

Reviews

Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity? Edited by J. Drinkwater and H. Elton. xxi + 376 pp., 12 figs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. ISBN 0-521-41485-7. Price: £37.50 hb.

The notion of a 'crisis of identity' is very appropriate to 5th-century Gaul, poised as it was, fundamentally, between the worlds of the late Roman western empire and the nascent Germanic successor-states on its territory, and was an evocative choice of subtitle for the 1989 Sheffield conference of which the proceedings are published in this book. The problem of identity applies from the point of view of the modern scholar, and from that of contemporaries on many levels. Should 5th-century Gaul be associated more with the late Roman period or the start of the early Middle Ages? Did 5th-century Gauls perceive themselves as subjects of the western (or indeed the eastern) Roman emperor or of an, at best, clumsily Romanizing barbarian king, and to what extent was it possible to be both simultaneously? Were they powerless victims of cataclysmic events or adept survivors in a situation which, in any case, somehow never seemed quite as bad locally as that being reported from elsewhere: able to maintain more or less the lifestyle to which they were accustomed, or compelled to depart as refugees to Italy or the Holy Land, either as a consequence of dispossession or because they were unable to cope with the confusion of loyalties which beset them? Quite apart from these perhaps more obvious and general aspects, were there not also personal, psychological crises of identity, arising from the tension between traditional Roman aristocratic values and the ideals of Christian *conversio* (which might have gained extra impetus in an apocalyptic atmosphere), as proposed in a stimulating contribution by Wes?

The answer must be, of course, that there will have been as many different experiences of an 'identity crisis' (or not) as there were individuals and communities in different circumstances, and with different vested interests, priorities and resources. Geography and finer chronological definition within '5th-century Gaul' are also important factors, the S. always remaining more favourable than the N. to the preservation of *Romanitas*, while the second half of the century witnessed the incorporation by the kingdoms of the Visigoths, Burgundians and Franks of those areas which had hitherto remained at least nominally under imperial Roman authority, and their abandonment of all pretence of a federate relationship. This subjective quality in describing the condition of 5th-century Gaul (beginning with the often highly polemical or otherwise tendentious literary sources), the paradoxes constantly encountered, and the futility of any attempt at generalization, are points repeatedly made clear — whether implicitly or explicitly — by the contributors to this volume. In part also the problem of identity is that of the correct empirical interpretation of certain forms of archaeological evidence which could have significant implications, and in which greater clarity may still be hoped for with continuing research and the accumulation of further data: for example, the 5th-century coinage (official or unofficial, Roman or barbarian?) and the distinctive weapon-graves and associated burials of the first half of the century in northern Gaul (Germanic federates or Gallo-Roman local strongmen and their retinues?).

The strength of this deceptively small book lies in the large number of fairly short contributions by scholars from a range of disciplines, most of whom keep their attention firmly focused on the central question in the title. The resulting impression is of a valuable concentration of scholarship, which explores issues of identity, dislocation and continuity from often subtle and ingenious angles. Besides the contribution by Van Dam which forms the general Conclusion, the 27 other papers are grouped in seven thematic sections, each prefaced by an overview presumably by the editors. Among the general subjects explored are the objectivity and historical value of the literary sources, the Visigothic settlement as the single most important aspect of the political background and potential source of crisis, archaeological and topographical evidence for decline and recovery and conflicts of loyalty at both institutional and personal levels. The individual thematic sections are far from evenly balanced in their composition, which is probably the untidiest and least satisfactory feature of the book. This must have been a feature of the original conference programme, since apparently only one paper remained unavailable for publication, but more effort should perhaps have been made to restructure the contents for publication.

Those who, like this reviewer, have a particular interest in the Germanic successor-states may especially appreciate the well-crafted section II on 'The Gothic Settlement of 418', comprising four papers. Monographs by both J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz (*Barbarians and Bishops. Army, Church and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford, 1990)) and P. Heather (*Goths and Romans 332-489* (Oxford, 1991)) appeared in the interval between the conference and the publication of this volume. Whereas that of Liebeschuetz effectively supersedes his contribution here on the composition and status of Alaric's Goths, the paper by Heather on the development of the Visigothic kingdom in Gaul takes up where the treatment of the Visigoths in his book leaves off, and forms a valuable continuation.

Remaining with the subject of Germans and the foreshadowing of the Merovingian period, there is more than a touch of 'devil's advocacy' about Halsall's reassessment of the early 5th-century weapon graves and associated burials in northern Gaul, which conventionally have been interpreted as those of Germanic federates and their adherents. He challenges this interpretation and suggests instead that they are Gallo-Roman burials reflecting one possible view of the much-discussed *Bacaudae* as autonomous local aristocratic leaders with private armies, initially encouraged or required to be self-reliant and subsequently regarded as public enemies (resulting in an image which it is irresistibly tempting to compare with that of the American survivalist militias, headed by some disgruntled retired general, much in the news recently). Halsall concludes by expressing concern that his reinterpretation might actually be correct. However, against the well-known background of the extensive Germanization of the late Roman army, the diversity of find-contexts of such burials at urban sites, Saxon Shore forts such as Oudenburg as well as inland strategic locations, and ordinary rural sites, is more strongly supportive of the conventional view than the absence of specific historical evidence of such scattered federate deployment militates against it. Moreover, it needs to be made clearer that the 'federate graves' are not exclusively a phenomenon of the 5th century, but appear in the second half of the fourth when alternative interpretations, whether Bacaudic or otherwise, are not necessarily historically appropriate.

Even in an extensive collection of papers of such range and quality as this, the vagaries of conference organization and participation make it inevitable that some important aspects of 5th-century Gaul will have been omitted, or disproportionate emphasis placed on some at the expense of others. At one point the editors themselves regret the absence of a study devoted to Gallic imperial usurpers, from Jovinus to Avitus. On the barbarian front, the Burgundians — admittedly only players from the middle of the 5th century — are rather neglected. As Elton mentions in his paper, the Burgundians appear to have been very rapidly and effectively assimilated by the Gallo-Roman population of their kingdom;

this surely has discussion potential in the context of identity, and in comparison with the Visigoths, with the possible further question of whether the scarcity or absence of a distinct archaeological record always has the same explanation. In spite of reservations already expressed concerning the overall organization of the book, the editors have done a good job of providing their section-prefaces and assiduously inserting cross-references between papers.

Taken as a whole, this book addresses a difficult subject with authority and sophistication. Individual papers and groups of obviously related papers constitute original and important contributions to particular subjects of interest to specialists, who may still find some welcome surprises in the wealth of obscure information and references which they bring together.

SIMON BURNELL

Saint Patrick A. D. 493-1993. By David N. Dumville and others. 15 × 24 cm. vii + 334 pp. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993. ISBN 0-85115-332-1. Price: £39.50 hb.

The many uncertainties about St Patrick's dates have allowed at least three anniversaries to be celebrated during this century. The traditional date for the start of his mission in Ireland, 432, was marked in County Down by the building of a Church of Ireland church at Saul in 1932 and the setting up by the Catholic Church of a huge statue of St Patrick on Slieve Patrick nearby, also in 1932. As David Dumville points out, the 'early' death date anniversary in 1961 'provoked an avalanche of academic and popular literature' and a great deal of heated scholarly controversy. The present book was published to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of the death of St Patrick on 17th March 493, a date which many of its essays support.

David Dumville's stated aim is to take stock of the present position, to identify the issues which need reassessment, and to present the evidence in a straightforward way, with some discussion of the range of possible deductions. The intended audience is identified as 'students of the history of Ireland, of the end of Roman Britain, and of the Church and its missions'. There are 34 essays, 28 by Dumville and six by other writers. Many are quite short and Dumville succeeds in his ambitious aim of bringing clarity into an area of great complexity and obscurity.

The essays fall into three broad groups: the first deals with chronological and historical questions, the second with particular source materials, and the third with aspects of the cult of Patrick outside Ireland and some of the later written sources. It is not possible to deal with all 34 chapters in a review, but I hope to give some idea of the range of issues covered.

It is fitting that the first essay, by Thomas Charles-Edwards, places the mission of Palladius against the background of theology and ecclesiastical politics in 5th-century Rome. In a series of short papers Dumville looks at what is known with certainty about St Patrick. There is no evidence for the 'traditional' arrival date of 432 or for St Patrick having studied in Gaul. Arguments for the death date of 493 are supported by careful analysis of evidence for 'contemporary' kings and saints, though absolute proof is not possible. A group of papers deals with the complexities surrounding Palladius and Patrick 'Senior', and another presents and analyses the text of the 'tract on the crimes of Coroticus' and discusses who Coroticus was and where the events may have happened. One of the longer essays argues from historical, linguistic and hagiographical evidence that the British church had a much more important role in evangelising Ireland than has generally been acknowledged.

The second group of papers is designed to make available to scholars source materials which are either unavailable or published in altered or reordered forms. The text of Patrick's *Confession* is printed showing which parts were omitted in the abbreviated version in the *Book of Armagh*, and Muirchú's *Life of Patrick* is reproduced as in the *Book of Armagh*. The third group includes a useful treatment of the evidence for the cult of Patrick at Glastonbury by Lesley Abrams, evidence of his cult in two Anglo-Saxon sources, and discussion of some of the later Patrician sources including the date of the Tripartite *Life* (no longer safely attributable to c. 900).

The book refers specifically to archaeology in three chapters. K. R. Dark discusses the possible nature and whereabouts of the *villula* from which Patrick was taken as a youth, against the background of present knowledge of settlement types in late Roman Britain. He tends to favour a south-western (Cotswold/Dorset) rather than a north-western location. In a piece on 'Emain Macha, Ard Macha' Dumville poses several questions about the date and establishment of a church in Armagh. He looks to archaeology for clarification of some of the issues, and in fact an excavation in Scotch Street, Armagh in 1990 (*Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 51 (1988)) goes some way towards this clarification. In 'St Patrick and the Christianization of Dál Riata' Dumville again looks to archaeology, in this case to date 'the establishment of Gaelic-speaking population and consequent Dalriadan authority in Britain' — no easy task!

The fact that specific references to archaeology are few does not mean that archaeologists can afford to ignore this book. Dumville applies a very valuable multidisciplinary treatment to what is extremely difficult source material, often complicated rather than clarified by earlier scholars. As far as Ireland is concerned, he rightly describes the period before the great plague of 549 as 'protohistoric' and the amount of reliable information is very small indeed. By deploying historical and linguistic skills, Dumville succeeds in stripping the evidence of ill-founded accretions and weighing up the issues with admirable objectivity. Clarity of treatment, careful balance, scrupulous attention to the sources, and a finely tuned insight are all plentifully in evidence. Anyone working on Britain and Ireland in the 5th century should pay close attention to this collection of essays. Though the aim was ambitious, the book should indeed serve as a 'reliable point of departure for the next generation's thinking'.

ANN HAMLIN

The English Conquest. Gildas and Britain in the Fifth Century. By N. J. Higham. 14 × 22 cm. viii + 220 pp., 5 figs. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-7190-4079-5 hb.; 0-7190-4080-9 pb. Price: £35 hb.; £14.99 pb.

This I found a decidedly strange little book; in its way, as much an idiosyncratic revision of Britannia in the immediately post-Roman era as A. W. Wade-Evans', or (with far greater learning) John Morris's. It opens with evidence of one admirable strength. The text of Gildas, *De Excidio Britonum*, like the shorter main writing (*Confessio*) of another Briton born at an unspecified date in the 5th century, Patrick, is hard enough because of the maddening paucity of clear geographical identifications, or of contemporary proper names. *D.E.B.* opens with passages of some interest because it is clear that the author describes fast-moving events in his own country, but when it descends thence into Scripture-derived homily most readers close the book. This is a pity because nuggets lurk in the tortuous Latin sentences and in unedifying translations. Higham has seen and practised the truth that one cannot hope to understand, to begin to understand, an early text of this nature except by reading and re-reading it dozens of times, whereupon insights

will surely dawn. In that respect I found the analysis of Gildas's teaching refreshing, often markedly original and new, and the basis (in part) of inferences that may bear upon contemporary history.

Again, Higham draws on his considerable experience as a fieldworker and historian of the landscape (witness his recent *The Kingdom of Northumbria A.D. 350-1100* (1993)) to give us a most persuasive chapter on the geography of *D.E.B.* and to locate Gildas firmly in some part of Wessex, with an apparent preference for the area of modern Dorset. The arguments — some of them, anyhow — for this are fully marshalled and though Higham gives himself insufficient room to expand the topic, I am sure that he had in mind the, probably post-Gildas, nature of 6th-century and later British Christianity in a region where one might just name Wareham, Poundbury, Cerne, Ilchester and Sherborne. Higham, who offers new avenues for research in this direction, convinces me that this does offer by far the most plausible setting for Gildas; I think that the Miller, Thompson *et al* northern milieu is finally put out to grass.

We come then, to the major piece of revisionism, which is the chronology, and the contention that Gildas wrote *D.E.B.* about A.D. 480; that its content, when any of it can be construed as a plain account of contemporary *Weltpolitik* is explicable only in terms of this early dating; and the picture of what are now England and Wales so presented is forced upon us by hitherto-misunderstood evidence. The linchpin of Higham's argument is the weight accorded to the so-called 'Gallic Chronicle' entry, *s.a.* 452, that allows a final Saxon victory in A.D. 441. The debate, often highly colourful, as to the veracity of this record has been conducted mostly in the pages of *Britannia* (see Higham's footnotes to Chapter 5) and remains inconclusive. Higham is in no doubt where he stands. Now while most scholars pay little more than lip-service, mainly from inertia or through convenience, to the idea that *D.E.B.* was finished about 530-540 (some might even swallow Molly Miller's absolute dates) and while many are aware that redating to something like 500 × 510 is actually just as acceptable, anything as early as 475 × 480 runs up against a large, separate problem. This is the reference to five named British kings, all seemingly mature men as Gildas addressed them, three at least of whom ruled over identifiable post-Roman kingdoms.

In the past the Five Kings aspect was rather tied to the mid 6th century because the supposedly grandest, 'Maglocunus' of Gwynedd, NW. Wales, was identified as the man named in an *Annales Cambriae* version, under the year 547; *Mortalitas magna in qua pausat Mailcun rex Genedotae*, 'A great death (= plague) in which Mailgun king of Venedotia went to rest (= died)'. Apart from the fact that, though the plague itself was real enough, this record was not penned until something like the 8th century, the old British name *Maglocunus*, latinized 'Maglocunus', did break down to forms that could be written as Mailgun, later usually Maelgwn. Ostensibly this obit refers to the king, and only that king, in question. (Higham rather carelessly spells his name as 'Maelgwyn', as if from **Maglouindos*, another name entirely.) Just as a drowning man in high seas will clutch at any plank, Higham has noted Dumville's bright suggestion, in Lapidge and Dumville, eds. *Gildas: New Approaches* (1984), Chapter 3, that the *A.C.* 'Mailcun' note is a late substitute, using the *Annals of Ulster* (*s.a.* 549), in an entry which originally recorded *mortalitas magna in qua isti pausant*, followed by names of a cluster of holy men. Accordingly the obstacle of the death, not much before 540, of a man who was already mature by 480 or so can be removed.

This where things start to go wrong, in my opinion, incurably so. Higham has not understood, and the limited references cited in his chapter-notes (there is no proper bibliography) confirm this, that to clear Maelgwn of Gwynedd out of the way is far from sufficient. The remaining objections are not only not answered; it is not apparent that Higham sees them. Two of the remaining four *tyranni* are hardly known outside *D.E.B.* To suggest that 'Aurelius Caninus' may, conveniently, be the **Cunignos* on a Carmarthen

CORRECTIONS TO *MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY* 39

The Editor and Review Editor would like to apologise for the errors which occurred within the Reviews section of the journal. Due to a technical problem in the transfer of information from disc which was not noted at any stage, most page references within the Reviews section only were changed to begin with a 6. A list of corrections is given below.

- p.299 line 47: for 'p.656' read 'p.256';
p.302 line 27: for 'p.633' read 'p.133';
p.304 line 9: for 'pp.63-49' read 'pp.43-49';
p.304 line 17: for 'p.68' read 'p.48';
p.305 line 8: for 'p.66' read 'p.46';
p.305 line 24: for 'p.69' read 'p.39';
p.309 line 38: for 'p.63' read 'p.73';
p.312 line 43: for 'p.630' read 'p.130';
p.313 line 13: for 'p.601' read 'p.201';
p.313 line 17: for 'p.605' read 'p.105', for 'p.677' read 'p.177';
p.317 line 16: for 'p.60' read 'p.90';
p.321 line 27: for 'p.670' read 'p.170';
p.321 line 35: for 'p.69' read 'p.99';
p.322 line 2: for 'p.604' read 'p.204', for 'p.607' read 'p.207';
p.329 line 11: for 'p.60' read 'p.10';
p.333 line 37: for 'p.67' read 'p.27';
p.334 line 39: for 'p.652' read 'p.352';
p.337 line 35: for 'p.630' read 'p.130';
p.338 line 20: for 'p.611' read 'p.211';
p.338 line 35: for 'p.600' read 'p.100';
p.338 line 41: for 'p.624' read 'p.124';
p.345 line 46: for 'p.68' read 'p.98';
p.347 line 34: for 'p.61' read 'p.91';
p.349 line 41: for 'pp.69-186' read 'pp.99-186';
p.349 line 42: for 'pp.687-234' read 'pp.187-234', 'pp. 635-340' read 'pp.235-340';
p.349 line 43: for 'pp.641-61' read 'pp.341-61';
p.349 line 45: for 'pp.684-85' read 'pp.484-85';
p.349 line 46: for 'pp.662-405' read 'pp.362-405';
p.350 line 1: for 'pp.607-19' read 'pp.407-19', for 'pp.6-97' read 'pp.9-97';
p.350 line 8: for 'pp.64-88' read 'pp.84-88';
p.350 line 23: for 'p.61' read 'p.91';
- p.301 line 6: for 'p.639' read 'p.139';
p.303 line 43: for 'p.66' read 'p.56';
p.304 line 11: for 'p.66' read 'p.46';
p.305 line 1: for 'cap.6' read 'cap.1';
p.305 line 13: for 'p.698' read 'p.198';
p.308 line 7: for 'p.670' read 'p.270';
p.312 line 29: for 'p.61' read 'p.41';
p.313 line 9: for 'p.605' read 'p.205';
p.313 line 16: for 'p.6' read 'p.5', 'p.649' read 'p.149';
p.321 line 24: for 'p.627' read 'p.127';
p.321 line 29: for 'p.603' read 'p.203';
p.321 line 36: for 'p.690' read 'p.190';
p.333 line 14: for 'p.621' read 'p.121';
p.334 line 5: for 'pp.609-11' read 'pp.109-11';
p.335 line 38: for 'p.66' read 'p.76';
p.337 line 36: for 'p.61' read 'p.11';
p.338 line 21: for 'p.612' read 'p.212';
p.338 line 37: for 'p.65' read 'p.35';
p.345 line 36: for 'p.61' read 'p.11';
p.346 line 2: for 'p.602' read 'p.102';
p.349 line 5: for 'pp.65-76' read 'pp.75-76';
p.350 line 13: for 'pp.69-97' read 'pp.89-97';
p.350 line 34: for 'p.6' read 'p.3'.

memorial reading INIGENA CUNIGNI AUITTORIGES (ogam) and AVITORIA FILIA CVNIGNI in Roman letters, dated (conveniently) '5th-early 6th century' by Nash-Williams, is nonsense. *Caninus* and **Cunignos* may mean the same (diminutives of 'hound, wolf') but (a) use of ogam and Primitive Irish *inigena* 'daughter' show this family as descendants of Irish settlers, not of Romano-British *patricii* (b) the British ruler's memorial would have read AVRELI CANINI. . ., if it existed and (c) Nash-Williams' date is only a general estimate.

