in his sources, which is reasonable enough in view of the amount of material covered. Occasionally, a doubt is expressed on the published interpretation of a site, and the author might reasonably have allowed himself more personal reassessment. His apparent reluctance to criticize the material which underpins the book may be gentlemanly, though the great variety of excavations' circumstances — in strategy, scale and thoroughness — makes it very difficult to harmonize their results smoothly. One is not always comparing like with like. Any author finds that some important work is published too late to be incorporated. Readers should be aware of two significant reevaluations: Valerie Horsman on Eynsford in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 105 (1988), and Paul Everson on Goltho in *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 23 (1988).

There is so much that is good about this book that it would be ungracious to dwell on minor criticisms. Town defences are brought within the scope of fortification generally, and the chapter devoted to them is most informative. Timber castles have at long last been given a fair treatment alongside their better-known stone counterparts: their structures — amenable to study *only* through excavation — have been described adequately here for probably what is the first time in a general (British) book.

Overall, this is a very considerable achievement of synthesis and presentation, for which every student (and not a few teachers) of medieval archaeology will be grateful. John Kenyon has set this new series off to a very good start.

R. A. HIGHAM

La Maison forte au Moyen Age, Actes de la Table ronde de Nancy-Pont-à-Mousson, 31 May–3 June 1984. Edited by Michel Bur. 22 × 28 cm. 345 pp., many figs., pls., plans. Paris: Editions du C.N.R.S., 1986. ISBN 2-222-03844-8. Price: 280 F.

This volume is a testimony to the very considerable advances which have been made in the study of historical settlements generally during the last 40 years and it owes much, not only to the achievements of individual scholars in western Europe, but to the Château Gaillard conferences in France and to the work of 'topic' groups such as the Moated Sites and Medieval Village research groups in England. Here are summarized 25 papers presented to the International Colloquium held at Nancy in 1984 to discuss the phenomenon of the *maison forte*. Notwithstanding many important contributions to our knowledge of seigneurial sites in specific regions which this volume contains, much of the discussion is focused on terminology. The papers are preceded by an introduction from Michel Bur; J.-M. Pesez provides a valuable summary.

Many contributors discuss the *maison forte* in France. Most provide evidence, and draw conclusions, for whole regions: Burgundy, Alsace, the Auvergne or Champagne. A few deal only with a specific site such as Roger Bertrand's summary of his excavation at Sainte-Geneviève, one of only two seigneurial sites in Brittany excavated to modern standards. Other contributors discuss evidence for the fortified manor in England, the Netherlands, Belgium (Hainault), south-west Germany and Italy. Only the account for Brittany, one of the French provinces richest in the number of its surviving seigneurial buildings, is inadequate.

The term *maison forte* originates in documentary evidence of the 12th to the 15th centuries in France. Records for Champagne, for example, reveal outlines of a firm and coherent legislation with respect to the *maison forte*. Archaeological fieldwork indicates that this legislation was both successfully applied and respected. Michel Bur emphasizes that the

term *maison forte* can only be defined by reference to the undefended residence on the one hand and the fortified castle on the other. The shallow-moated site with a platform enclosed by a simple palisade of stone or wood, providing accommodation for man and beast, has no military value. Such are the smaller seigneurial sites which have only rarely been the object of suspicion; they were built for security not defence. The existence of a moat does not necessarily imply the presence of a *maison forte*. The latter, the *domus firma*, held directly of the principal lord, has something of the castle about it; such a building might be encircled by a high wall with provision for flanking fire, *bretèche*, and turrets. As soon as towers appear then the *maison forte* passes into the category of the castle proper. Evidence from the Champagne shows that when litigation occurs it invariably centres on gradual changes of category. The line of demarcation between the simple manor-house and the fortified house is always easier to trace than that between the latter and the château. Nevertheless, the designation of a *maison forte* is surely a statement of intent, the precise degree of fortification not necessarily being specified. Jean Le Patourel distinguishes *maison forte* from castle, arguing that in northern and eastern England, fortified manors had royal licences to crenellate, possessed stone walls with wall-walks and might, or might not, have had moats; semi-fortified sites had moats only. In her view, the *maison forte* is to be distinguished from the true castle by the absence of provision for flanking fire and of the multiple towers necessary for a genuine military purpose. But inevitably there is no hard and fast rule; we are dealing with a continuum. Documentary evidence in France is more likely to provide information on former *maisons fortes* than is fieldwork and points to the *maison forte* as a specific phenomenon of the end of the Middle Ages, giving it an economic dimension, the residence of the local *dominus*. Pushing the agricultural buildings into a secondary enclosure, many a *petit seigneur* gave to his residence that bipartite structure more common to the true château.

In 'Le manoir fortifié dans le royaume d'Angleterre' the late Allen Brown stresses that although the *château fort* loses its power during the 16th and 17th centuries, it is not certain that decline had not set in earlier. The fortified manor in England does not date exclusively from the end of the Middle Ages, just as some less strong castles appear before the 16th century: Markenfield in the 14th, Stokesay, Acton Burnell and Little Wenham in the 13th. The small keep of Little Wenham is a true *maison forte* like those of Hopton and Longthorpe. It is the 13th and early 14th centuries which mark the apogee of the castle. Brown reminds us that the *maison forte* does not make its appearance in the 13th century and therefore does not constitute a new type of seigneurial residence; the *maison forte* exists in England from the beginning of the Norman conquest and lasts the whole of the feudal period. The castle too is a fortified house, the residential fortress of a seigneur. No matter what the date of a castle it remains a seigneurial residence, but it differs from the *maison forte* by the degree of fortification and it is sometimes very difficult to draw a line between the two. It is the lightly-fortified residence which is the *maison forte*. Kings and great lords tried variously to control the fortification works of their vassals, fortification which was not necessarily a bad thing for them. By law and custom only the right to fortification counted no matter whether it was for a castle, fortified manor or a town; crenellation may not be the best criterion by which to distinguish categories of fortification. The equating of castles with *grands seigneurs* and *maisons fortes* with *petits seigneurs* does not always hold. Brown defines both *maison forte* and *château fort* simply as the fortified residence of the seigneur. There is no close correspondence of degree, and certainly in England the *maison forte* is not characteristic of a single period or of a particular social level save that almost all are aristocratic.

Bur also draws attention to the type of site with a platform, sometimes slightly raised and rarely circular, on which the elements of the habitation shelter behind a palisade or plain wall are organized in either regular or loose order; this is the type which, evolving towards the château by the reinforcement of the defences, comes to be designated *Wasserburg* by German scholars. A second type of *maison forte* known in eastern France from both fieldwork and archives are the *maisons en forme de tour*, *Wohnturm*, or *Turmburg*. Known in Franche-Comté as *tours-saules* they offer both residence and security and are none other than the west European tower-houses so well-known in northern and western Britain. Evidence for such structures is

now also coming to light in Brittany as the result of work by this reviewer and his colleagues. Other contributions deal with sites in Belgium, Germany, Italy (urban fortified houses) and Alsace. One of the best accounts is that by Jean Mesqui for the Valois and western Champagne. He concludes that the *maison forte* has meaning only as an expression of desired political power in the second quarter of the 13th century and otherwise remains just a seigneurial residence in which fortification is an abstraction to be measured only by the most subjective means.

Whilst there is broad agreement on the principal distinctions between the *maison forte*, the *manoir* and the *château fort*, in practice classification remains often highly subjective. Notwithstanding differences, a number of consistent themes underlying the settlement history of western Europe emerge. For many regions, however, we have at present little evidence. The Nancy colloquium marks an important stage in the research; much remains to be done and many questions have yet to be answered.

GWYN I. MEIRION-JONES

Cahier des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Reims, no. 3 (1987), *Inventaire des Sites archéologiques non Monumentaux de Champagne*, Volume III, *Vestiges d'Habitat seigneurial fortifié en Champagne centrale*. By Michel Bur, with D. Bodovillé, J.-P. Boureux and R. Threis. 21 × 27 cm., 134 pp. No ISBN. Price not stated.

This is the third volume to be published of the inventory of non-monumental archaeological sites of the Champagne. The first two were devoted to the lower Argonnais (1972), and the Ardenne and the valley of the Aisne (1980). Volume III is concerned with the sites of the Chalk plain between the rivers Aisne and Aube, the greater part of the *département* of the Marne. A fourth volume devoted to the *département* of the Aube is promised.

Michel Bur provides a brief introduction to the motte-and-bailey castle, in which he traces the known history of the type from the first probable documentary references in the 9th century to the final expression of the motte as a low platform surrounded by a moat in the late Middle Ages (14th to 16th centuries). As he rightly indicates, it is to the period from the mid 10th to the mid 13th centuries that the bulk of castral mottes belong. The 11th and 12th centuries saw also the appearance of the small circular earthwork, of 30 to 100 m in diameter, without *dominio*, i.e. without the visible signs of the presence of a lord. Are such features to be considered as a type of defended settlement socially and politically inferior to the motte, related to the exploitation of the land, perhaps simply as enclosures for folding animals? Not a few examples from the Champagne fall into this category. Others are located in the centre of a lordship.