The hard obstacles would be the redating of Gildas's *Vortipori*, VOTEPORIGIS (gen.) on another Carmarthenshire stone, and *Constantinus* of Damnonia (probably a part of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall) to a position where both were born in c. 430 × 440. If Higham had wished to rewrite most of what is generally held about the outline history of non-Saxon Britannia in the 5th century A.D., then these problems should have been addressed, and many would have enjoyed some further chapters setting out any sort of defence of the implied revisionism. One could further point out that other problems pop up, in relation to the state of the church in Britain at the time when Gildas (a monk? a priest and monk?) completed *D.E.B.* Michael Herren's views on the progress of monasticism in Britain when Gildas wrote ('Gildas and British monasticism'; pp. 65-78 in A. Bammesberger and Alfred Wollman, eds. *Britain 400-600: Language and History* (Heidelberg 1990)) seem to this reviewer somewhat overstated and with a fair amount of special pleading. Nevertheless, there is enough extractable from *D.E.B.* to see more or less where we are, in the likely sequence of Insular monastic developments; and it is frankly inconceivable on present evidence that any antecedent generation, like c. 460-480, contained — even in S. Wales, cradle of such monasticism, let alone Wessex — the kind of features minimally deducible from Gildas's wording. Alas, since none of this is debated by Higham, one has to assume that this particular consequence of his early redating had escaped his notice.

In sum then: an interesting venture from a fluent pen, but where its newly-proposed chronology is concerned, wholly unconvincing and most inadequately argued. We are informed (back cover) that it is the first volume of a major three-part analysis of the origins of England. Some of us will await with interest, not so much Vols. 2 and 3, but separate assessments of Vol. 1 from the Anglo-Saxon lobby.

CHARLES THOMAS

Civitas to Kingdom. British Political Continuity 300-800. By K. R. Dark. 16 × 24 cm. xiv + 322 pp., 61 figs. and pls., 6 tables. London: Leicester University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-7185-1465-3. Price: £42.50 hb.

One sympathizes with the main aim of this book. Such a lot has been written recently about the Anglo-Saxons in Britain during the 5th and 6th centuries, and when the Britons have put in an appearance it has been routinely as the people to whom Anglo-Saxons were doing things. The Britons deserve the chance to be centre-stage for once, to be studied for their own sake and seen in the round, with Anglo-Saxons figuring largely as the people to whom *they* did things. That is what Kenneth Dark sets out to do, and in many respects he does it well. Anyone who thinks that it is for lack of evidence that the Britons are rarely more than bit players in our efforts to decipher the history of Britain in the migration period must read this book.

Dr Dark's thesis is that in the parts of lowland Britain which lay beyond the Anglo-Saxon settlement, 'in political and cultural terms "Roman Britain" ended in the 7th century' (p. 656). Actual Roman rule terminated in 406, overthrown by a popular revolt fuelled by disappointment that the usurper Constantine III was having no success in Gaul,

and by a violent spasm of militant Christianity. Bureaucratic government and Romano-British élite structures were finished by 409, being at once replaced by kingdoms throughout the provinces of Britain. Some of these were focused on *civitas* capitals, some on the hillfort power bases of a re-emerging British tribal elite (and in SW. Wales, an immigrant Irish one), but in practically every case they bore a close direct geographical relationship to the Romano-British *civitates*, which in turn closely mirrored the tribal territories of the late pre-Roman Iron Age. Yet this was no rapid return to a Celtic lifestyle which had been only superficially touched by Romanization. Plainly things changed, but the Britons who stayed free of Anglo-Saxon control in the 5th and 6th centuries formed a wealthy late Antique society retaining many elements (both practical and aesthetic) of Romanized life. Sooner or later it succumbed to Anglo-Saxon domination in all areas except Wales, where it was transformed by the 8th century into a heroic Celtic society of the sort we find reflected in early Welsh poetry. This, however, was a transformation produced, not by the environmental, economic, demographic or military factors which are usually adduced, but by a brand of individualism inspired by an increasing awareness of national identity and by Christianity.

This is a bold thesis, boldly developed. Its detailed discussion of how British society worked in the 5th and 6th centuries, and of how much is owed to its own insular past, how much to the Irish, and how much to its contacts with the remainder of the Roman world, offers many valuable insights. Among those which will be of special interest to readers of *Medieval Archaeology* are important ideas about 'black earth' (a product of dense, low-status occupation), the late 4th-century 'pagan revival' (a modern academic myth), archaeologists' attempts to identify political territories, the Class G penannular brooches and coins in Anglo-Saxon graves (payments made by Britons to stabilize boundaries shared with Anglo-Saxon kingdoms), and the organization of British warfare. Some of the author's suggestions will no doubt raise even the most benign eyebrows, however, such as that there was an economic boom in early 5th-century Britain.

Notwithstanding these and many other points of great interest, the thesis is flawed. Dr Dark might well object that those who take exception to his provocative ideas, as many will, have failed to appreciate the full force of his arguments. If so, one would have to say that the fault is largely his own. He argues at length and with close attention to detail for some of his beliefs, such as that the illustrated manuscript known as *Vergilius Romanus* is of sub-Roman British origin, or that Gildas lived in Dorset. But too many of his big ideas are presented with a minimum of detailed working-out or exemplification. To compound the problem, some of them form important structural elements of his model on which further hypotheses are erected. Nowhere is this more obvious or more damaging than in Dr Dark's efforts to discover the extents of territories. He is right to believe that medieval land units (and Iron Age and Romano-British ones too, if we can discern them) are a potentially invaluable historical source. But to employ them reliably, we have first to establish their boundaries' courses as closely and accurately as possible. If we then find people at different periods whose land-units cover much the same area — which is the best one could hope for at this early date — the onus rests squarely on us to prove that the land units are the same by reason of, for example, the area's continuous use. We ought never to assume 'continuity'; a case must be made for it through closely detailed, substantive argument.

The book claims that in the early 5th century Britain underwent a rapid and relatively seamless transformation as a result of which some areas remained Romanized, if decreasingly so, into the 6th century. It is essential to its thesis, therefore, that the British kingdoms should have developed immediately and directly out of the late Roman *civitates*, and that their kings (who are not much discussed) should have emerged naturally out of the *ancien régime*. We can accept that this is likely to have happened in some places, even in the area identified here as a Catuvellaunian/Trinovantian kingdom (Wheeler's

'sub-Roman triangle'). But the way to prove it is not to select bits and pieces of disparate evidence, map them, add a measure of special pleading, and then claim that the outcome shows the extents of the *civitates* and allegedly coincident British successor kingdoms. Other, lesser, medieval land units, both Welsh and English, are given sub-Roman or earlier origins with even less justification. Yet as the author himself says, 'this is an approach requiring the utmost care and critical assessment' (p. 639). It is a matter for real regret, therefore, that he did not follow his own advice, since his unfounded reliance on being able to map early land units seriously undermines this thoughtful and stimulating discussion of the Britons.

STEVEN BASSETT

Cadbury Castle, Somerset. The Early Medieval Archaeology. By Leslie Alcock with S. J. Stevenson and C. R. Musson. 21 × 30 cm. 188 pp., 78 figs. and pls. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995. ISBN 0-7083-1275-6. Price: £35.00 hb.

The excavations at the hillfort of South Cadbury were amongst the most important of the late 1960s. They represented a major research project which revealed information about many periods, and which introduced the use of such techniques as geophysical prospection in a well-publicized and effective way. The excavations in the interior were extensive, and allowed the investigation of substantial structures. The complexity of the entrance sequence cannot be underestimated, though the medieval phases were amongst the simplest. The rampart cuttings were innovative, with the introduction of extensive excavation rather than just narrow trenches. For example, Cutting D was over 12 m long, and allowed for variation in details of sequence and construction to be recognized spatially as well as chronologically. The use of spaced vertical timbers in the front stone revetting of the early medieval bank would not have been recognized in the traditional method of rampart excavation. Numerous professional archaeologists were inspired and encouraged during the project, and the public were enthused and informed by considerable media attention. We still await the momentous discoveries of the Iron Age and earlier periods to be published in full, but we are now privileged to have in appropriately detailed form the information for the early Middle Ages.

The discovery of the early medieval phase at Cadbury Castle was of considerable importance, and the interim volume by Alcock ('*By South Cadbury is that Camelot*' ... *Excavations at Cadbury Castle*, 1972) has been much used to date. The discoveries at the site were an inspiration for others searching for post-Roman hillfort reoccupation. Only at Cadbury Castle, however, has the evidence been demonstrated so convincingly, indicating substantial new defensive work around the perimeter and structures within. It is therefore surprising that English Heritage had no funding available for the publication of these results, but as Alcock admits this has allowed him to produce his own style of report. The volume consists of three parts: the excavations, the finds, and a discussion and synthesis. Each deserves discussion in turn.

The excavation report is a detailed stratigraphic account supported by detailed cross-references to the illustrations and finds. The line drawings continue the clear and distinctive style seen in other Alcock publications, and overall this is an effective presentation of complex material, particularly so for the early medieval and late Saxon entrances and rampart cuttings.

It is not surprising that on such a complex site there is not only one possible interpretation of the evidence, and on some of the most important issues more than one view is presented. For example, the differences between Alcock and Musson with regard to the E. gable of structure L1, the supposed early medieval hall, are fairly set out. It is of interest, if not concern, that this building had post-holes which varied considerably in size,

and are not in any way different from all the other post-holes in the area. The ability of the human eye to recognize patterns is undoubted; uncertainty over the past reality of such patterns must always remain, but a strong case is put forward for the building's existence. The cruciform trench, still thought to be a foundation for a late Saxon church that was never built, is published in plan, but unfortunately there are no sections across its fill.

The finds are presented in detail, with specialist reports and discussions. This is all rather lavish, with each category of finds starting on a new page, and no use of smaller type. The limited amount of material is notable, though hardly unfamiliar on sites of the period; some of the finds are significant in their own right, but for most their importance lies in their secure contexts and spatial locations, used to such effect in the analysis.

The discussion and synthesis forms the final, substantial, part of the volume. Some sections, such as that on artefacts and activities, and a comparative analysis of the structures in the early medieval period, are most useful. Alcock also presents his views on long-distance trade and the identification of high-status sites, to a certain extent repeating earlier publications but updating the material and extending discussion to cover all of western Britain. The final sections place the results in an historical setting. This volume is generally well-produced, with only a few of the plates a little dark or grainy, and with very few printing errors (Lynch for Lynn in text and bibliography).

It is stated at the beginning of the excavation section that all previous publications have been superseded, though reference to reconstructions will be made. It is, however, unfortunate that this matter was not addressed more fully. The role of buildings, and their possible appearance, should have been discussed, and the early reconstruction drawings critically reassessed. Both the hall and gateway are vital evidence for the architecture of this period, and deserve fuller treatment in this definitive work. Perhaps limited resources prevented this aspect being fully developed, although Alcock's negative and pessimistic comments on reconstruction (p. 633) may be more relevant.

The Cadbury Castle excavation was a tremendous undertaking; its writing up has been long and difficult, but the end product will stand as a testament to all this physical and intellectual effort. It will be much used by those interested in post-Roman west, and it has effectively escaped from overly Arthurian associations in its final published form. It stands alongside Dinas Powys as a major contribution to our understanding of western Britain during this period.

HAROLD MYTUM

Corpus of Early Christian Inscribed Stones of South-West Britain. By Elisabeth Okasha. 16 × 24 cm. × + 374 pp., figs., pls. London: Leicester University Press, 1993. ISBN 0-7185-1475-0. Price: £65.00 hb.

Dr Elisabeth Okasha has established herself, with an impressive range of publications, as our leading epigrapher in the Anglo-Saxon field. In turning her attention to the deep South West (with its mainly non-Germanic inscribed memorial stones) she covers those of Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, with Scilly and Lundy, though not the Wareham group. I suppose it was inevitable that the 79 stones discussed should be both renamed and renumbered, the place-names being variously those of parishes or localities, but the would-be user who requires to link these to Macalister's two-volume (1945, 1959) *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum* may like to know that a full two-way concordance between the new Okasha numbers, and those of Macalister (and Thomas, for some post-Macalister discoveries), could be added at the last moment to my *And Shall These Mute Stones Speak?* (Cardiff, 1994), at 333-34. Okasha 76 'Whitestile', probably post-medieval, and Okasha

73 'Tuckingmill' (vague report only) are omitted, and my own list (*Mute Stones*, 330) notes a few additional Cornish examples (numbered 1201–1203–1207) not in Okasha.

It may be said at once that the very large body of references cited for most of these inscriptions, together with a seventeen-page bibliography, constitutes a magnificent and painstaking accomplishment, matched by the individual statements about the known histories, previous readings and regrettably frequent removals and maltreatments of these monuments. Okasha's industry and thoroughness in this respect is legendary and any subsequent enquirer will have cause for gratitude that this has been done; quite extraordinary early sources have been unearthed, and a kind of potted historiography of a specific antiquarian interest could be compiled from this alone. When we turn to the introductory chapters, Celticists as well as the growing band of persons interested in the early inscriptions of Ireland and the British West may start to feel less happy. Okasha's own 'Preface' disclaims any attempt to write either south-western protohistory with a Christian slant, or a 'work of palaeography or a treatise on Celtic philology'. Fair enough; but all these stones, representing attempts mainly from the late 5th to the mid or late 7th century to render a variety of Celtic personal names, occasionally in ogam though mostly in the Roman alphabet, cannot be divorced from their wider context. That context includes the near-certainty that, in E. Cornwall and SW. Devon, the custom of erecting such memorials started *c.* 500 — with the likely exception of a very few isolates like (Macalister's numbers) 479 Carnsew and the Lundy OPTIMI stone (Thomas 1400) — as an aspect of conversion, in large part initiated by casual settlers arriving in Cornwall from S. Wales. Unlike many of the Irish ogam stones and a few 5th-century ones in Pembrokeshire that are apparently pagan, all the SW. British memorials are Christian, as revealed by their wording, by analogy and even by minimal art.

Okasha's ideas as to absolute and relative chronology (Section 7: 'Dating . . .') open with the comment that one can do no more for any stone than suggest a date-range within the early Christian period, defined here as *c.* A.D. 400 to *c.* 1100. Her classification of the inscriptions (or, as she calls them, 'texts') is dominated by a 'Category 1', established by form: i.e. pieces of undressed or roughly dressed stone without any carved decoration. (Category 2 comprises those few of the well-known Cornish crosses with brief inscriptions, and Category 3 the odd non-pillar, non-cross artefacts, e.g. altar frontals.) Her date-range for Category 1 is from the 5th or 6th century to the 11th. The opening date has long been agreed, and can often be refined. The quite unrealistic closing date is derived from the Lanteglos-by-Camelford stone, Okasha's 22, probably a cross-shaft bereft of its small head, which has a long 'early Middle English' dedication, where an English-named man and his wife **Genereth* (?Old Cornish) erect the *sybstel* for the soul of Aelwine and for themselves. It is perhaps just pre-Norman. Archaically much of the lettering revives Roman capital forms; this pillar has no congeners and of itself cannot possibly prolong, to *c.* 1050-plus, a class of inscriptions in which capitals were already losing ground to book-hand letters in the later 6th century, and which as a class may well have gone out of fashion entirely in Cornwall and Devon by *c.* 700–750. It is therefore tedious to read, again and again, in Okasha's entries the assertion that 'Category 1 stones date from the 5th or 6th centuries to the 11th century but this stone cannot be more closely dated'. On p. 66 the author herself seems to admit the weakness of such a claim.

Can these sixty or more inscriptions in fact ever be dated? In absolute terms, no, because they lack such absolute criteria, and even to say that 358 from Castell Dwyran, Carmarthenshire, VOTEPORIGIS, is 'about 550' assumes, shakily, that Gildas wrote *D.E.B.* 'about 540'. In relative terms, for purposes of historical models and sequences, some can be provisionally given half-century or third-century 'dates' within assumed absolute brackets. There are many criteria — open always to modification — that can be used; linguistic, contextual, even epigraphic (and Okasha does not really look at such

features as final horizontal -I, which seems to have been invented in northern Pembroke around 500, or introduction of angle-bar A from Christian Gaul, which may have spread a generation later from SW. Wales to N. Cornwall).

The linguistic aspect of these brief 'texts', dominated as they are by male personal names of British, Irish and continuing Roman nature, is naturally vital. If we find known Irish names in Devon or Cornwall, at least some explanation is required, and moreover the precise spelling of certain names, when allied to approximately dated developments in the parent languages, may offer indications close than A.D. 400 to 1100 (!). Okasha's division of names by language (pp. 63–49) will again raise eyebrows. Because of incorrect readings some of these are ghost forms anyhow (like TIMI and IVGDOI etc.). If CVMREGNI — better, CVMRECINI, and from British **Comreginos* (vel. sim.) is (p. 66) 'Certainly Latin', where else is this attested? In individual entries, where Okasha has decided to allot space to further examination of names as linguistic phenomena, it becomes clear that she must have been offered inadequate guidance through this (non-Anglo-Saxon) minefield; also, that such discussions show no signs of familiarity with a good deal of recent work in Celtic studies. For her 34 Mawgan (*recte* 'in Meneage') 'the text is so highly deteriorated that it is not certain . . . what script is used'; and (p. 68) 'This name (= CNEGVM I) is reconstructed from early drawings and readings'. But why? The text is perfectly legible still; it reads CNEGVM I FILI GENAIVS (the linked letters are ligatures), nearly all Roman capitals of a rather bold square form and with reversed S and angle-bar A, and is probably within the 7th century (for 'Cnegumi' read perhaps late written syncope of a British name with 'CONE-').

It is when we examine the primary input, the fieldwork and the reading of the stones, that a very real unhappiness comes to the fore. We are not told as much in so many words, but Okasha's approach appears to be confined to *looking* at stones (often several times) and declining to illustrate them beyond untouched photographs. This is all very well, but today it is far from enough; most of these inscriptions are on granite, many in dark corners, and one may well ask what purpose such photographs serve, save to indicate shape and genuine existence. The purist objection that use of chalk or charcoal to produce detailed views as a basis for line-drawings introduces too much 'subjectivity', as is usually said about Macalister, can be met. Readings should always involve two or more experienced workers; every line of every letter must be agreed, 'blind' chalking (i.e. start at the end and work backwards) is best, many visits may be required and night visits with strong oblique lighting are of huge value. The drawback of Okasha's system is that, far too often, 'texts' are said to be illegible, or only partly recoverable, or deteriorated beyond any safe interpretation, when they are nothing of the sort. For the recent (her 4, Thomas 1206) Bosworsey pillar, one of very great interest because so early an instance of the digraph — TH — which must have been brought to Cornwall from Wales after (?) 500, we are only given (two lines) [.O. .] I [.N] I / [.R] IVGDOI. The photograph itself, if you know where to look, tells more. This is readable, despite the damage of two gatepost bolts, as DOVITHI IC / FILIVS DO CIDCI. It is entirely in large capitals with some peculiarities (first final — I, I in IC (= *hic* 'here') and last final — I are all horizontal; C of IC is reversed; -CI in DOCIDCI is ligatured), but the result of this allows genuine names, *Douith(us)* and probably **Docidoc(us)*, British ones of the late 6th or 7th century. Okasha's remarks about '(R)iogdocus' have no meaning. There are other stones where no particular blame can be attached; at St Columb Major (her 47), like Macalister, she seems to have examined the wrong face — on which Macalister, mistaking pegmatite scars for letters, thought he saw (his 475) 'IA / CON / IVS' — and thus missed the fragmentary but legible A. . . ? / ? . . . FILI on the reverse. For the four important Island of Lundy stones one must accept that (reportedly galloping) deterioration makes it fortunate that I was able to record these correctly 30 years ago. Here again, however (Okasha's 26), to say that 'The name [PO]TIT is probably

Latin' must imply unfamiliarity with Patrick, *Confessio*, cap. 6. For the few south-western stones involving ogam one has to suspect that the author simply does not understand how this script operated, or its post-400 history on British soil. For Lewannick I (Okasha's 23) the ogam up one angle is *not* 'now illegible' and several letters are visible in the photograph; in Lewannick II, one of the ogams was written the wrong way and then corrected up the other angle, as is patently obvious; for (her 78) Worthyvale, the ogam *LATINI* is still detectable, as is the name *MACARI*. As the genitive of *Macarius*, a loan from Greek *Makarios*, why is this absent (p. 66) from the short-list of 'Certainly Latin' names?

When, finally, we look at a handful of very late (*sensu* 10–11th century) inscribed crosses in Cornwall, this is very much Okasha's period and a topic in which she has given us a great deal. On the Penzance Market Cross, the 11th-century, three-line, basal panel inscription gives rise to Macalister's view that this, Text i, was 'impossible to interpret' ('a conclusion with which I agree', writes Okasha, p. 698). But surely the whole context would at once suggest (a) a dedicatory inscription, and (b) one such in Latin; *.UICUMQ;* is plainly *Quicumque* 'Whoever. . .', and, since we have a few letters recorded before further present-century damage, more or less complete restoration is fairly simple (see my *Mute Stones*, 299–300 — this cross is Macalister (Vol. 2) 1051). In an important recent paper on a group of late stones from Tullylease, Co. Cork, with Isabel Henderson (*Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (1992), 1–36), Okasha herself discussed and published another whole batch of inscriptions of much this sort, including a 'QUI CUM QUAE'.

Of course, the volume, despite its exorbitant price (and wiser students will await its appearance, reduced, in the Oxbow catalogues), has splendid aspects, notably the bibliography. A major, possibly irreparable, defect is the failure to precede the project with a full study of the comparable inscribed stones of S. Wales, which (p. 69, n. 25) Okasha has not seen and can therefore adduce only at second hand. This Welsh material in every respect is the parent of the Dumnonian child. In his 'Foreword' the distinguished general editor of the series talks of 'the secure foundation of a consistent and scholarly treatment of their (i.e. of the inscriptions') classification and of the problems of dating, transcription and analysis'. Similar though less confident claims from the same editorial pen have prefaced other books in this series. Here, sadly, we may not all be able to follow him.

CHARLES THOMAS

Angelsächsisische Waffengräber des 5. bis 7. Jahrhunderts. (Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters Beiheft 6). By Heinrich Härke. 21 × 30 cm. 290 pp., 82 figs., 1 fiche. Cologne: Rheinland-Verlag G.M.B.H., 1992. ISBN 3-7927-1217-2. Price not stated, hb.

This book presents in full the research that lies behind various articles on the same topic presented by the author in English, French and German publications, e.g. Sonia Chadwick Hawkes' *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England* (1989) and Martin Carver's *The Age of Sutton Hoo* (1992). It is a study of Anglo-Saxon weapon burial in the 5th–7th/8th centuries, based on a sample of 47 cemeteries in England, was presented as a doctoral thesis at Göttingen University in 1987.

Some may wonder whether they would miss anything by reading only the author's English articles on the subject, rather than the German publication. The answer is positive because the monograph presents in detail the data and the method of working which before were only outlined. The first chapter presents the history and methods of research both on Anglo-Saxon and continental materials. Chapter 2 deals with the written sources, both on Anglo-Saxon weapons and on social structures. The criteria used for the choice of the archaeological material representing the sample are explained in the next. Chapter 4 is

devoted to typology and chronology. As far as chronology is concerned, the author's method is unconventional and bound to make readers cringe who believe in a differentiation between relative and absolute chronology as a basic requirement for archaeological research. In Chapter 5 a survey of the frequency of weapon combinations, their distribution, and interpretations of functional and social aspects of the weapon burial rite, are given. Further data on the graves, such as the construction of a grave and the significance of other grave goods in relation to weapons, are analysed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 concentrates on anthropological data in relation to the weapon burial rite. In the final chapter, presenting general conclusions, the reader will find little that has not been said in the author's articles on weapon burial rite, but will note that through the previous chapters it is now easier to judge their plausibility. The catalogue of cemeteries includes cemetery plans and information on the sites which was not published before and thus gives further valuable information. The same applies to the catalogue of graves presented on microfiche.

As a publication of international interest, the book is well done. The subdivision of Chapters 1–7 into sub-chapters allows those who would shrink from reading an entire German monograph to extract information on details of special interest without having to sift through lengthy passages of data within the text, and the catalogues present a minimum of difficulties as such.

The 47 cemeteries of which the sample consists are divided into nine regional groups of two to fourteen cemeteries. Statistically this may be a sufficient, but it is certainly not an overwhelming mass of data and the reader may be interested in adding further material to the samples to see how this affects the percentages on which some of the conclusions are based; e.g. the number of weapon graves in a region in relation to the total number of graves, or in relation to the total number of buried males. Thus the sample could be updated whenever a modern excavation produces acceptable data. It is therefore a little disappointing to find that it is not clear how the author calculated the percentages presented in Table 6, though this should become clear from the data given in Table 2. This, however, is only a minor point which does not affect the enormous value of the book as a source of reference for Anglo-Saxon and continental cemetery studies.

For years, research on Anglo-Saxon and continental row-grave cemeteries has been carried out in a degree of isolation not justified by differences in the material. A major publication on Anglo-Saxon studies published in Germany therefore gives reason to hope that a change is imminent, which will influence artefact studies and stimulate exchanges of methods and ideas.

BIRTE BRUGMANN

Animals in Early Medieval Art. By Carola Hicks. 17 × 25 cm. ix + 309 pp., 87 figs and pls. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993. ISBN 0-7486-0428-6. Price: £39.50 hb.

When St Bernard of Clairvaux railed against the use of monstrous animal decoration in Cluniac houses in the early 12th century, he was unaware of the tradition and sources for much of the carving on the cloister capitals which he found so distracting.

'What profit is there in those ridiculous monsters, in that marvellous and deformed comeliness, that comely deformity? To what purpose are those unclean apes, those fierce lions, those monstrous centaurs, those half-men, those striped tigers, those fighting knights, those hunters winding their horns? Many bodies are there seen under one head, or again, many heads to a single body. Here is a four-footed beast with a serpent's tail; there a fish with a beast's head. Here again the forepart of a horse trails half a goat behind it, or a horned beast bears the hinder quarters of a horse.'

This book provides an illuminating background to the Romanesque bestiary, by discussing the depiction and symbolism of animals in medieval art from the 6th to the 11th

centuries, as manifest on surviving examples of sculpture, manuscripts, embroidery and metalwork. In scope the survey is limited to the British Isles where, Dr Carola Hicks argues, the underlying Celtic and Germanic traditions combined with Mediterranean influences to produce a far stronger animal art in Britain than almost anywhere else in Europe. This view does need some qualification, given the spectacular manifestations of animal art in Scandinavia, but the concern of Dr Hicks is with the so-called recognisable animal, that is one which is shown correctly proportioned, normally in profile, belonging to a particular species, real or fantastic, as opposed to the animals of ornamental interlacing. The term 'recognisable' is used to simplify some of the involved terminology relating to representation and symbolization in art. This classification has some merits but it is an over-simplified division of the medieval bestiary with its fantastic and anthropomorphic hybrids, and does not always take account of the effect of stylization in the transmission of an animal motif nor the important role played by technique and its relationship to material process. Yet the co-existence of the recognisable, the stylized and the schematized animal form are all seen to be vital elements in the art of NW. Europe during the first few centuries A.D. Their continuity, stylistic evolution within Insular art and presumed transformation in meaning, from pagan to Christian contexts, form the substance of the book.

Carola Hicks proves to be eminently well-qualified to tackle this subject. Her knowledge of the material is detailed, thorough and long-standing; her interest in animal subjects in art can be traced back to an undergraduate thesis, at Edinburgh University, on a group of Roman brooches in the shape of animals. Her observation that the motif of one of these brooches, in the form of an eagle swooping on a hare, appears among the fauna of the Bayeux Tapestry borders, about one thousand years later, started the thought processes for her subsequent research into this intriguing subject.

A useful and succinct 'Introduction' gives a balanced appraisal of the methodological problems of reconciling archaeological, documentary and aesthetic sources. The iconographical analysis of the symbolic function of animals in Insular art is one such problem. The author acknowledges that even when it is possible to identify the more overt Christian symbols used in the period — the lamb, the dove and the fish representing aspects of Christ, the lion, calf and eagle of the evangelists — there are many different shades of meaning in the animals depicted that depend upon the knowledge and references of the spectator as much as the intention of the artist and those who commissioned him. It is dangerous to assume that with the assimilation of an animal motif and its dissemination from one craftsman to another, the significance of the animal motif stayed the same, particularly from pagan to Christian contexts. Dr Hicks shrewdly recognises that, 'the more the art of the period is analysed, the more complex the processes inspiring it appear.' (p. 9).

The presentation of the material in the five chapters follows a chronological sequence, from the 6th to the 11th century, discussing the regional manifestations of animal art in England, Ireland and Scotland. These parallel developments reinforce the notion that within each region distinct artistic traditions can be traced, in spite of the interactions between Anglo-Saxon, Irish and Pictish cultures. The 6th and 7th centuries have chapters to themselves. Chapter 2, the 7th century, is the pivot between pagan manifestations of animal art, highlighted in the regalia from Sutton Hoo, and the assimilation of animal ornament in the Christian Insular manuscripts. Chapter 3, the longest in the book, focuses on the 8th and early 9th centuries and includes an interesting section on the textual commentaries, the so-called 'monster and marvel' texts, together with their ultimate classical sources. These literary models, disseminated from monastic centres, can be recognized in the stone sculpture commissioned by the church. The assimilation of Viking culture and the impact of Scandinavian art on the Insular style is addressed in Chapter 4.

A shorter final chapter on the 11th century concludes that 'by the early 12th century, animals were becoming a more minor part of ornament, although they retained their symbolic role and were later revived as part of the naturalism of Gothic art. The Bayeux Tapestry and the early Romanesque sculptures can be seen as the climax of the process that continued for over 500 years, the adaptation of pagan animals into the complexities of Christian symbolism and their resulting reinterpretation as a major theme of religious art.' (p. 670). And so back to St Bernard of Clairvaux. . .

Given its very obvious merits, it is a pity that the visual impact of the book is rather dull. The text is lucid, free from jargon and reveals detailed and perceptive observations on the material. In studying the transmission of animal motifs and in attempting to interpret and extricate their meaning Dr Hicks avoids the pitfall of unwarranted speculation, but the text does deserve better illustrative material and a more generous allowance of plates. It is also to be regretted that no scales are given against any of the illustrations. Whilst annotations for each chapter are given at the end of the book, there is no separate bibliography, which would have been an asset to the student. In spite of the criticisms that can be made against its editorial production, this book is essential reading for anyone interested in the early medieval art of Britain.

GEORGE SPEAKE

A Summary Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Collections (Non-Ferrous Metals), Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (B.A.R. British Series 230.) By Arthur MacGregor and Ellen Bolick. 21 × 29 cm. 277 pp., 4 figs., 2 tables, 998 pls. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1993. ISBN 0-86054-751-5. Price: £36.00 pb.

This is a most welcome publication, presenting a wide range of mostly copper-alloy artefacts from early Anglo-Saxon contexts, belonging to what is generally recognized to be the second finest collection of such material outside the British Museum. Of course, there are other important collections elsewhere, such as the Cambridge University Museum and the Faussett Collection at Liverpool, but the British Museum and the Ashmolean alone can display representative material from all the major regions of Anglo-Saxon settlement. In addition to the important local finds from the Oxford region, there is valuable material from Kent, beginning with that excavated and published by James Douglas in the late 18th century and a significant collection of finds from East Anglia acquired by Sir John Evans in the 19th century and later donated by his son. There is material here from as far W. as Blockley in Worcestershire and as far N. as Darlington in County Durham. It was in researching this collection that the redoubtable E. T. Leeds produced a famous series of publications, which played a major role in establishing Anglo-Saxon archaeology as a serious discipline in the first half of the 20th century.

Arthur MacGregor and his collaborators have created a summary catalogue with no attempt to provide the sort of detailed description of each item we find in David Hinton's catalogue of late Saxon metalwork in the Ashmolean or David Wilson's earlier British Museum catalogue. Instead we are given a very basic description with key dimensions, a summary result of any metallurgical analysis, followed by museum details and author and date references to any literature. Each entry is accompanied by a small photograph, usually at a scale of two-thirds real size. The entries are grouped by object type and each section is introduced by a short discussion, which attempts to summarize what we know using non-specialist and non-technical language wherever possible. Similarly the catalogue entries deliberately do not attempt to assign typological labels for each item. Mention of

animal ornament by reference to Styles I and II could not really be avoided, but if the reader requires further information there are references to the key literature. An introduction to the catalogue explains the history of the collection and is followed by an index of collectors and donors, an index of sites and a brief, but valuable discussion of the interpretation of metal analyses by Catherine Mortimer. Financial constraints underlie this format, which seeks to provide in printed form the core data of a major collection at a reasonable cost and, by the deliberate simplicity of its approach, to make this material more accessible to a wide range of potential users.

The catalogue is dominated of course by dress accessories. Brooches are considered first (sections 1–22), followed by bracteates and other pendants (23–25), bracelets, finger rings and earrings (26–28), wrist clasps and gusset-plates (29–30), pins, hooked fasteners and lace-tags (31–33), buckles and other belt fittings (34–36), not to mention the fragments of gold braid from Chatham Lines in Kent (58). Personal items, such as toilet implements (37–41), girdle-hangers (42) and work-boxes (43) are listed with tools, such as needles (44) or sets of balances and scale-pans (53). Vessels and containers form another major category with bronze bowls (51), bronze-bound buckets (50), escutcheons and other mounts, some of which were probably used to ornament wooden boxes (47), and finally clips and other plates often used to repair or reinforce lathe-turned wooden vessels (56).

It could be argued that sword pommels and scabbard mounts (45–46) belong with other iron weapons, which otherwise have been firmly excluded from this catalogue. Appliqué mounts and studs are also a feature of some shields or bucklers and some studs here (47) may also really belong to a weapon category. Another criticism that can be made of the catalogue format adopted here is that it separates individual items from the rest of the grave assemblage to which they belong. As major categories, such as weapons, iron tools and pottery are essentially excluded here, this is surely inevitable. Perhaps this catalogue might stir others to rectify the situation. It would be no bad thing if this publication encouraged the revival of the moribund project to produce a full corpus of grave assemblages from the Upper Thames region, and the full publication of major cemeteries in other regions would be equally welcome. At the end of the day of course, the inclusion or exclusion of particular object types and the way in which they are grouped in a catalogue comes down to taste. As every item here is both illustrated and described, the reader cannot be seriously misled.

A more serious criticism concerns the scale and quality of the photographs which illustrate the catalogue. While it is valuable to have the images integrated into the catalogue entries here, many of the objects surely require illustration at life size or indeed enlarged. Economic factors presumably underlie this choice and also presumably influenced the decision normally not to illustrate the reverse view of an object. The decorated reverse of a Kentish silver disc brooch from Faversham on p. 63 (no. 6.14) is an exception, even though one might have also expected illustration of the reverse of some of the composite disc brooches, such as that from Monkton (Thanet). As an *aide mémoire* of the material, the illustrations are adequate, but the more elaborately-ornamented objects do deserve better than they receive here. As all this presumably reflects the tight budget under which this catalogue was prepared, it would be churlish not to finish by congratulating Arthur MacGregor and the Department of Antiquities in the Ashmolean Museum for making so much of its collection available in this way. Students at all levels, the staff of archaeological units preparing settlement or burial finds for publication, collectors and many others will find this an invaluable publication, providing them with ready access to comparative material, and it will be cited frequently in articles and reports.

Fra Stamme til Stat i Danmark 2: Hovdingsdamfund of Kongemagt. (Jysk Arkæologisk Selskabs Skrifter XXII: 2) Edited by Peder Mortensen and Birgit M. Rasmussen. 21 × 30 cm. 298 pp., 177 figs. and pls. Aarhus: Jysk Arkeologisk Selskabs Skrifter, 1991. ISBN 87-7288-565-3. Price: Dkr250 hb.

This is the second volume of papers commissioned as part of a multidisciplinary project designed to study the emergence of the Danish state. The volume covers the period from the 7th century to the 11th century and redresses the normal balance of archaeological literature on this period by giving the Viking Age, as it is normally understood, short shrift. The English reader should not be put off by the fact that all the papers are in Danish or Swedish as there are full English summaries, amounting in some cases to a word-for-word translation, of all the papers and every figure caption.

Part One includes eleven chapters dealing in the main with the 7th century, a time of transition in southern Scandinavia as elsewhere. Three extensive settlement excavations of late Germanic Iron Age date are described by Hansen, Hvass and Mikkelsen. Of these, Vorbasse and Norre Snede were villages and by the 7th century both consisted of a single row of more or less square plots varying considerably in size and content (most contained at least one subsidiary rectangular timber structure in addition to the main hall). One of the Vorbasse plots is considerably bigger than the remainder. Morup, by contrast, appears to have been a solitary farmstead and its main building, at 44 m, is the largest of any in the three settlements. A study of the house plans from these sites, and inference about their superstructures, suggest that the classic curved-walled Viking Age hall emerged during the 5th-7th centuries and that there is sufficient regularity in the development of house plans from site to site to construct a dated typology of house plans.

The development of trading settlements in Southern Scandinavia is also discussed in the volume, and papers by Callmer on Ahus (on the E. coast of Scania) and Jensen on Dankirke and Ribe (on the W. coast of Jutland) provide striking comparisons with the wics of the southern North Sea and Channel coasts. In both cases a sequence of successive trading settlements has been identified. At Ahus the earliest is of early 8th-century date and appears to have been a seasonally occupied market place in which craft production took place. Its successor may have been permanently occupied and dates from the late 8th to the late 9th centuries. There then appears to be a hiatus (although Callmer believes that this may simply be due to the fact that the succeeding settlement has yet to be discovered). The medieval town of Ahus was occupied from at least the 11th century onwards. The site at Dankirke is interpreted by Jensen as a trading post and is situated very close to an ordinary Germanic Iron Age village, Dankirke Nord. Unlike the earliest centre at Ahus, Dankirke contained permanent structures and overlapped in date with the trading centre at Ribe which was founded in the early 8th century. Also in contrast to Ahus, the trading centre at Ribe remained in occupation from the early 8th to the 11th or 12th century at which time the focus of settlement was transferred to the opposite bank of the Ribe River.

Following the study of trade is a series of papers concerning the development of centralized power, starting with a paper by Margrethe Watt on Sorte Muld on Bornholm. The one characteristic of this site which distinguishes it from any other known settlement of this period in Scandinavia is the phenomenal quantity of precious metal finds recovered from it. These include *c.* 2300 gold foil figures as well as a range of imported *solidi* and *denarii*. Such was the quantity of precious metal circulating on Bornholm that one can actually chart the 'trickle-down' effect as the goods were passed down through the social hierarchy, leading Watt to identify half a dozen secondary centres, operating both in the early and later Germanic Iron Age, all on an island roughly 22 km long by 12 km wide. The following paper, by Lars Jørgensen, looks at Bornholm again, from the viewpoint of the weapon graves and their implications for social development. The middle of the 6th century saw the introduction of chamber burials, usually containing a male burial

accompanied by a range of prestige items, such as sword, shield and horse with harness. The number of prestige burials declined in the later 7th and 8th centuries, leading Jorgensen to postulate that the later 6th and 7th centuries saw the emergence of royal power marked in its formative period by competition between rival élite groups. This is the period of most intense activity at Sorte Muld. With the establishment of a single dynasty the need for such intense display would have lessened. By the 9th century there is historical evidence for a king of Bornholm.