The inventory results from fieldwork in 514 *communes* in the *départements* of the Marne, the Haute-Marne and the Ardenne; some 38 sites were selected for analysis and of these 28 are the subject of detailed mapping at a scale of 1:1000. Details of the sites are tabulated, with information on the site (plain, promontory, spur), relationship to other rural settlement (in the middle of, alongside, independent), remains (motte, platform), dimensions (diameter at base, on summit, height), ditch (width, depth), documentary references by date (*castellum*, *chastel*, *motte*, *forteresse*, *munitio*), whether there was right of justice, and the status of the holder (*dominus*, *comes*, *rex*, *miles*, *sire*, *écuyer*).

A location map provides reference to the 38 sites. Each site description, preceded by the plan of the field-survey and sometimes also a photograph, is subdivided into location details, reference to the relevant IGN map and details of the church dedication. Then follows a brief description of the remains including the grid reference in Lambert co-ordinates and a verbal description of the site. Brief sections are devoted to 'Dating', 'Written tradition', 'Oral tradition', 'Excavation details', 'Historical evidence', and 'Bibliography'. The available information under each of these headings varies enormously; in some cases there is nothing.

But these are only summaries and those requiring further details will have to go to the bibliographies and archival sources. There is a further page listing general sources and bibliography.

This is a valuable publication which greatly adds to our knowledge of seigneurial sites in western Europe. It is to be hoped that it will not only be followed by similar inventories for those parts of region not yet covered, but also stimulate other scholars to follow the lead of Michel Bur and his collaborators.

GWYN I. MEIRION-JONES

Short Reviews

Archaeology, Economy and Society: England from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Century. By David A. Hinton. 15 × 23 cm. viii + 245 pp., figs., pls. London: Seaby, 1990. ISBN 1-85264-049-9. Price: £14.95 pb.

The academic discipline of medieval archaeology in these islands has now surely come of age with the increasing number of syntheses on the subject published within the last decade. However, this volume is, perhaps, the bravest example so far because of its chronological breadth of over a millennium of recorded history. In an attractively produced paperback volume David Hinton, the former editor of this journal, has attempted in just over 200 pages of text 'to examine the contribution that archaeology can make to an understanding of the social, economic, religious and other developments that took place in England from the Migration period to the beginning of the Renaissance' (p. viii). That he has succeeded so well at such a seemingly impossible task is a tribute both to his academic skills and to his many years of editorial work.

The author examines this long period chronologically in order to emphasize the 'changes' in the physical evidence (p. vii) but he wisely does not compartmentalize every century into a particular chapter. There are, nevertheless, some losses in such an approach which can be appreciated by examining one of the classic thematic approaches to the subject such as Helen Clarke's *The Archaeology of Medieval England* (1984) where it is much easier to chart the expansion and contraction of, for example, towns in the high Middle Ages as it is all contained in one chapter. In this regard Hinton seems to have lost an opportunity here to have succinctly discussed what archaeologists understand by the ubiquitous term 'town'.

It is seldom that a scholar can be found of the calibre of Hinton to so successfully span the 'great divide' between pre- and post-Conquest archaeology in England as is exemplified by this book. Despite being primarily an expert on Anglo-Saxon and medieval jewellery and other small finds the author strikes a nice balance in his discussions between settlement archaeology and the study of the artefactual evidence. His grasp of the complexities of the former is well illustrated by his grasp of the important role played by moated sites within the society of the lesser nobility of the high Middle Ages (pp. 162-66) and then by his smoothly moving on to a short but brilliant discussion on the social stratification of the houses of the period (p. 164). There are, of course, due to the nature of this 'thin book', several important areas which do not secure the space that they merit, such as the short shrift given to the Black Death in Chapter VIII. But, generally, if more detail on a particular subject is required it can easily be located by utilizing the copious notes for each chapter to be found at the end of the text section of the book, which almost makes up for the lack of a bibliography.

These are only a very few minor criticisms which can be levelled at what is overall an excellently researched work of synthesis. For the student of archaeology a short glossary of terms such as 'stylobates' would have been helpful. Some short concluding chapter would also have been valuable to signpost future major directions in the study of medieval archaeology. The illustrations are generally judiciously chosen and well produced, except that the ugly large lettering should have been masked on the aerial photograph of Earls