The theme of the relationship between conspicuous display and maintenance of the social hierarchy is further developed by Karen Nielsen Hoilund in a splendid paper on the ornamental metalwork. In a survey spanning Scandinavia from Jutland to the Malar area and including the rich material from Bornholm and Gotland, Hoilund first shows the distribution of brooch types which she divides into four chronological phases ranging from the late 6th to the late 8th centuries, and in each group but the last, can identify three geographical groups: southern Scandinavia (including Scania), the Malar area and Gotland. Interpretation of distribution maps is always difficult and in this case difficulty is compounded by differences in deposition between the areas. The brooches studied were apparently female attire and as such the surviving material is affected by the status of women and the degree of stratification within the society (more egalitarian in Gotland and southern Scandinavia than in the Malar area). Nevertheless, the data seem to show the gradual dominance of southern Scandinavian types of brooch, and the corresponding shrinkage in the distribution areas of types made and used in Gotland and the Malar area, until by the late 8th century no groups typical of these regions can be identified at all. In other words, Scandinavian women were no longer displaying their regional identities so clearly. Hoilund then presents the results of a correspondence analysis carried out on stylistic elements of those brooches decorated with animal art. This enabled eight stylistic groups to be recognized. Six of these were clearly centres in southern Scandinavia and the other two in Gotland. By looking at the quality of the ornamented objects Hoilund shows that it is possible to see that low-quality items are more common in the production regions whereas the fine-quality pieces were exported (for example to the Malar area).

A paper by Ole Fenger then tries to establish the nature of the legal system in the later Germanic Iron Age and concludes that, although 19th-century German attempts to reconstruct the archetypical Germanic law using 12th and 13th-century Scandinavian law codes were fundamentally flawed, it is nevertheless possible to say that the legal system of 7th to 9th-century Scandinavia would have placed much more emphasis on the blood-feud and collective liability without guilt, and much less emphasis on the king as upholder of the law. Before the establishment of the church, therefore, royal power was limited, as was the stability of the state.

Part One is concluded by a synthesis from Ulf Näsman who examines the nature of the sources for the period (which reach their nadir in the 7th century) and their interpretation. Environmental evidence, little used elsewhere in the volume, is brought to play and it is suggested that an increase in woodland visible in pollen diagrams should be interpreted positively as the result of a shift to a more pastoral economy rather than an agrarian collapse, as previously postulated. Näsman also makes the case for the development of the early Danish state being stimulated by Frankish expansionism and comments on the similarity in the dendrochronological dates now being obtained from an early phase of the Danevirke, the foundation of Ribe, the digging of the Kanhave canal and the change in settlement pattern observed at Vorbasse, all of which date to the first half of the 8th century.

Part Two of the volume is less coherent and includes eight chapters of varying relevance to the central theme. Of particular interest is Sawyer's paper on the documentary evidence for Denmark and its kings which makes a case for the Danes being from Jutland

and their border, Denmark, moving further and further E. as independent politics were subsumed into the expanding kingdom.

ALAN VINCE

Women in the Viking Age. By Judith Jesch. 16 × 24 cm. viii + 239 pp., 33 figs. and pls. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994. ISBN 0-85115-278-3 hb, 0-85115-360-7 pb. Price: £25.00 hb., £12.95 pb.

Women in the Viking Age is long overdue. It is the first book on the subject, and redresses the balance by focusing on the life of women, so often overlooked in both scholarly and popular books on the Viking Age. The bias towards the male Viking is after all part of the Viking myth — that Vikings were aggressive raiders and nothing else. The scant attention paid to women in Viking Age studies is partly a reflection of their infrequent appearances in contemporary documents in what was very much a man's world. However, just as the myth of the horned helmet has been dispelled by archaeology and by more critical reading of texts, so the rôle of women can be given more flesh, thanks to archaeological excavations in the Viking homelands and in their colonies, and a more critical study of art history, literary sources and documents.

Judith Jesch looks at all this evidence with a critical and scholarly eye, and has written a lively and compelling book. She approaches each source with due caution but provides refreshing insights and comes to wise conclusions. She asks searching questions of the evidence, and even though much of it is familiar territory, she looks at it from a new viewpoint, and finds much that is enlightening about the Viking Age as a whole. From an apparent paucity of evidence, she paints a rich and varied picture of the life of women in the Viking Age. It is a book which is thankfully free from gender jargon, but which nevertheless focuses on women's lives, perceptions and sensitivities, as seen from a woman's point of view.

In her 'Introduction', the author claims that she is not writing a general book on the Viking Age, but she gives enough of a historical framework to make the study meaningful for the general reader as well as for the specialist. She begins with the 'dry bones' of archaeology (the 'butter-churn and the spindle', p. 61), and progresses to 'the flesh on the bone' (the wider horizons) as apparent in the runic inscriptions. She then considers the life of female colonists, foreign views of Viking women through chronicles and the writings of Arab travellers, contemporary art, myth and poetry, and finally 13th-century literature with its kernel of historical truth and its gloss of romanticism.

The author claims that there were many developments in the Viking world in which women could share. In the dynamic society of towns, women were involved in trade and industry. In their travels abroad to new colonies, women had the chance to acquire new languages and wealth, and to adopt new customs and fashions. Some women had enough power and financial independence to raise impressive rune stones to their dead husbands and children. These monuments displayed family wealth, status and even in some cases, legal settlements. Some women travelled. Others were poets. Christianity brought further opportunities for women: to go on pilgrimage, and to build bridges and causeways to commemorate a loved one.

While much of Viking art is a projection of male warrior society (p. 630), there are glimpses here and there (as in skaldic verse) of real women in a man's world. It is only at the end of the Viking Age that art-forms more fully reflect women's experience.

The author's particular strengths lie in her study of literature. Here, for the first time in a general book on the Viking Age, the Arab sources are quoted at some length, and with

critical appraisal. Despite the eyewitness nature of these sources, there are difficulties in interpreting them, as the Arab eyewitness had to use a translator who may not have understood all that was going on.

Jesch's analysis of poetry in Chapter 5 is astute, as is her recognition that its view of the Viking Age is symbolic rather than factual. The final chapter 'Warrior Woman to Nun' takes a retrospective view of the Viking Age, as well as looking at how our 20th-century perceptions have been influenced by the 13th-century saga literature. Since many of the literary sources are the product of a masculine discourse, they cannot be taken as fact; archaeology and history have to act as correctives here (p. 605). It is one of the strengths of the book that Jesch brings together so successfully the evidence of the different sources, points to inherent weaknesses and bias, but nevertheless gleans much that is positive from them. (Incidentally, is it not rather archaic to castigate, however gently, the archaeologists who quote from literature to prove their case (p. 601)? This is surely no longer an issue in modern archaeology).

Occasionally, linguistic eccentricities jolt the reader (such as the author describing herself as feeling 'trepidatious' (p. 6); and the reference to 'poetological' sources on p. 649). Elsewhere there are odd spellings ('sizable', p. 605, and 'aging', p. 677). There are one or two quibbles relating to the appearance and the mechanics of the book. The illustrations are few and not of the highest quality. They are not numbered, and there are no references to them in the text (though usually they are on the appropriate page). There is only one (excellent) map, which is odd given the world-wide canvas of Jesch's book. Another point which jars is the lack of numbered footnotes or references to sources; the endnotes consist simply of general references per page, which makes chasing a particular source rather difficult. However, these quibbles do not undermine the value of this book.

Some Viking women come over as real people: the woman buried at Westness in Orkney, known only from her possessions buried with her; Inga who raised four rune-stones to Ragnfast in Sweden, and made sure that her claim to his property was spelled out for all to see; Astrid who was probably a great embroiderer, and whose mother raised the splendid picture and rune stone in her memory at Dynna in Norway; and the tempestuous Helga (Olga) who ruled Kiev for over a decade in the mid 10th century and about whom great legends survive. Judith Jesch has captured the spirit of Viking women. Her book is a fitting tribute to them.

SUE MARGESON

Norse and Later Settlement and Subsistence in the North Atlantic. Edited by Christopher D. Morris and D. James Rackham. 17 × 25 cm. × + 230 pp., figs., pls. Glasgow: Glasgow University, Department of Archaeology, 1992. ISBN 1-88873132-40-9. Price: £19.95 pb.

This is the first in a series of occasional papers from the Department of Archaeology at Glasgow, where the first-named editor holds the chair. It augers well for future volumes, for the standard of printing and layout is high and the cover design is economical yet attractive. Most of the papers derive from lectures given either at a conference at Bowdoin College, Maine, in 1988 or at the 11th International Viking Congress held in Caithness and Orkney in 1989, the rest of the proceedings having been published separately (G. F. Bigelow (ed.), 'The Norse of the North Atlantic', *Acta Archaeologica*, 61 (1990); C. E. Batey, J. Jesch and C. D. Morris (eds.), *The Viking Age in Orkney, Caithness and the North Atlantic: Proceedings of the 11th Viking Congress* (Edinburgh, 1993)).

A pleasing link with the historical Viking expansion was achieved by arranging the contributions geographically from E. to W., from Norway (seven pages) to Shetland (23

pages), Orkney (eight pages), Caithness (59 pages), Iceland (85 pages) and Greenland (38 pages). The space allocated to Iceland (four papers) reflects the importance of recent work there in palaeoecology and related disciplines.

Irmelin Martens defines marginal farming in Norway, demonstrating that marginal areas were linked into the overall economic system rather than isolated. Gerald Bigelow's exemplary paper on Norse archaeology in Shetland reviews a wide range of problems in a way that will be useful far beyond Shetland itself. He offers a complex model of economic change throughout the Norse period, as well as perceptive ideas for areas of future research. A brief circumstantial report on the remains of a horizontal mill at Orphir in Orkney serves to whet the appetite; work at this high-status site by Colleen Batey and Christopher Morris will not only illuminate the historical references in *Orkneyinga Saga* but also expand greatly our understanding of Norse economy in Orkney. Corn-mills with a horizontal water-wheel were common in Shetland and to a lesser extent in Orkney in recent centuries, but this is the first evidence for their use in earlier times. They are likely to represent one of the many links between Orkney and Ireland in the first millennium A.D.

A programme of environmental column sampling is reported by Christopher Morris and James Rackham as part of the Viking and Early Settlement Archaeological Research Project at Freswick on the coast of Caithness. The next stage will be to process the bulk samples from the excavated trenches, but the enormous amount of work involved begs the question of whether it will produce significantly more information or greater certainty of interpretation to justify the cost. The possibility of deep sea fishing on a commercial scale in the late Norse period, identified both in Caithness and Shetland, seems certain to be a recurrent and intriguing theme in years to come.

For Iceland, Thomas Amorosi and Cynthia Zutter provide progress reports on analysis of the deep midden at Svalbard, where deposits span 800 years from the 11th century to modern times. Amorosi is concerned with the evidence for climatic change and human response to that change; he proposes a model of shifting deposition to explain the complex stratigraphy, and suggests that the midden was deliberately allowed to build up into a farm mound in order to counteract potentially disastrous flooding and incursions of sea ice. Zutter's work on archaeobotanical analysis confirms the range of vegetation seen on other sites in Iceland and Greenland with the exception of cereals, lacking from Svalbard.

Two sites of particular historical interest provide material for the two palaeoecological studies that follow. Snorri Sturluson's farm at Reykholt, set in a fertile valley in western Iceland, is the subject for Paul Buckland, Jon Sadler and Gudrun Sveinbjarnardottir; the post-medieval phases of the farm were excavated and yielded such high levels of lice infestation as to indicate very poor personal hygiene among the human inhabitants. South-west of Reykjavik, Bessastadir was part of Snorri Sturluson's estate in the 13th century, becoming paramount in late medieval and post-medieval Iceland, and it remains the official residence of the Icelandic president. Small-scale excavations on the 17th and 18th-century midden confirmed the high status of the farm, with an unusual abundance of grain beetles and the presence of grape pips and bones of walrus, polar bear, pig and a less welcome import in the form of the brown rat. These are discussed by Thomas Amorosi, Paul Buckland, Gudmundur Olafsson, Jon Sadler and Peter Skidmore.

The volume ends on a suitably magisterial note with a contribution from Thomas McGovern discussing palaeoeconomic approaches to Norse Greenland. These include not only the analysis of faunal remains in a local and North Atlantic context, but also a consideration of vernacular architecture as part of the socio-economic system. Whereas most authors in this book have been at pains to stress that their areas were fully integrated into contemporary European culture, McGovern is content to admit that 'Norse Greenland remains a strange and difficult case from the world's rim'.

This volume is a welcome addition to the growing sources of information and discussion about the lands of the North Atlantic in Norse and later times. As the theme of subsistence and settlement is common to all these papers, a combined bibliography might have been worth the extra effort. But speed of publication is more important in a fast-developing field.

ANNA RITCHIE

Viking Scotland. By Anna Ritchie. 18 × 25 cm. 143 pp., 121 figs. and pls. (12 pls. in colour). London: Batsford and Historic Scotland, 1993. ISBN 0-7134-7316-9. Price: £14.99 pb.

Viking Scotland belongs to a new series published jointly by Batsford and Historic Scotland in which (according to the back cover) 'leading authors interpret, for a wide readership, the major Scottish archaeological and architectural monuments'. Sixteen titles are listed, ranging in time from periods of prehistory through to abbeys and palaces. This is one of the first in the series to emerge, and is a bold and successful attempt to bring together the essential archaeology of an important period of Scandinavian influence which affected large areas of N. Britain between A.D. c. 800 and 1100.

It is an awkward period from which to produce a coherent account — the evidence is varied, disparate and includes the emergence of the written word as an uncomfortable bedfellow. Dr Ritchie has wisely glossed the relevant documentary sources and has produced an unashamed archaeological account. Those seeking a deeper historical perspective should be directed elsewhere, perhaps to Barbara Crawford's *Scandinavian Scotland* which is in many respects complementary. There is also the problem of balancing the different types of data available — settlements, burials, place-names and artefacts — and their relative merits, not to mention the biases of archaeological attention. Some of the material is the product of modern research, while other material emanates from ill-recorded sondages of the 19th century. All these wrinkles have been smoothed as much as possible to produce a balanced and readable account.

The period covered is examined by geographical area. Scandinavian influence in N. Britain was neither even nor ubiquitous, its most enduring effects lying within the coastal zones of the N. and W., and in parts of the S. Each zone has its own idiosyncratic flavour and this is described and explained in three of the eight chapters which provide the core of the book: the Northern Isles and Caithness; Argyll and the Western Isles; and southern and eastern Scotland respectively. Purists may wonder why the Isle of Man is not given greater prominence, but Scotland has to stop somewhere. To include Man in any more detail would be to enter a more complex cultural zone and one substantially different from the rest of the area treated in this book.

The volume opens with an introduction to the wider arena of Viking movement in Britain and the Atlantic. This provides a necessary maritime background for understanding how the coasts of N. Britain came to be penetrated and settled. In Chapter 3 Scotland is placed in sharper focus and the author lays out the types of evidence and sources available. A chapter on pre-Viking Scotland sits rather uneasily between the two but is essential to the study and is an area in which the author is also a respected authority. This examines the Picts and their contemporaries; it lays particular emphasis on the development and spread of Christianity and gives a useful summary of the important interface between Viking and pre-Viking cultures.

However, the real meat of the book lies in the three regional chapters and these provide a welcome and refreshing collation of material both old and new. Viking studies have too often been presented as an aspect of art history and, while many of the best-known objects deservedly retain their place here, the text and illustrations also reflect

modern research themes in settlement, land use and the environment. The old chestnuts are still there, for example Jarlishof, Birsay and some of the rich burials from the W., but there is also much use made of unpublished material particularly from recent (and not so recent) excavations. The text is subdivided further into areas of specific interest, for example Rousay, Sanday, Colonsay or Caithness, although there will no doubt be some criticism of the comparative length of the individual sections. Less glamorous but by no means less important is the chapter on southern Scotland in which the cultural analysis becomes more complex. Hogback tombstones make their mark and the importance of Whithorn is flagged.

There is no natural point at which the Viking period universally finishes and the author provides a necessary continuum into the 13th century (Chapter 7). This is now 'late Norse' (the definition is given early in the book) and is largely based on northern evidence including runic inscriptions from Maeshowe, some late Norse 'castles', and a heavier reliance on the *Orkneyinga Saga*. The final chapter takes a brief glimpse at the 'modern' inheritance, again with a distinctly northern bias.

House style has presumably made the 'further reading' section frustratingly short. This is unfortunate as a discussion on data drawn from so many sources would benefit from a more comprehensive bibliography. Clearly this is intended as a more popular book but Dr Ritchie has included enough to satisfy a larger market. One reason for its popularity will be the density and quality of the photographs and most of the illustrations. The eight chapters cover 126 pages, over 100 of which contain at least one illustration. The eight pages of colour plates bound in the centre are of particularly high quality. I have reservations on some of Alan Braby's accompanying line illustrations which appear rather bare and add less to the text than perhaps they might. However, as an archaeologist himself, Braby has produced illustrations which, although unadorned, are archaeologically 'correct'. The scene depicting the Viking raid is perhaps rather thin but others are worth looking at in some detail.

Viking Scotland is a popular and very readable book which draws together the strands of this difficult period in a lucid and straightforward way. Situations and events are explained in a manner which is not patronising and the volume will command a wide and varied readership for many years to come. It sets a high standard for this new series.

JOHN HUNTER

Building Customs in Viking Age Denmark. By Holger Schmidt. 21 × 28 cm. 178 pp., 73 figs and pls. Herning: Bergiafondens and Poul Kristensen, 1994. ISBN 87-7468-385-3. Price: DKr250 hb.

This synthetic work will prove a useful source to those who need to acquaint themselves with the range of archaeological evidence for timber buildings in Viking Age Denmark. Some types of structure are covered in much more detail than others. Strangely the epilogue describes the terms of reference more clearly than the introduction. Here Schmidt describes how primary attention is given to '... the usual buildings of the Viking period...' The most important classes of structure not covered are churches and sunken buildings. The geographical limits of what is almost Danish are stretched in slightly arbitrary directions: that is, S. into what is now Germany, and E. into what is now southern Sweden, but not W into the English Danelaw or as far as Norway. The book thus lacks the useful comparative material from excavations of the last 20 years or so in eastern England and Norway. Despite this, many readers will be encouraged to follow up references to sites mentioned in the text, such as the well-known Hedeby, and less well-known Elisenhof. At both these sites several types of well-preserved waterlogged buildings, of particular interest to any researcher of early structural woodwork, have been excavated.

The text is divided as follows: a preface, an introduction, and the first substantial chapter on 'Settlements'. This provides an overview of settlement types and layout during the period, e.g. rural villages, military sites, isolated steadings etc. The next chapter, 'House Sites', is essentially a review of evidence for ground-floor plans of buildings, illustrated primarily with post-hole plans from eroded dry sites. Exceptions to this dry fare are Figs. 14, 15, and 17, which are plans of buildings with substantial timber and roundwood remains from Elisenhof and Hedeby respectively. In the next chapter, on 'Building Constructions', a more detailed look is taken at the implications of post-hole plans and fragmentary timber remains *in situ*. The chapter is opened with colour reconstruction sketches of the possible appearance of the great hall excavated at Lejre. A small amount of space is also given to descriptions of groups of reused building timbers which survived in deeply cut features such as wells or reused in later standing buildings. For the writer of this review, concerned with woodworking and reconstructing buildings in three dimensions, this was a particularly interesting section but all too brief. For example, tantalising reference was made to a complete wall post found reused in a well at Vorbasse (p. 60), but no drawing or detailed description was supplied. The chapter on design which follows is principally a review of iconographic and sculptural sources for building form. The final few pages of the book are made up of a brief epilogue, notes, bibliography, and an index to sites mentioned in the text.

At several points in the text Schmidt provides interpretative and synthetic comment. For example, he suggests that there is a clear trend towards the break up of the prehistoric longhouse form during the Viking period, in which byres become separated from hall ends and are buildings in their own right. Another important suggestion is that of the gradual removal of aisle posts, and the transfer of roof support to the walls during the Viking period.

Despite the foregoing this reviewer found some serious faults with the book which made it very hard to use as a work of reference. Although the translation is generally very good, the use of technical terms is often greatly confused, and simple well-understood terms such as 'aisle post' are not used at all. The term 'purlin' is used instead of aisle or arcade plate, bridled joints are called mortises, etc. Usually the text can be deciphered by referring to other passages or figures but occasionally it remains obscure. There are no sub-headings and only an outline index, which makes quick reference use impossible. Many of the line drawings are too highly reduced to be clear, and in general the book is very short on drawings and photographs. The range of woodworking techniques known to have been available to Viking woodworkers in Denmark is not adequately summarized, and anachronistic features such as later medieval mortise and tenon joints are assumed to have been in use when no evidence is cited. The attitude to the dating of some architectural elements is less than rigorous: e.g. timbers in Fig. 44 which were found in a later medieval context are ascribed a Viking date on the basis of 'patination' alone.

In sum we can say that this book will be useful to the serious student of early timber buildings, but will tantalize and frustrate as much as it informs.

D. M. GOODBURN

The Viking Age Buildings of Dublin. By Patrick F. Wallace. 2 vols., 22 × 31 cm. Vol. I: xv + 207 pp. Vol. II: vii + 215 pp., 24 pls., 189 figs. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1992. ISBN 1-874045-00-3 hb.; ISBN 1-874045-01-1 pb. Price: IR£45.00 hb.; IR£29.95 pb.

This is the first and most important book of a series which deals with the structural evidence from the 1962-81 excavations in Dublin. The book is in two parts: Part 1 contains

the text and Part 2 the illustrations. This is an excellent approach and allows for easy reference.

The quantity of excavated material, coupled with the unsurpassed quality of preservation, marked Dublin as a city possessing an exceptional cultural resource. Throughout the 1970s frequent summary publications whetted the appetite. In the 1980s the publications dealt with various topics in greater detail, including a comprehensive survey by Murray of the domestic buildings excavated in the 1970s. The on-going excavation necessitated a reappraisal of this evidence in the light of the remarkably well-preserved Fishamble Street houses. The Wood Quay/Fishamble Street excavations achieved notoriety for the controversy which erupted in the late 1970s, and ever since 'Wood Quay' has a place in Irish folklore comparable to that of the Battle of Clontarf.

Now for the first time the complete *corpus* of house plans is presented and the comprehensive discussion leaves one in no doubt that the archaeology of Dublin is a treasure of international importance. The book begins with a much-needed clarification of the term 'Viking Age' which is used in Ireland, not only to describe the 9th to 10th-century period but also the 11th and 12th centuries up to the arrival of the Normans in A.D. 1170. In effect there is little evidence for Viking influence in the material culture of mid 10th to 11th-century Dublin. The term 'Hiberno-Norse' is now generally used to describe the residents of the late Viking Age Irish port towns.

Wallace's recognition of essentially native Irish traditions in the domestic architecture suggests that even the Norse element may have been much less significant than the historical accounts have led us to believe. Wallace falls short of actually stating this, and the underlying assumption that the population was essentially Norse leads him to some ambiguous suggestions regarding the relationship between the residents of Dublin and native Irish traditions, which are seen as essentially rural.

A definitive typology based on a variety of structural elements supersedes any other typology offered to date. Because the survival was so comprehensive, the classification will enable other archaeologists to understand the ground plans of less well preserved houses excavated elsewhere. The constraints of a typology present some problems, however, as can be seen from the similarity of Types 1 and 3. The description of the proportions of Type 1 is somewhat confusing and repetitive. In conjunction with the typology, there is a suggested reclassification of the Dublin buildings excavated before 1976, which is very worthwhile.

Chapter 3 deals with individual elements within the houses. The discussion contains a wealth of information but occasionally the main points of the argument are lost within the detail. A similarly erudite discussion of carpentry is provided in Chapter 4. The author's grasp of the subject is clearly apparent and all the techniques discussed are further clarified in a glossary and glossary sketches. This section provides an essential work of reference for anybody interested in structural woodwork. Though no definite conclusions are drawn regarding the degree of specialization which existed within the town, terms such as 'the post-and-wattle wall erector, the panel-and-mat maker and the carpenter-builder' tend to imply that all of these are seen as mutually exclusive professions. Furthermore, the suggestion that the houses 'were built by specialist carpenter-builders rather than by owner occupiers' appears to be at variance with Rappaport's concept of 'pre-industrial vernacular' which is quoted by Wallace and into which he states 'the Dublin buildings fit'.

The discussion of roof support systems is superbly illustrated and the author's confidence with this subject is clearly rooted in lengthy consideration and research, particularly in vernacular buildings of more recent times. The remainder of the discussion deals with origins, contexts and comparisons. This is an excellent overview of the published Irish and international evidence which is complemented by the author's first-hand

knowledge of many of the sites discussed. Wallace argues convincingly for a native Irish origin for the house types. There are, however, a few unsubstantiated statements which detract from the generally well-supported arguments. Amongst these is the suggested 'possibility that Scandinavian-inspired architecture may have prevailed in the rural settlements around Dublin.' How can this statement be reconciled with the native Irish building tradition present in Dublin 'apparently built by a population recruited from the hinterland'? In this regard there is a tendency to elaborate on diverse aspects of Irish architecture to the detriment of the main points. The coherent arguments occasionally flounder in an attempt to cover every anomaly and remote possibility.

Apart from some apparent contradictions, and perhaps some academic kites flown higher than the evidence warrants, the bulk of the discussion is firmly founded on well-researched and clearly thought-out arguments.

The catalogue is excellent and, in conjunction with the line drawings, leaves nothing to be desired. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of all the photographs, though there are many which vividly portray the phenomenal treasure which our generation was privileged to witness, and the excavation and publication of which is of singular credit to Pat Wallace.

MAURICE HURLEY

Mammen. Grav, kunst og samfund i vikingetid. Edited by Mette Iversen. 21 × 30 cm. 344 pp., 267 figs. (some in colour). Aarhus: Jysk Archaeologisk Selskabs Skrifter XXVIII, 1991. ISBN 87-7288-571-8. Price: Dkr280.

The name Mammen may best be known to British readers through the magnificent Viking Age iron axe inlaid with silver decoration. This has given the name to a late 10th-century art style current in Scandinavia and Scandinavianized Britain, the Mammen style, of which the great beast on the rune stone beside Jelling church is probably the most frequently illustrated; but it also influence the carving of crosses in the Isle of Man and elsewhere (D. M. Wilson and O. Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (1966, 1980), 119-33). The axe was part of a burial deposit in a wood-lined chamber beneath the barrow of Bjerringhøj, discovered accidentally in 1868 and emptied by the local farmer and his labourers. Mammen is perhaps equally well known for the pair of harness-bows from a hoard adjacent to the barrow, discovered and retrieved in 1871. Neither of these two deposits of crucial importance to the development of art styles and chronology of the Viking Age was excavated scientifically, nor published in great detail, and their dating has depended on stylistic analysis by more recent scholars.

Now, thanks to recent re-excavation and scientific applications, chronological problems can be solved. This volume presents the evidence. It also contains wonderful illustrations of the axe and the harness-bows on which any further discussions of art styles will have to be based. This book compromises the papers presented at a symposium on the significance of the Mammen finds held in 1987, a year after the re-excavation of Bjerringhøj by staff of the Museum of Viborg and the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Aarhus.

The new excavations amazingly found the burial chamber, beneath the now ploughed-out mound, intact below the subsoil, with its lining planks preserved sufficiently for dendrochronological dating. The wood used to line the burial chamber was felled during the winter of 970/971, and whether the timber was used immediately or left to season for a couple of years, we now have a positive date on which to hang the chronology of the Mammen axe, and thus the Mammen style. This discovery falls into line with other dendrochronological analyses of 10th-century discoveries in Denmark: the burial chamber

under the North Mound at Jelling 958/959; the construction of the South Mound at Jelling c. 970; the rebuilding of Danevirke 968; the bridge at Ravnign Enge 979; Trelleborg fort 980/981; and Fyrkat fort c. 980. Together they underline the wealth and (royal?) power in Denmark in the second half of the 10th century. The Mammen burial, however, has something more to offer. The burial in Bjerringhøj suggests that the man who was buried there was a 'first generation' Christian, someone brought up in pagan traditions but who was 'converted' and subsequently buried according to a compromise of rites. The best parallel for the British reader is Sutton Hoo, where Christian and pagan elements were brought together.

The volume under review concentrates mainly on the burial under Bjerringhøj. Twelve of the articles deal with the 1968 excavation and its re-excavation in 1986. These include the first publication of the documentation of the discovery and subsequent treatment of the Bjerringhøj find (Jens Vallev) and surveys of recent research on the grave-goods. A catalogue of the contents of the grave dug in 1886 (Mette Iversen and Ulf Näsman) is followed by papers on individual aspects of the find. Signe Horn Fuglesang concentrates on the Mammen axe itself, with an overview of the Mammen style including a hand-list of Mammen-style objects known from Scandinavia and elsewhere; thanks to the dendrochronological results from the 1986 re-excavation, these objects can now be placed in a sure chronological context. The textiles recovered from the grave, now largely destroyed, have been reconstructed by a number of specialists (Else . . . stergård, Penelope Walton, Egon H. Hansen, Lise Ræder Knudsen, Elisabeth Munksgaard) and the status of clothing in the Viking Age discussed by Inga Hägg. Two of the colour figures show the probable clothing of the man buried at Mammen.

The beliefs of the man buried in Bjerringhøj are discussed by Bodil Leth-Larsen and Anne-Sofie Graslund. Partly on the basis of a huge beeswax candle (3.5 kg in weight), it was concluded that the man buried at Mammen was at least paying lip-service to Christianity. This has given rise to further discussion on the influence of Christianity on late 10th-century Denmark.

The hoard discovered in 1871, in which the harness-bows were found, is also published here in detail for the first time. Jens Velle and Ulf Näsman discuss and illustrate the find.

The archaeological evidence from the contemporary site of Højning is also included (Olfert Voss), and there are also contributions by linguists and historians (Marie Stoklund, Bent Jørgensen, Jan Peter Schjødt, Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, Inge Skovgaard-Petersen, H. Hellmuth Andersen, M. Müller-Wille).

This splendid publication brings together 19th-century information and modern research. Its illustrations are magnificent. No-one interested in Viking Age art could do without it.

HELEN CLARKE

Medieval Towns. By John Schofield and Alan Vince. 243 pp., figs., pls. London: Leicester University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-718512-944 hb.; 0-718519-71-X pb. Price: £40.00 hb.; £14.99 pb.

This excellent book is a wide-ranging, descriptive survey of urban archaeology in the medieval period (here c. 1100-1500) written by two of the sub-discipline's leading lights. Dedicated, appropriately, to those diggers and finds specialists who have worked in towns in the last 20 years, it is testimony to their achievements (and equally an expression of the approach to archaeology in 'the Rescue years').

Not surprisingly, both writers play to their strengths. Thus, each having worked in London, it figures conspicuously (but surely appropriately) in the work, whilst ceramic production (A.V.) and building plan form (J.A.S.) are prominent. Nonetheless, they also include much material which will be new to the general reader and are far from parochial in their coverage. For a change Scotland and, where possible, Wales gain the recognition which they deserve and the authors incorporate evidence from continental sites. Even Islam gets a brief mention, making the point that Western Christendom cannot be understood in its entirety without reference to Muslim (and Byzantine) spheres.

Prefaced with an introduction outlining how urban archaeology has been organized, town origins and documentary frameworks, subsequent chapters develop the themes of topographical and structural development at macro- (Chapter 2) and micro-levels (Chapter 3); the more 'economic' topics of urban manufacture (Chapter 4, not easily distinguished from rural production, as Vince acknowledges) and trade (Chapter 5, including the vexed issue of the role of exchange systems in urban development); finishing with religious practices (Chapter 6, with friaries an obvious focus) and environment (Chapter 7, on physical conditions, diet and disease which draws heavily, but fittingly, on the work of others).

Thus the book answers important questions concerning *what* happened in towns and *how* this changed throughout the period. Yet it rarely asks *why*. Responses here would require closer attention to social context and, although the need is acknowledged, the arguments get little space or development. Hence public/private duality is raised in the discussion of spatial organization in buildings — but only on its final page (98) — and gender relations are merely mentioned in a last paragraph. The authors allow that siting of manufacture is not determined solely by economic and geographical factors (p. 627) — but patterning is then assigned good, functional interpretations (commerce at the front to maximize custom, smelly production at the rear). Similarly, Christianity represents an 'interlacing of secular and religious motives' (p. 670) — but ecclesiastical buildings were positioned, ultimately, for the convenience of their customers. Finally, we need innovative perspectives on ecofactual information (p. 603) — but the 'challenging new way' turns out to be good old processualism, with all its inherent dangers of geographical determinism. Somehow social aspects never quite achieve their promised prominence, and are left, by default, to the documentary historian.

Lacking such development, the authors are easy prey to Adam Smith's ahistorical economic individualism. Thus artisans are drawn to the town because of the available capital, the trade routes and the customers (p. 69), presumably to truck and barter with the farmers who aim to 'make money by supplying the towns' with meat (p. 690) — mercantile activity can pull the economic system up by its own bootstraps. With towns as non-feudal (here, proto-capitalist?) islands in a feudal sea, medieval urbanism really is cast adrift from regional issues. These perspectives can be criticized on factual grounds, as well as in theory. If the artisans are busy competing, why do they decide to group together? And how do their decisions relate to the known involvement of king and nobility in organising urban topography? Why is technological development so sluggish in certain sectors, for example the bell-making moulds used over several centuries? And why did market-orientated farmers never get round to organising dedicated meat supplies for the urban diet on any scale?

Clearly the rôle of royal and seigneurial authority in urban development, the rate of technological change over the centuries, and the character of surplus extraction in the countryside embody vital debates on the nature of feudal relations. Yet the explanatory frameworks used here create more problems than they solve; in the concluding chapter on future directions, several pigeons come home to roost. The authors are aware that Astill, Dyer, perhaps Britnell, and certainly Hilton, have important things to say, yet seem

curiously undecided about whether we should even have an urban research agenda (avoid 'over-rigid research designs' (p. 604), yet create a 'dedicated research strategy' (p. 607) for standing buildings — a difficult balancing act), let alone what should be on that agenda.

Urban archaeology achieved much before 1990 but P.P.G.16 and the current emphasis on evaluation, then preservation, have changed the ground rules, presenting both a dilemma and an opportunity. We will no longer be allowed to gather data in the *hope* that it will address important issues: research must be *designed* with such questions clearly, and explicitly, in mind. This book shows how rich and varied the available data could be. Medieval urbanists must have the courage of their own convictions to take that next step.

STEVE ROSKAMS

Excavations at Fishergate, Norwich. 1985. (East Anglian Archaeology 68). By Brian S. Ayers. 22 × 30 cm. x + 94 pp., 37 figs., 5 pls., 32 tables, 1 fiche. Dereham: Field Archaeology Division, Norfolk Museums Service, 1994. ISBN 0-905594-13-4. Price: £13.85 pb.

Excavations in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, 1977 and 1986 — 88. By Alan H. Graham and Susan M. Davies. 22 × 30 cm. x + 161 pp., 42 figs., 49 pls., 24 tables. Salisbury: Wessex Archaeology, 1993. ISBN 1-874350-020-7. Price: £18.00 pb.

Excavations in Hull 1975-6. (*East Riding Archaeologist* Vol. 4; Hull Old Town Reports Series 2. Edited by D. H. Evans. 22 × 30 cm. 216 pp., 130 figs., 18 pls., 100 tables, 3 fiches. Hull: East Riding Archaeological Society and the Archaeology Unit, Humberside County Council, 1993. ISSN 0012-852-X. Price: £18.00 pb. + £3.50 p. + p. from E.R.A.S. Publications, Humberside Archaeology Unit, Estates and Property Management Dept, County Hall, Beverley, North Humberside, HU17 9BA.

Medieval and Later Usk. Report on the Excavations at Usk 1965-76. By Paul Courtney. 23 × 29 cm. xx + 177 pp., 66 figs., 25 pls. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994. ISBN 0-7083-1245-4. Price: £30.00 hb.

Jennings Yard, Windsor. A Closed-Shaft Garderobe and Associated Medieval Structures. By John W. Hawkes and Michael J. Heaton. 21 × 30 cm. vii + 104 pp., 37 figs., 7 pls., 30 tables. Salisbury: Wessex Archaeology, 1993. ISSN 1-874350-05-1. Price: £15.00 pb.

The volume on Fishergate describes the first excavation in that area of the 10th-century town of Norwich which probably lies N. of the R. Wensum; the southern edge of this area was investigated. The pre-urban vegetational history was illuminated by several kinds of environmental analyses. Ditching and fencing of the 10th century was overlain by increased rubbish dumping in the 11th century near the river bank. Further ditches, post-holes and a barrel cess-pit indicated occupation in the 12th century. The artefacts were remarkable for Norwich: the largest single assemblage of Ipswich ware so far recovered from the city, imported mid Saxon and Norman pottery, and 8th-century finds including a sceatta of 710-725 and two brooches (good recovery of metalwork was facilitated by metal-detecting of spoil). In all, this is the largest group of mid Saxon material so far excavated from Norwich. Ayers argues for further investigations in the future to clarify the origin of the postulated 10th-century enclosed settlement N. of the Wensum. As always for Norwich, the excavations are placed in the context of the work of the Norwich Survey, and the Fishergate report is the seventh volume of material from the city since 1981.

The volume of excavations in Hull is the fifth and final report on the investigations during the 1970s of medieval England's second largest port on the E. coast. This volume is devoted to a series of sites along the route of a new dual carriageway which cut through the middle of the medieval town; it includes domestic sites from the 13th to the 19th centuries,

the garden of the Augustinian friary, and a small look at the medieval town gaol. Only now are some reports and artwork of the mid seventies published, and it shows; but we should forgive. A feature of the Hull reports has been the growing corpus of native and foreign pottery now catalogued and published (with extensive groups of pottery from the Low Countries, France and Germany, and some from the Mediterranean). The report in this volume by Gareth Watkins, which assesses pottery from a wider group of sites between 1971 and 1977 in Hull, is designed as a supplement to his own work in the 1987 report on Blackfriargate and High Street. The five volumes on Hull are a triumph of painstaking archaeological and historical investigation. They form the basic archaeological archive of the town, and put Hull on the map in any discussion of British medieval urbanism.

From larger towns to smaller towns. Excavations in 1977 and 1986–89 in the centre of Trowbridge, and specifically on the site of the lost castle, are admirably recounted by Graham and Davies. A lengthy occupation sequence began in the 7th century, including a sunken-floored building and long rectangular ground-level buildings. In the late 10th century the landscape was reorganized with substantial ditches, a stone church and its cemetery, which contained nearly 300 skeletons by the 12th century. Some burial features parallel those in the contemporary cemetery of St Nicholas Shambles in London. This settlement was at least partly cleared to make way for the defences of the castle of the de Bohuns about 1139; any earlier phases of the castle are still undefined. The church lay in the corner of the inner bailey, with a reduced and cramped churchyard; though use of it may have waned, it seems to have stood until the 16th century. This report establishes the long pre-Conquest history of Trowbridge, which has up to now been absent from discussions of Saxon settlement in Wiltshire.

Excavations at Jennings Yard, Windsor, in 1987 found evidence of substantial medieval stone buildings in the suburb of Underore, between the castle and the R. Thames. Three successive masonry buildings spanned the period 1150–1600; associated structure included a possible moat and revetted causeway. A wide range of finds included local and foreign pottery and, in the waterlogged conditions, leather, woodwork and good environmental material. This included what is claimed to be the first archaeological record in medieval Britain of a rosemary seed, in a channel of the 13th or 14th century. The major feature was a 12th or early 13th-century stone building of at least four chambers in basement plan — or possibly an undercroft of two chambers, each vaulted in two aisles — and the eponymous garderobe which contained a wide range of seeds. It lay within its own moated enclosure, but also probably functioned with the river and is analogous to merchants' houses in Southampton, London and Norwich.

Courtney's report on Usk describes medieval and post-medieval remains found during the 1965–76 excavations of the Roman legionary fortress. These revealed a medieval farmstead on the edge of town, the medieval defences (where the town ditch was effectively dated to the 13th century by carbon-14), a 17th-century cess-pit from an élite Usk household, and the exercise yard of the 19th-century prison. A Home Guard trench was identified by oral evidence from inhabitants who dated it to 1940. It is difficult to locate some of the sites in relation to medieval or present streets, though there is eventually a small map showing the sites microscopically. Two final chapters propose an outline chronology for the development of medieval and later Usk, derived from archaeological and documentary material, and place the town in a regional context by reviewing the towns of Gwent as centres of urbanism and markets. Courtney suggests future priorities for excavation in the town: the Norman core, the eastern ditch, and a presumed area of abandoned burgage plots. The excellent regional survey points out that places not on rivers, such as Caerwent or Trelech, faded or failed in the Middle Ages; and that medieval Wales had no equivalent of the English county town, and the emergence of an urban hierarchy in Gwent came only in the early modern period.

We need more reports like these. The five volumes, two on larger towns and three on smaller urban settlements, have much to tell us about their individual places. They demonstrate the worth of digging in towns, even the smaller ones, to map out the full variety of the archaeological resource. This kind of rescue archaeology is now out of fashion, and it will no doubt be thought by some that reports like this are in an old style not to be imitated. It is true that the work was done to a different agenda. This (the official agenda of the 1970s and early 1980s) could be summed up as follows: rescue archaeology is a branch of emergency preservation rather than research. All destroyed items (usually the site) are analysed and interpreted to a level which balances practicality and their merits; the report, whether in archive or conventionally published, is a catalogue of destroyed strata. An associated catalogue of the extant items (the finds and environmental samples) is a comprehensive guide to what has been saved or sampled from the site.

Bodies of work like these, on individual towns, are required before informed decisions can be made about the future conservation of strata in those towns or indeed in others. They also help to set the future research agendas for those places, and suggest how urban settlements should be investigated: both the successful ways and the not so successful. It is to be hoped that other towns follow their example, so that the urban archive grows.

JOHN SCHOFIELD

Brighton Hill South (Hatch Warren): an Iron Age Farmstead and Deserted Medieval Village in Hampshire. (Wessex Archaeology Report 7.) By P. J. Fasham and G. Keevill with D. Coe. 21 × 29 cm. xii + 166 pp., 81 figs., 14 pls., 1 fiche. Salisbury: Wessex Archaeology, 1995. ISBN 1-874350-13-2. Price: £20.00 pb.

Three-quarters of the churches of Wessex were founded between the mid 10th and mid 12th centuries, evidence as much of the weakening authority of the older mother churches as of the piety of local lords. Such a massive and general expansion of church building masks, however, great variety in when, how — indeed if at all — provision was made for worship on individual estates.

Hatch, on the SW. fringe of Basingstoke, provides a textbook example of just such a local church, and one of great clarity because of the settlement's desertion and the church's demolition in the later Middle Ages. In fact, until revealed by assessment and excavation in advance of development in the early 1980s, the site of the settlement had been completely lost. Domesday Book mentions a church here, and almost certainly that was the two-cell chalk and flint building revealed by excavation, with a 10.4 m long nave and a 3.9 m long chancel, the latter subsequently enlarged to 6.5 m. Probably built shortly before 1086, it lay within a churchyard roughly 30 m square, defined at first by a fence and later by a ditch. The 260 or so graves located showed, unequivocally, that Hatch enjoyed right of burial; nine individuals, including one who died c. 1300 and another a priest, found a last resting place in the nave of the church, the remainder outside the building. In the 14th century Hatch fell into decline and was abandoned, and the church shared its fate: in 1378 it was reported that no-one was then living in the parish, that the church was ruinous, and that the value of the curacy was so small that no-one could be found to serve the parish. In fact the last recorded presentation to the living had been over ten years before.

Many of those buried, at least in the first century of the church's existence, had only a short last journey, from their long and narrow timber houses in the surrounding settlement. Several of those were at least partially excavated, and while there were clearly considerable variations in plan form and constructional details structure 3440, 17 × 6 m and with posts set in a continuous foundation trench of c. 0.5 × 0.5 m, was fairly typical. At first, from perhaps the mid 11th century until the later 12th, the settlement seems to have been largely

open, and without archaeologically identifiable boundaries. As with the churchyard, and apparently a part of the same system, the later 12th century saw the excavation of ditches creating a number of discrete enclosures, although whether individual properties also became more clearly defined was not apparent. One of these, the inner enclosure,⁷ is postulated to have been the manorial *curia* on the basis of its close proximity to the church, and because of the recovery therefrom of higher status finds. At about the same time a different style of building construction evolved, employing posts set in individual holes rather than a continuous trench. Although the excavated remains of the houses and agricultural buildings are less impressive than those of the earlier structures it is argued that they represent a more sophisticated form of timber framing employing a greater, although not invariable, use of paired posts. No stone was used in the houses whatsoever. At the end of its life the church had a roof of ceramic tiles while at least one building, possibly the manor house, had a ceramic louvre and chimney pot (neither, unfortunately, illustrated).

As Hase has recently observed of church provision in Wessex (in M. Aston and C. Lewis (eds.), *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex* (1994)), it is one thing to describe what happened but quite another to explain it. This report certainly achieves the former, and that despite relatively poor quality of preservation found by the excavators, and has a plausible stab at the latter. Where it does fall down is in its superficial use of documentary evidence, especially concerning the church, and in failing to address fairly fundamental questions. Hatch is said to have been a parish, but there is no specific discussion of its origins, nature or extent. Similarly ignored is the status of the church. As it had right of burial it is unlikely to have been a chapel of ease. That leaves two possibilities, either that it was a dependent parochial chapel or that it was a completely independent parish church. Equally woolly in treatment and understanding is the discussion of Hatch's tenurial history. In an otherwise well-edited and attractive report the treatment of bibliographic references in the documentary discussion is slapdash, and few of the record sources cited appear in the volume's consolidated bibliography.

Bones, pots, and rusty nails are all reported on here at exhaustive and expensive length. Had the same rigour been applied to the documentary evidence a much more certain understanding, of far more fundamental matters, might have been presented. The opportunity is, of course, still there, and it is very much to be hoped that someone will take up the challenge. Until then the real significance of this interesting site will remain uncertain.

PAUL STAMPER

'Churches Built in Ancient Times'. Recent Studies in Early Christian Archaeology. Edited by Kenneth Painter. 20 × 25 cm. xxvii + 362 pp., figs. and pls. London: Society of Antiquaries of London and Accordia Research Centre, 1994. ISBN 1-873415-10-9, ISSN 0953-7155. Price: £36.00 pb.

This volume is the outcome of a research seminar held in London in December 1991. The occasion was in honour of Professor William Frend; of the fourteen contributors, nine are holders of the Frend medal for work in early Christian archaeology. The chronological and geographical range of his activities and interests is reflected in the other papers, ranging from Nubia, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan and Bulgaria to Britain and Ireland. Preliminary essays by the editor and Frend himself provide histories of church archaeology; the extensive bibliographies appended will be found invaluable for students and others entering this field of study.

Much of the book is concerned with the churches themselves, as architectural monuments visible above ground or revealed by excavation. Andrew Poulter, however, takes a wider view, discussing the churches in Nicopolis (northern Bulgaria) in the context of their spatial distribution in the Byzantine city. Charles Thomas also puts the British Church in a wider Eastern Mediterranean perspective; Rosemary Cramp does the same for the continental context of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow; and Michael Jones for St Paul-in-the-Bail in Lincoln, in a European setting.

For British readers, Warwick Rodwell's meticulous work in the Channel Islands is refreshingly new; of especial interest here is the incorporation of menhirs in church settings, sometimes Christianized by the addition of a cross.

It is also satisfying to see the Biddles applying their expertise developed in England to the 'southern extremity of early Christendom'. Birthe Kjølbjerg-Biddle describes the complex excavation of the church on the Point, part of a citadel still partly above the waters of the flooded Nubian Nile valley. The origins of the church were redated from the 13th to the 6th or 7th century A.D. A mound of 'rubbery material', apparently solidified oil and incense emitted when cut 'a distinct 'Holy Sepulchre' smell'. She uses the data for a survey of the typology of smaller churches in the area.

Undoubtedly, however, the highlight of the book is Martin Biddle's essay on the Tomb of Christ. This is an outstanding piece of scholarship, a model for anyone attempting detailed structural analysis in conjunction with the study of historical sources. The rock-cut tomb lies within a structure known as the Edicule, itself inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the heart of Jerusalem. Biddle's paper is concerned with the history of the monument from its 4th-century origins, the historiography represented by the massive bibliography, the complexities of the structure itself, and the principles and procedures now being applied to its recording and interpretation. This work was undertaken as a prelude to possible restoration of a structure which is now in a 'tottering' state as a result of centuries of partial destruction, neglect and especially the earthquake of 1927. It is now propped up with steel and timber shores. Precise recording in three dimensions, a fundamental pre-requisite of any dismantling and rebuilding, is now achieved by photogrammetry, linked to a detailed descriptive database.

A remarkable facet of the evidence for the changing form of the Edicule is the available visual representations, dating from the 5th century to recent times, from ivory carvings, models in diverse materials, pilgrim flasks of silver and glass, rings, mosaics, censers and drawings in manuscripts.

While the structure itself is one of the most important monuments of Christendom, popular interest and massive tourism are concerned with the authenticity of the rock-cut tomb itself. Biddle summarizes and collates the available evidence for the location of the burial place of Christ in the gospel accounts and subsequent sources.

The photogrammetric graphics are difficult to understand in two dimensions, but must be understood as the skeletal framework embodying a database which can be referred to in any restoration. As Painter says in his introduction, 'What a triumph it will be if, when the actual work of restoration begins, the religious communities in the Holy Sepulchre — Greek, Latin and Armenian — allow archaeological participation and even excavation!' If this does come about, it will be in no small measure a tribute to the achievements of the Biddles in diplomacy and in archaeological and historical brilliance.

For those of us engaged in investigations of the humbler structures of early Christian Britain, most of the work described in this book may seem exotic, but it is a useful corrective to insular thinking. The studies show us the roots from which sprang our Anglo-Saxon and Western British churches of the 7th century onwards. As Harold Taylor reminded us, they too were built for the same spiritual reasons as those in the Near East and Africa.

Technically, the book is produced to the high standards expected from the Society of Antiquaries; it is highly recommended as a book to buy and study, and not to borrow or lend.

PHILIP RAHTZ

In Search of Cult. Archaeological Investigations in Honour of Philip Rahtz. Edited by Martin Carver. 21 × 30 cm. ix + 234 pp., figs., 15 pls. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993. ISBN 0-852115-337-2. Price: £49.50 hb.

The application of archaeological techniques to the exploration of religious belief and practice is one of several areas of the study of the past to which Philip Rahtz has made a particular contribution. This volume of 25 essays was compiled by Martin Carver, his successor as professor in the Department of Archaeology of the University of York. It is a fitting tribute to the man and to his breadth of interests, ranging as it does from the Neolithic to the present day and from Britain to Gibraltar, the United States, South Africa and Australia.

A *festschrift* such as this provides a valuable opportunity to float ideas. Ann Woodward uses an understanding of the early Christian cult of relics to explore the use of fragmentary human remains in prehistoric Britain. Warwick Rodwell's investigation of the contribution of the Church to the transmutation of London from the age of Constantine to the early Anglo-Saxon period is a particularly impressive speculation. Susan Hirst revisits the excavation at Sewerby which led to the disturbing discovery of an Anglo-Saxon woman apparently buried alive — an interpretation others have found unpalatable. Hirst ponders the significance of an unwillingness to concede evidence of brutality in the archaeological record. Tania Dickinson identifies an Anglo-Saxon 'cunning woman' from the amuletic and symbolic objects in her grave, used in the practice of beneficent magic and healing. Catherine Hills reviews the patchy progress in the publication of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, and proposes some approaches to their assessment.

Six papers discuss various aspects of monasticism. It is through this aspect of Philip Rahtz's work that the writer of this review first met him, comparing notes on the circumstances of excavating medieval monasteries in modern New Towns, Bordesley in Redditch and Norton in Runcorn. Surprisingly, Bordesley does not feature in Lawrence Butler's entertaining appreciation of Philip Rahtz. However, Bordesley Abbey exemplifies the Rahtz approach, combining excavation carried out to exceptional standards with field survey, historical research and artefact studies, conducted by numerous individuals infected with his enthusiasm to extract the maximum from the enterprise. In this volume Grenville Astill and Susan Wright provide an excellent example by discussing the ways that patronage may be perceived in the archaeological record, and then proceeding to discern the support of patrons in the remains and graves of Bordesley. Such is the authority with which the structures are described and analysed that one could imagine that Bordesley Abbey had standing buildings to compare with Fountains or Rievaulx; it is necessary to remind oneself that apart from the gatehouse the monastic remains were entirely beneath the turf when the project started. The claustral ranges still are, and much else besides, which prevents a definitive understanding of the part played by patrons in the fluctuating fortunes of Bordesley.

Roberta Gilchrist and Richard Morris provide a useful account of monasteries as settlements in the pre-Conquest period. Mark Johnson concentrates on the Saxon monastery at Whitby and concludes from recent excavations that it would be possible to re-expose the physical remains uncovered in the 1920s excavations to enable a reassessment

of this important site. Peter Leach and Peter Ellis present the results of excavations in Glastonbury that provide new evidence of the line and form the monastic precinct boundary. Reformed orders are the subject of two papers that describe their development and distribution, emphasising the pan-European nature of medieval monasticism. Mick Aston tackles the Carthusians, and succeeds in bringing together useful data on the spread of Charterhouses, with pointers for future research. James Bond describes his paper on the Premonstratensian order as a preliminary survey, but that understates the value of a particularly thorough and well-researched account. The opportunity to compare the patterns of growth of the Carthusians and Premonstratensians is particularly welcome.

Ian Burrow and R. J. Lampert provide interesting and sensitive accounts of archaeological work with native peoples in New Jersey and Australia. Alan Turner, in his paper on 'Archaeology, human evolution and politics in South Africa' succeeds unwittingly in striking a cautionary note about our ability to discern the structures of belief from the archaeological record. Written in 1986, its context is the ascendancy of the National Party's ideology. An 'afterword' was added in 1992 when the situation in South Africa was described as volatile. Reviewing the paper in 1995, following the election of an A.N.C. government, one is conscious that when momentous change occurs it frequently does so over periods of time far shorter than those usually contemplated by the archaeologist.

The volume concludes with a list, drawn up with meticulous care by Lorna Watts, of Philip Rahtz's principal publications. There are 235 in all, published at the rate of almost six a year since 1951, with 1988 the record year in which 20 appeared.

J. PATRICK GREENE

Monasteries. By Michael Aston. 19 × 25 cm. 176 pp., many figs. and pls. London: Batsford, 1993. ISBN 0-7134-6709-6. Price: £15.99 pb.

The greatest compliment you can pay to an author is to say that people really do use his/her recent book. This I can say with all honesty about *Monasteries* because I have just ordered two more copies for the library. Archaeology and history students like this book because its ideas are clearly set down and interpreted through an abundance of thoughtfully chosen aerial views, plans and reconstructions. Virtually every turn of the page has something to offer the eye, all of it in my opinion more pleasing than the tawdry grey and pink styling of the cover. Many of these illustrations are evidently by Mick Aston himself — as anyone familiar with his stencil range will know. Mick's training as a field archaeologist and geographer shine through. He often thinks in plan, both in this book and in the field, and the pencil and notepaper are never far from his side.

It is true that there has been a good deal of recent literature on the monastic theme. A selection would include Coppack's general English Heritage survey in *Abbeys and Priors* and Greene's survey of post-Conquest medieval monasteries in *Medieval Monasteries*. There have been studies too of particular orders; Gilchrist's study of nunneries in *The Archaeology of Religious Women*; Gray on the Trinitarians; and Bond on the Premonstratensian in Carver's *In Search of Cult* (reviewed elsewhere in this volume) to name a handful. Major U.K. excavations have also been published such as Bordesley, Guildford, Chertsey, Coventry, Norton Priory and Sandwell amongst others. There are useful reviews of recent approaches by Mytum and Gilchrist (B.A.R. 203 and 227). Even this list would be to ignore numerous other contributions.

With so much new literature on the bookstand, what does this volume in particular have to offer? First and foremost, whilst there is a bias towards rural post-Conquest monasteries, it is more complete than any other survey I know of because it includes an

archaeology of monasticism from the late 3rd century to the present day. Effectively this is a chronological digest with each of the chapters following on from the last. Secondly, it confidently rips monastic archaeology from the grasp of the architectural historian and places it firmly on the agenda of the landscape archaeologist. To reinforce this point the book is emblazoned with the series title — ‘Know the Landscape’ and first chapter is entitled ‘Monasteries in the Landscape’ (the author’s intended title for the volume). Finally, like all Aston’s books this is very readable stuff and will go down a storm with ‘extramurallites’ the country over (a new order here?). The introduction, for example, explains the sources available for the study of monasteries and encourages readers to initiate their own research. The bibliography is valuable and the text is knowledgeable without being patronising. Given that the book was edited on a naturist beach in France (p. 60), not an obvious recipe for a mind fully engaged on monastic matters perhaps, the book still managed to retain the concentration of its editors to no obvious detriment.

The author is not a self-confessed theorist and perhaps this is one area where the bibliography could have been widened. For example, very few monks experienced their monasteries from the air or in plan on the drawing board and, in a sense, the vision of the monastery here is abstracted. Perhaps more could have been done to bring in the current fashionable discourse on the ‘meaning’ of buildings through their symbolism or in the articulation of their plans rather than focussing upon the functional interpretation presented here. This book does not enter these interpretive debates whereas Gallagher, for example, has since taken an interesting approach to this question in his paper on Augustinian monasteries in Locock’s *Meaningful Architecture*. To press forward as a demanding, dynamic subject we need both approaches, of course.

A related question, and a complex one, is exactly what is meant by ‘landscape’ in the context of this book and the Batsford series. The main premise, first espoused in W. G. Hoskins’ ‘The making of the English landscape’, is that sites can be arranged into chronological order and into different spatial patterns; thus monasteries are taken to be a class of monument which can help to tell the story of the countryside. Field archaeology and historical geography are neatly dovetailed. However, one alternative view would be that the landscapes themselves, rather than the monasteries, should be the analytical unit for study. This would include more meaningful contributions from vegetation history, sociology botany, zoology, geography and geomorphology, for example. There is a great deal of work to be done here on the definition, recognition and research of landscapes and the approach taken here is only one avenue for the future.

My overall feeling in closing this book was that so much still needs to be done. Basic lists of medieval monasteries, dates, founders, locations and so on still need compiling for some parts of Europe and to combine this information for all countries would be invaluable. Many of the minor orders, like the Hospitallers, badly need further work and are only briefly touched upon here. Some excavation reports are awaited like South Witham and Mount Grace. And what of post-medieval and modern monastic orders? There is considerable potential here too. Who will drive the research agenda for monastic studies? Would a journal of monastic studies be appropriate? An emerging candidate to address these questions here may be the new ‘Monastic Bulletin’ published by the University of York and the Borthwick Institute for Historical Research. In the meantime *Monasteries* provides a refreshing stimulus for monastic studies and will be on student booklists for many years to come.

CHRISTOPHER GERRARD

Gender and Material Culture. The Archaeology of Religious Women. By Roberta Gilchrist. 16 × 24 cm. xiii + 222 pp., 73 figs. and pls. London: Routledge, 1993. ISBN 0-415-08903-4. Price: £35.00 hb.

Nunneries made up a significant proportion of the medieval monastic church and there can be no doubt that they have failed to receive the attention they rightly deserve. How much that results from an androcentric bias in research as opposed to poor survival of data is debatable, but our lack of understanding most certainly weakens our appreciation of one of the more remarkable aspects of medieval archaeology. The past quarter-century has seen a revival of monastic archaeology generally and this book underlines Roberta Gilchrist's role in that movement. New ideas are essential if we are to ask the right questions of the often perplexing or plain contradictory data thrown up by the archaeological study of monastic sites. Dr Gilchrist's approach rightly questions the methodology that has failed us in the study of nuns' houses, and proposes new methods derived from post-processual archaeology. Can the same criteria be applied to male and female houses; does the same concept of space apply; and do we unintentionally (or subconsciously) devalue the contribution of women to the medieval church? Whether she has succeeded in redefining our research agenda for nunneries is irrelevant; this book places nunneries at the forefront of archaeological debate and will undoubtedly influence the way we look at any monastic site in the future.

The structure of the book is straightforward, with chapters defining her methodology, the historical background of women's communities, the economic culture, the planning of nunneries, architectural symbolism, spatial analysis, and alternatives to coenobitic life. The strength of the book is the raw data it contains. Quite simply, this is the first compilation of a large corpus of information on women's houses. It is well expounded and effectively illustrated. Particularly useful to me (and I suspect to many other readers) are Chapters 2 and 4 which present the basic evidence. Chapters 5 — 8 are syntheses of high quality, but synthesis for all that. I may be showing male bias in wanting to consider raw data, but it has always been my contention that female monasticism and male monasticism were obliged to follow similar lines of development from the late 11th century, because of the androcentric authority of the Pauline church which was enhanced rather than weakened by the reform movements then sweeping the monastic world. Much though Dr Gilchrist would like to break free from the shackles of history, one has to accept that the archaeology of the Middle Ages cannot be seen as an alternative to documented fact. It might adapt it or extend it, it might even change the conventional interpretation (as for instance in settlement studies), but it can never stand alone. We are not dealing with 'history' or 'herstory', but very much with 'theirstory'.

By taking a separatist stance, Roberta Gilchrist has emphasized the differences between male and female houses, and differences there definitely were. In doing this she has relegated the common factors which in my view are important. She contends that nunneries were provided with poorer sites than their male counterparts, though it is apparent that houses like Marrick, or Swine, occupy sites that are as least as good and in many cases better than many houses of Augustinian canons. One could say the same thing about patronage. We tend to forget that many male houses were equally poorly endowed, and that like nunneries many owe their foundation to gentry families. Our mistake is to take houses like Selby, Gisborough, or Fountains as the norm when they were always exceptional. If she had used the full information provided by the surviving Yorkshire surveys of 1535 (they were taken for the *Valor*, not at the suppression) it would be immediately apparent that the outer courts of nunneries were as well furnished with barns and animal houses as their male counterparts. It would also be apparent that nuns were not alone in abandoning the traditional use of the cloister buildings. Take the surely mid 16th-century plan of Marrick (Fig. 23). This plan, which is perhaps the most importance

piece of evidence for nunnery planning in the whole book, because it was drawn by someone who knew how the house functioned, merits only seven lines of text, perhaps because it contains damning evidence that nuns' houses shared the three-court layout typical of male houses. Incidentally, several of the captions on the drawing have been incorrectly transcribed. For instance, the rooms to the N. of the steeple are labelled '?chaplains' although my reading of the original caption is 'the p'oress cha(m)ber', surely the prioress' chamber. Similarly, the 'kill howse' and its 'kill' are captioned 'slaughter house'. Not forgetting that Marrick lies in Swaledale, kiln house and kiln are the correct reading, and would normally be expected in the Inner Court, the yard so labelled (not 'nuns' court') to the N.

Architecturally there was little difference in scale or elaboration between the nuns' churches of Swine or Nunkeeling and their male counterparts, and it is surely a matter of scale rather than ideology that accounts for single-cell churches in the poorer nunneries and male houses. It was patronage of Mary de St Pol that provided the nuns of Denny with a new aisled church, appreciably larger than the Templar church it replaced. As regards the predominance of the northern cloister in nuns' houses, out of a total of 61 sites where evidence of orientation is available, only 21 had northern cloisters. No account has been taken here of the incidence of northern cloisters resulting from pre-existing lay settlement to the S. of a shared church, certainly the case at Wilberfoss for instance. That argument remains unproven.

Archaeology, we are told, is about people, and this book puts people well to the fore. Religious women had a poor deal in the medieval church after the conquest, subject as they were to the correction of priests and bishops. In this they differed markedly from men. The Cistercians' refusal to acknowledge women living common lives to their ideal, until it was already an indisputable fact, underlines their position. Male aristocratic patrons were poorly disposed to nuns because of the attitude of established orders to them and the dynastic relationship between feudal lords and their gateways to heaven. All the same, nuns made up a substantial proportion of the medieval monastic world, and like their male counterparts left a lasting mark on the landscape and on society. Given the restrictive background against which this happened, no-one can write off the contribution of medieval religious women.

Polemic aside, this book is an important contribution to medieval monastic studies and deserves a wide audience. Gender is currently an emotive issue which can obscure or enhance the subject matter, and Roberta Gilchrist has trodden a careful path, in most instances getting closer to her subject than anyone else has managed before. If she has a problem, it is that all the known data will not support her theses precisely, but that is not a problem peculiar to this book or her chosen area of research.

GLYN COPPACK

San Vincenzo al Volturno 1. (Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome 7).

Edited by Richard Hodges. 21 × 30 cm. xxi + 236 pp., figs., pls. (some in colour).

London: The British School at Rome, 1993. ISBN 0-904152-24-3. Price: £35.00 pb.

San Vincenzo al Volturno 2. (Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome 9.)

Edited by Richard Hodges. 22 × 30 cm. xviii + 200 pp., 67 figs., 109 pls. (36 in colour), 3 foldouts (1 in colour). London: The British School at Rome, 1995. ISBN 0-904152-26-X. Price: £37.50 pb.

This is an Italian site of which all British medieval archaeologists need to be aware — if they are not already. The excavations reported upon here have rescued from relative obscurity a S. Italian abbey located in the mountains of the Molise near the source of the

Volturno river. It is what must now be one of the best understood early medieval monasteries in Europe, and has justly been dubbed a 'monastic Pompeii'. According to its chroniclers, the abbey of St Vincenzo was founded in 703 by three brothers from the Lombard duchy of Benevento at the site of an oratory erected by Constantine. It was extensively rebuilt under abbot Joshua (792 — 817) a time when, despite its remoteness, it was linked to events on the wider European stage by virtue of being at the southern fringe of Carolingian influence in Italy. Carolingian patronage replaced Beneventan, and there were many Frankish monks. However the abbey's period of greatest prosperity was relatively brief, for catastrophe struck in 881 when the Arabs attacked and drove out the monks who did not return until 914. The abbey was repaired and then substantially rebuilt in the 11th century, only to be relocated on a new site a few hundred metres away on the other side of the Volturno in the 12th century.

In this position, the abbey survives today, rebuilt after being damaged in the last war. The site of the original abbey is marked by a crypt containing a cycle of paintings datable to the time of abbot Epyphanus (824–42). It is for these paintings that the site was best known, and it was the need to restore the structure in which they are located that led to the series of excavations conducted by Richard Hodges (from 1988–95 Director of the British School at Rome). The excavations at once produced startling discoveries: the 8th-century abbey was shown to be situated in the vicinity of the crypt and not on the site of the existing abbey as had been thought, and its ground plan was found to be well preserved, with a series of churches and other buildings spread over a large area. These were identified in a programme of trial-trenching targeted to elucidate the topography of the site. The late Antique origins of the abbey were also confirmed, two churches proving to be rebuilds of Roman structures. The finds have been no less exciting, as glass, enamel and metal workshops were discovered, and the pottery will be crucial for the study of S. Italian wares. Furthermore, the project has from its outset included a wider survey to set the abbey within a regional perspective and to examine the settlement pattern of its territory.

These two volumes are the first in a five-volume series on the project. They are primarily an excavation report, and they include the church to which the crypt belonged, the adjacent 'south church', the assembly room, the refectory, a late Roman building identified as a tower, a cemetery and other ancillary buildings. The rebuildings which the churches underwent are chronicled. Of particular interest is the remodelling of the 'south church' as a type of palace, and the painted decorative scheme found in the assembly room and the refectory. These reports are leavened with several digressions by a variety of authors on, amongst other things, the discovery of the site, its environmental setting, the late Roman context of the site, the network of political patronage that allowed the abbey to flourish and decline, and a comparison of the ground plan of the abbey with that of St Gall. The crypt paintings which had kept the name of the abbey alive are reinterpreted by John Mitchell as indicating that the church was a funerary oratory for a child whose parents were benefactors of the abbey.

To have persevered with so large and complex an excavation, and to have brought much of it into print in these two volumes, is a major achievement. However, there are limitations to these reports. Excavations were still continuing in 1994 in key areas, notably the main monastic church of the 9th century. Because the site is being preserved for presentation to the public, the earlier phases of buildings cannot be adequately investigated. At times a great deal is argued from partial results. The late Roman tower, a crucial structure, is reconstructed from a complicated group of walls, only about half of which was uncovered. To compare it with the *edificio* in Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, which anyway was inspired by Frederick II's Castel del Monte, is a flight of fantasy.

The volumes lack a tight editorial hand, which would have curbed a tendency to prolixity and repetition. The accounts of the buildings in Vol. 1 are fragmented, doggedly

following the footsteps of the excavators, describing each stage of the excavation as it happened. The investigation of the 'south church', for instance, is described in four separate reports, an approach un-equal to the task of presenting the building as an entity. A confident distinction has not been made between what is archive information and what is worthy of publication; at times the report is too detailed, and at others lacking in detail. There is a particular problem with context numbers: those cited in the text are not always illustrated, whilst illustrated structures are not always labelled, making it difficult to compare the phase plans.

It is always unfortunate when the publication of a site and its finds is separated. (For the finds, we must await Vol. 3, which it is to be hoped will appear as commendably quickly as Vol. 2). In this case, though, the problem is compounded by the absence even of a summary of the material culture associated with the phases and on which the dating is based. Statements such as 'It is difficult to date the 9th-century features encountered in these excavations' (Vol. 1, p. 621) do not inspire confidence. For a report which is essentially about buildings, the absence of any discussion of the characteristics of the masonry is a major omission, especially as it is clear that the type of bonding material was used as a dating indicator. Where there have been changes in interpretation of the evidence over the years, not only is the reasoning behind them unexplained but the very fact goes unmentioned. An instance of this is the altar found in the 'south church', which is now reconstructed differently to what it was in an interim report in *Archeologia Medievale* 1982, something which attracts no comment even though the reconstruction is admitted to the problematic.

What gives rise to greater disquiet is that a close reading of the text raises doubts about the interpretation of the evidence as published. The building plans do not always reflect the interpretation placed upon them; the same stones recur on plans after phase when in theory the structures have been rebuilt. It is not made clear what is retained from one phase to another. There are no levels on the plans, and few published sections, even though this was a site with deposits up to about 2 m deep. Indeed, the account of the phases has very little sense of a stratigraphic sequence, being related mainly in terms of the walls rather than the deposits enclosing them and the rising floor levels. Hodges is disarmingly frank about some of the problems encountered in these excavations: the unexpected discovery of deep stratigraphy and extensive structural remains when the project was geared up to trial-trenching and shovel-testing, and the strain that this put upon their recording system and overall resources. But this was a research excavation on a site of international importance, comparable, although very different, to Sutton Hoo. It deserved the respect and care accorded to that site. When Hodges says of the discovery of the extent of the buried remains, 'possibly we should have stopped at this stage' (Vol. 1, p. 67), one may be inclined to agree.

DAVID ANDREWS

Timber Castles. By Robert Higham and Philip Barker. 20 × 26 cm. 390 pp., many figs. and pls. London: Batsford, 1992. ISBN 0-7134-2189-4. Price: £47.50 hb.

This is a book written to counter that most irritating of misconceptions, that in the story of castle building, castles of timber and earth were both early and primitive, and that real castles evolved out of, and away from, them. This is a myth which is so hard to eradicate from students' and others' minds, in part because of the way the standard books on castles are laid out, with a first chapter on mottes and other earthworks, followed by the 'real thing' for the rest of the book. As directors of one of the major recent excavations on a castle which was never built of stone, the authors have every motivation for attacking the conventional view as it is held. A valid theme is linked to a very high standard of illustration and production by the publishers.

The book is in ten chapters, with a site gazetteer and full bibliography. The core of the material lies in Chapters 2, 3, 6 and 8. Chapters 2 and 3 cover origins, beginning with the British Isles, a surprise because it comes before Chapter 3, which covers the continent of Europe. There is a good reason for this, which is to break from the assumption (pp. 609–11): 'Too often the continental view has been dominated by the development of feudal society in Northern France, and the British view by the Norman Conquest'. This enables the authors to discuss other defensive works, from Anglo-Saxon burhs to Celtic forts, without prejudging the outcome. As they say, the line between these and castles is not an easy one to draw in practice: are we sure that burhs were always 'communal', and how do we tell? If a Celtic lord built a defended private residence, how do we detect the absence of the miracle ingredient 'feudalism' which stops it being a castle? What do we call the mottes built by Welsh lords, in form the same as castles of the English? As the authors say, all too soon we hit the problems of 'what is a castle?'

The continental survey of Chapter 3 covers a wide sweep of territory but concentrates on France, the only country to get more than a page or two of text. The main loser here is Germany, a double pity. Much of our interest in the preserved remains of timber work in castles goes back to the excavations of the wetland sites of Germany. The tradition of water defences, as opposed to the use of height which lies at the heart of the idea of the motte, is a real possible second line of castle development in Germany. This said, the accounts of individual sites, particularly those of France, will be much used. The only work I would definitely add would be the study of the distribution of mottes in Le Caux by Le Maho, which details the case for the distinction, which the authors suggest, between the castle building of the great lords and the lesser men.

Chapter 6 reviews the evidence for the reconstruction of timber buildings from the excavated traces. This consists mainly of a review of the remains of standing timber structures: even from the early period represented by stave churches, it was clearly possible for medieval carpenters to erect sophisticated structures on foundations which left very little trace below ground. The chapter leads logically to Chapter 8, where a number of castle excavations are reviewed from the point of view of their timber traces. This produces a mixture of acute individual observations linked to a series of excellent illustrations of the sites concerned; again this will be a most useful quarry for other workers, for some of the excavations are not generally known. Chapter 9, on reconstructing Hen Domen, rounds off the section.

The chapters I would select as the core are not consecutive in the book and this reflects a certain air of eccentric organization as well as some repetition in the coverage. Chapter 7 consists of a brief account of the 'types' of earthwork castles found, which overlaps with much of Chapters 2 and 3, and then publishes a whole series of superb aerial photographs of castle earthworks. This also illustrates an ambiguity in the aim of the book. On p. 652, the authors hope that the term 'timber castle' will supersede that of 'earthwork castle'. Unfortunately for their case they themselves constantly move over to considering earthworks, notably mottes and ringworks. The aim is worthy, but as long as we are relying on a tiny sample of excavated castles for our knowledge, then we will continue to have to study many castles through the remains we can see above ground. Chapter 1 similarly moves, in no particular order, between explaining the purpose of the book, recounting some past research programmes and giving historical material, all of which are treated elsewhere.

The authors express the wish that this will not be the last word on the subject, and its message is too comprehensive, stimulating and well-presented for that not to happen.

THOMAS McNEILL

Chateau Gaillard XVI. Edited by Joseph Decaens. 25 × 30 cm. 371 pp., figs., pls. Caen: Centre de Recherches Archéologiques Médiévales, 1994. ISBN 2-902685-03-3. Price: FF250.00 pb.

Since 1962 seventeen of these conferences that take their name from the great castle of Richard I at Les Andelys, where the first took place have been held, participation being by invitation. The present book records 33 papers on *castellogie médiévale* given at the 16th *colloque international* held at Luxembourg in 1992. The papers are in German, French and English, arranged alphabetically by authors, each with a few pages of double-column text and illustrations at the end. There are short résumés of most of the papers at the end. It is a lavish publication weighing 1.75 kg, and is edited professionally. A work of this kind, resembling two or three journal issues, is virtually impossible to review: one has to select what seems most important. The conference theme was meant to be *debut du chateau* although contributors sometimes strayed from this.

Speakers from the perimeter area of the castle were well represented: Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Bohemia, Hungary, Spain, Wales and Scotland (only Ireland and Italy were absent). Knight described fortifications in Wales from the post-Roman period, although the later castles of the Welsh princes described by Avent were clearly not a native phenomenon but imitations of intrusive Norman castles. One of the major papers of the conference was that by Bazzana on the growing Christian recourse in Spain to fortification in the N., both E. and W., as the *Reconquista* gathered momentum. One tends to associate Spain with late castles, from the 13th century onwards (castles play little part in the *Cid* poems) and so the old problem of when does a fortification become a castle arises here. However the responses of the Christian side on this interface with Islam is of absorbing interest.

Another outstanding contribution is not from the perimeter but from the heartland of Islam: Crusader towers (keeps) in *Outremer* by Pringle. He has assembled an impressive amount of data, set out in tables, and makes invaluable comparisons with keeps in France and England. They seem to have been inhabited (sometimes disputed in this country), and a striking series of histograms comparing internal areas in the three areas demonstrates a binodal configuration: i.e. showing a small and large internal area thereby conforming reasonably closely with the reviewer's division into solar and hall keeps. This is peculiarly gratifying! Another histogram shows a marked preference for a square rather than rectangular shape. Albeit confirmation of what we thought, it puts the whole matter on a much firmer basis and raises this article to the most significant in the volume.

Of the large number of papers dealing with home ground I would give pride of place to Butler's on 'The Origins of the Honour of Richmond and its Castles'. It is written with clarity and understanding and the association of castles with the earl's chief officers is of particular interest. The 15th-century view of Richmond Castle (p. 66), which was not known to me, shows steps leading up to Scolland's hall, although it was intended to show the lengths of castle guard responsibility along the curtain wall.

Among other articles of note is the very appropriate one by Margue on the origins of Luxembourg. There was a significant population on the site prior to 963 when Earl Sigefroid founded the castle, but this action gave identity and status to the place. Most of the papers deal with regional researches and while there is a fair measure of agreement about the date of inception of the castle, the 9th–10th centuries, it is difficult to demonstrate it happening. The problems of dating by association with written sources are formidable as Zettler shows. The Latin terms *castrum* and *castellum* came into use long before castles *sensu stricto* existed and in any case how do we define a castle? The problem is especially acute for German speakers because *burg* is applied to prehistoric or indeed any pure fortification that has not become a *schloss*. These problems cannot be pursued in this review.

The reader will see that there are some half dozen major contributions in the book, a baker's dozen of middling works and the remainder mainly fairly lightweight, perhaps more suitable for publication in a regional journal. The main object of the conference is not to produce earthshaking new discoveries but to demonstrate solidarity in the cause of 'castellology' and this the volume under review does handsomely.

MICHAEL THOMPSON

Crusader Castles. By Hugh Kennedy. 19 × 26 cm. xv + 221 pp., 25 figs., 88 pls. (7 in colour). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-521-42068-7. Price: £27.95 hb.

Castles have long captured the popular imagination, so much so that in certain academic quarters in this country architectural historians have tended to look somewhat askance at those whose main interest is military architecture (an exception must be Sandy Heslop, with his excellent work on the donjons at Orford and Norwich). As castles are so popular to study this has resulted in a mass of publications, many of them adding little or nothing to the subject. But a 'series' that has been very well received is that produced by Cambridge University Press (see *Medieval Archaeol.*, XXXVI (1992), 354-5), and this latest volume is most welcome.

Until recently one of the few English language books commonly available on the castles of the crusading era has been Fedden and Thompson's *Crusader Castles* (1957, reprinted 1968). From the 1980s there have been a number of important publications on the architecture of the Crusades written by Denys Pringle, for example *The Red Tower* (1986; see *Medieval Archaeol.*, xxxii (1980), 342). Nor should we forget the magisterial *The Fortifications of Armenian Cilicia* by Robert Edwards, which also covers Byzantine, Muslim and Crusader castles. A more up-to-date study has been needed for some time to take into account some of the work that has been undertaken recently on such sites as Belvoir, and this is what Hugh Kennedy's book does.

In his first chapter the author reminds us of the scholarship which has gone before, resulting in some of the finest volumes ever to be written on castles, such as those by the Frenchmen Emmanuel Guillaume Rey (1837-1916) and Paul Deschamps (1888-1974), books not only of note because of their detailed descriptions, but also for the excellent drawings and plans contained therein. This is followed by a brief survey of military architecture in western Europe and the Near East on the eve of the First Crusade. What this clarifies for the reader is the type of fortification to be found in the Byzantine, Armenian and Muslim worlds that the Crusaders might have experienced en route to the goal of Jerusalem. How much of an influence these buildings had is a question hard, if not impossible, to answer satisfactorily, and the author is correct in concluding, in Chapter 2, that more is to be learnt about Crusader fortification by studying the purposes to which the castles were put and the requirements to be fulfilled by the buildings, as well as from the scale of the opposition that they faced in their eastern foothold.

The other chapters examine the development of Crusader castles in the 12th century (Chapters 3 and 4), with the 13th-century castles of the nobles and religious orders covered in Chapters 6 and 7. Coming in between, but better to have been placed at the end, after Chapter 8 (Muslim castles in this period), is Kennedy's analysis of siege warfare. Twelfth-century castle design was dominated by the rectangular and square tower, the castle form in the territory of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem often being simple walled enclosures surrounding the main tower, the latter usually consisting of a vaulted basement with one storey above. As the author shows, there are several notable exceptions, of which pride of place, even in its ruined state, must go to Belvoir with its concentric plan and square mural towers, contrasting with the isolated towers that were constructed, usually to guard roads.

The effect of terrain on castle design in the 12th century can be seen best in the states to the N. (Tripoli, Antioch and Edessa). Here the hilly topography lent itself to castle defences following the contours of the hilltop, with long stretches of curtain wall lacking much in the way of flanking towers (akin to the castles of the Welsh princes), the classic example being Saone.

The Crusader defeat at the battle of Hattin in 1187, and the equally disastrous aftermath when Saladin took many a castle with consummate ease, is seen by Kennedy to have had a 'traumatic effect' on the design of 13th-century castles. Although multi-towered castles are known from the 12th century, the scale of the works from the early 13th century onwards is breathtaking, although no greater than some of the best castles in western Europe itself. Ranging from the Templars' Chastel Pelerin and the Teutonic Knights' Montfort to the work of the Hospitallers at Crac des Chevaliers and Margat, these are the classic sites to which reference is frequently made by those who have studied castle architecture, and it must be admitted that few sites in the West can compare with the sheer strength of masonry at Crac. The most obvious contrast between the defences of the Crusader states and Western Europe in the 13th century is the architecture of the Templars, where the square or rectangular tower is the dominating form, as opposed to the rounded form that is most commonly used in the West and by the Hospitallers in the East. But arguably one of the finest features of Crusader castles is the level of survival of the domestic accommodation, with great vaulted chambers, halls and storerooms.

Kennedy emphasizes that the military architecture of the Crusader states did not revolutionize castle design in the West, as David King stressed in his excellent *The Castle in England and Wales: an Interpretative History* (1988), and at the Teutonic Knights' Montfort it has long been suggested that the design stems from the Rhineland. The fine honing of artillery and siege techniques in the East must have played a major role in the development of the more sophisticated castle plan of the 13th century, with the emphasis on mural defence. Kennedy's study of siege warfare in the Crusader period is one of the best chapters in the book, and the student of military history is well served by this summary, with the subject being studied in more depth in R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097-1193* (2nd edn., 1995) and C. Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East, 1192-1291* (1992).

A modern study of Crusader military architecture has long been needed, and Kennedy is to be congratulated in providing it. All the photographs, many of them excellent, were taken by the author. The plans are mainly taken from previous publications, and many have not reproduced well, which is unfortunate: for example, Montfort on p. 630. Errors and slips are few (should it be 'eleventh' as opposed to 'seventeenth' near the bottom of p. 61?; excavation has shown that Carisbrooke Castle originated as a ringwork — the motte came later). The one weakness in the book is the tendency to describe every narrow opening as an arrowslit; the small slits in box machicolations could not have been used by archers, and Kennedy gives the impression that archers were actually meant to sit in these features! The same applies to the slits in the merlons, such as those at Saone: surely more for safe observation than for the firing of weapons.

C.U.P. is to be congratulated on another fine addition to the literature of the castle. We must now look forward to Ifor Rowlands' study, for C.U.P., of the social and political aspects of castles in Wales. We can also hope that the Press might have the initiative to persuade someone to produce an English-language book on the castle in France; with Ireland at long last about to be covered in a new book, it is an English language study of the French castle that would most benefit castle students. Equally valuable would be the production of a British equivalent to Jean Mesqui's stunning two-volume work, *Château et Enceintes de la France Médiévale: de la Défense à la Résidence* (1991-93).

Beeston Castle, Cheshire. Excavations by Laurence Keen and Peter Hough, 1968-85. (English Heritage Archaeological Report 23.) By Peter Ellis. 21 × 30 cm. 229 pp., 145 figs. and pls., 3 fiches. London: English Heritage, 1993. ISBN 1-85074-429-7. Price: £27.00 pb.

This report attempts that most difficult of exercises: to write up excavations carried out long ago by more than one director at various places in a site. While one of the excavators, Laurence Keen, wrote large sections, Peter Ellis had to try to weld many disparate sections together. The excavators dug the bulk of the inner ward of the castle, an area of the outer ward and the area around the outer gate. The excavation of the inner ditch has already been reported on, but is very little referred to.

The first thing that is pleasing is the standard of presentation. English Heritage's large page size, with double-column text, is easy to read and use; the drawings, in particular are very good. The report has three main sections: the prehistoric occupation; the medieval castle; and the later, mainly Civil War occupation. For obvious reasons, I will concentrate on the castle. Here are sections on the historical documentation, the standing masonry and the excavations themselves, the stratigraphy being followed by the artefacts, and finally a short discussion.

Beeston Castle is set high on a cliff overlooking the Cheshire plain, and it has been as prominent in the literature of castles as it is in the landscape. Its inner ward has been identified as having been built, with Bolingbroke, in the 1220s, an early example of the 'keep-less' castles with true gatehouses. This is repeated here in the discussion (p. 611), but the excavations are also said (on p. 612) to cast doubt on this, because later 13th-century coins and pottery were found in foundation trenches or under the floor of the SW. tower. This is unresolved in the discussion, and it is impossible to resolve it from the account of the excavation, because one section through the foundation trench (Fig. 76) fails to distinguish its fill from the courtyard outside the tower; the other section is not published, and the pottery date (for Fabric F) is asserted as late 13th-century apparently because of the date of Ewloe, when similar pottery was made in S. Staffordshire earlier. The above-ground remains take up eight pages of description, but make no mention of the date problem of the inner ward: the SW. tower is treated as of one build with the gatehouse. Unfortunately this description lacks first-floor plans of any building; the gatehouse ones (inner and outer) lack details referred to in the text and the outer curtain is planned only at the level of the general site plan. As a record, for want of relatively little effort and expense, it is inadequate.

The absence of evidence for such buildings as the great hall or kitchens is given as reason for thinking that the castle might have been unfinished (p. 600). This, of course, may be a product of the relatively small area of the outer ward excavated. Within the area, although it is stated that recent artefacts were found down to bedrock (p. 65), all the post-holes found were assigned either to the 19th century (if noticed in the topsoil) or to prehistory; none were considered to be medieval. Outside the outer gatehouse and the adjacent curtain, there was a ditch; its upper fills contained Civil War material, with only medieval pottery in the lower fills (p. 624); again, it seems odd that the possibility of the ditch being medieval in origin, and then recut, is not raised. While the finds are well drawn, the pottery descriptions in the text are very vague; the more detailed ones, which might help other excavators to identify theirs, are buried, without reference, in the microfiche.

A prehistorian might have doubts about the strength of the identification of the Iron Age hillfort bank (it lacks a facing at front or rear and the berm is very wide); a Civil War expert would want to see discussion, not only of the artefacts left behind by the besieged, but also of any traces of the siege works (the general plan stops short of the area where a mount was erected in front of the gate).

This adds up to a mixed reaction to the book. It deserves a welcome as a serious attempt to clear up unfinished business and present the public with a full account of the

examination of this important castle. It is damaged, however, by omitting some important evidence and by failing to confront the crucial problem of date frankly. Either the excavation has shown that Beeston has been dated fifty years too early, or it should be admitted that the evidence was too flawed to be trusted.

THOMAS McNEILL

Fenland Survey. An Essay in Landscape and Persistence. (English Heritage Archaeological Report 1). By David Hall and John Coles. 22 × 30 cm. xii + 170 pp., 101 figs. and pls. London: English Heritage, 1994. ISBN 1-85074-477-7. Price: £35.00 pb.

The Fenland Project ran from 1981 to 1988 with substantial funding from English Heritage. It involved survey, palaeoenvironmental work and radiocarbon dating. In 1989–90 the results were evaluated and from 1990–93 selected excavations were carried out. The work followed on from the pioneering work of Graham Clarke and Harry Godwin and some 250,000 hectares were fieldwalked! A series of detailed monographs has been published in *East Anglian Archaeology*; this volume is a synopsis of the whole project.

There are ten chapters evenly divided between the co-authors, John Coles, well-known internationally for his work on wetlands, and David Hall, well-known nationally for his detailed work on medieval settlements and field systems and his intensive fieldwork campaigns. The volume includes five chapters on prehistoric and Roman aspects; this reviewer concentrated on the introductory chapters (1: John Coles on 'The Face of Places'; and 2: David Hall on 'A Basinful of Complexity') and the chronological chapters by David Hall: 8, 'Continuity and Response' (Anglo-Saxon, A.D. 400 onwards) and 9, 'Defence, Communication, and Reclamation' (1066–1500). John Coles provided the final chapter: 10, 'Reflections'.

This is a superb volume. It is well-written, well-illustrated, and will provide the main introduction to the archaeology of the Fenlands for some time to come. All aspects of the early history and prehistory of the Fenlands seem to be well covered — the geological background, recent deposits, vegetation history and impact of people in the area. David Hall's detailed fieldwork has defined earlier drainage patterns and the development of roddons and the peat areas. It is good to see 'experience and intuition' openly and honestly given as part of the fieldwork techniques used.

There are many interesting aspects in the Saxon and medieval chapters. For this area, archaeologists are lucky that they have both a lot of ploughed land (though this, of course, also has disadvantages) and a well-defined Anglo-Saxon ceramic sequence: 400–650, 650–850 (defined by Ipswich ware) and 850–1066 (defined by St Neots, Thetford and Stamford wares). In the earlier stages, dispersed, loose clusters of pre-village settlements have been distinguished, with nucleated settlements only developing in the later period. The important Sea Bank also seems to have been built at that time as well. Early Anglo-Saxon material indicating dispersed settlement is found on most large Roman sites, suggesting some continuity, while mid Saxon material on different sites forms the basis for the medieval villages, suggesting relocation in mid Saxon times. Much of the evidence for the silt lands presented in this volume is entirely new; it is suggested that villages with communal farming are the result of Mercian conquest.

Chapter 9 is a major element which deals with all aspects of the Fenland in the medieval period, by which time it was fully and intensely exploited. There were large urban centres on the edges and numerous important ports looking to the Wash. Important monasteries existed at Crowland, Thorney and Ramsey.

Full survey produced shrunken and deserted settlements, fisheries and salt pans: Fig. 82 represents the total landscape of the medieval Fenlands in Cambridgeshire, a major achievement. There is much useful material on landing places, mere, salterns, parks and

water management, with good discussion of canals, river diversions and monastic schemes, though a separate map of all this would have been useful.

More could perhaps been made of monastic involvement in the landscape, particularly as the monasteries were of great importance here in the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries. There were also a large number of smaller houses, which are rather better covered; granges should perhaps have received more attention, but these are minor quibbles of a personal nature!

For anyone interested in medieval settlements there is much useful material. One of the best sections concerns new settlement sites in the Middle Ages, where David Hall distinguishes linear villages along drove roads and major roddons. Such 'drove settlements' develop from the 13th century onwards and represent daughter settlements coming into existence as a result of population growth and settlement expansion. Similar developments can be seen in the comparable Somerset Levels.

The early economy of the Fenland is well represented in the sites located and landscapes studied. The fen was valuable for food, fuel (especially peat) and grazing on the extensive pasture. Salt and pottery were produced, using peat as fuel. Salt was produced in the salt-water marshes, resulting in large mounds of mud left as a by-product, and also from evaporation from pools — not such a common form.

Much of the discussion and examples will form a rich quarry for studies on comparable wetlands elsewhere.

John Coles draws the volume to a conclusion — 'The result is the Fenland of today, with most of the archaeological monuments damaged. This was the starting point for the Fenland survey — to recover the evidence of the past before it had all perished'. This volume is a splendid summary of all this work. The detailed studies have already provided the basis for a lot of further archaeological work and this will no doubt continue in the future. Something is left: there are medieval *landscapes* remaining, for example in Marshland, and the silt fen area is a 'remarkably unchanged piece of medieval landscape in its general layout'. These must be saved, as must a selection of the canals, salterns, pottery production sites, moats, granges and windmill sites, so that something of the unique Fenland heritage can be passed on to future generations. This volume provides a sound basis for decisions which will need to be made about these matters, and everyone involved in the project is to be congratulated for such a major piece of research.

MICHAEL ASTON

Yorkshire Boundaries. Edited by H. E. J. Le Patourel, Moira H. Long and May F. Pickles
21 × 30 cm. viii + 165 pp., 52 figs, 6 tables. Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological Society,
1993. ISBN 0-902122-67-3. Price: £14.95 pb.

This volume is the final product of the Yorkshire Boundary Survey, established in the late 1970s to record boundary markers which were threatened by redevelopment and agricultural changes. A number of working groups recorded 125 township boundaries. However, those seeking a presentation and analysis of this work, or even an indication of the terms of reference and methodology will look in vain, although an appendix lists the names of those who recorded individual boundaries. For these the reader is directed to the Yorkshire Archaeology Society's archive in Leeds.

Instead we have a book in two parts, each with an introduction by Jean Le Patourel. The first part contains seven papers on Yorkshire boundaries in general, the second has six case-studies. The contributions are very much individual pieces, without any strong sense of overall purpose, but four studies of Yorkshire charters, written by Moira Long and May Pickles, form as it were a book within the book.

As Jean Le Patourel points out in her introduction, not all the projects planned for this volume were completed, so there is no chapter on boundary place-names, nor any detailed examination of the early estate at Ripon. There are other omissions too: an archaeologist could wish for a more detailed presentation of the physical evidence for many boundaries, and it is disappointing to see only a couple of passing mentions for ancient hedgerows as boundary markers. There is little discussion either of the association between boundaries and death, double boundaries separated by a watercourse, illegal or informal boundaries.

With its frequent use of technical terms, the book is clearly written for archaeologists and historians rather than the general public. However it is readable and there is much to interest the non-Yorkshire reader.

Philip O'Hare (Chapter 1) provides a good introduction to the development of Yorkshire boundaries, reminding us that in the 11th century the N. Pennines formed an ill-defined boundary zone between England and Cumbria-Strathclyde. As in Wales, centralized control was impossible in this upland area. The reorganization of the East Riding hundreds into wapentakes in the 11th and 12th centuries shows that Scandinavian influence continued to develop long after the Norman conquest.

Mary Hall's 'Pre-Conquest estates in Yorkshire' (Chapter 2) effectively demonstrates the close relationship between land tenure, and civil and ecclesiastical administrative structures at both manor/township/parish and hundred/shire/deanery levels. Ann Alexander (Chapter 3) and J. Howard Dobson (Chapter 4) discuss perambulations and boundary markers respectively; both show the need for further fieldwork to record boundary archaeology. It is surprising not to find mention of crosses cut into trees — one of the most common methods of marking township, manor or parish boundaries in the Bedfordshire perambulations.

May Pickles (Chapter 5) makes the important point that long-distance roads and boundaries serve quite different functions and so should not be expected to coincide. Coincidence, or lack of it, is no necessary indication of relative date. Don Spratt, on the other hand, in a reworking of his 1981 paper (Chapter 7), argues for continuity between medieval boundaries and Bronze Age features in the North Yorkshire Moors.

Martin Ecclestone's 'Townships with detached parts' (Chapter 6) unfortunately adopts a flawed and inappropriate methodology. Taking the modern counties of South and West Yorkshire, it is not surprising that he finds most detached parts in the low-lying, marshy E. (an area of medieval intercommoning and assarting). Why the smaller number of detached areas in the higher W. should be associated with climatic differences is unclear.

The case-studies in Part 2 demonstrate the difficulties of identifying charter boundaries where rivers have changed course and intensive agriculture has destroyed landmarks. However the effort pays off, especially in Moira Long's splendid detective work at 'Howden and Old Drax'. 'Crayke' is not an investigation of a charter boundary description but an entertaining presentation by Jennifer Kaner of a unique township — a hill surrounded by a medieval park, which was a detached part of County Durham in the middle of Yorkshire. It is satisfying to discover that boundary banks and hedges survive, and that the whole form of the township and its boundaries illustrates its extraordinary history.

The book demonstrates some of the inherent difficulties in reporting a diverse and ambitious voluntary project involving over ten years' work. However it is well presented and well edited, with clear figures, and some important contributions. Landscape historians and archaeologists everywhere will find it a stimulating and useful addition to their bookshelves.

The Medieval Houses of Kent: An Historical Analysis. By Sarah Pearson. 22 × 28 cm. × + 196 pp., many figs. and pls. London: R.C.H.M.E., 1994. ISBN 011-300047-2. Price: £19.95 pb.

A Gazetteer of Medieval Houses in Kent. By Sarah Pearson, P. S. Barnwell and A. T. Adams. 22 × 28 cm. xii + 145 pp., 184 figs. London: R.C.H.M.E., 1994. ISBN 011-300049 9. Price: £14.95 pb.

The House Within. Interpreting Medieval Houses in Kent. By P. S. Barnwell and A. T. Adams. 22 × 28 cm. xii + 163 pp., 166 figs. and pls. London: R.C.H.M.E., 1994. ISBN 011-300048-0. Price: £12.95 pb.

These books present the results of the Royal Commission's intensive study of rural medieval houses in Kent, carried out from 1986 to 1992 and published with commendable speed. Sarah Pearson's historical analysis sets out three critical questions: (a) status and its correlation with building character; (b) the predecessors of the earliest existing houses; (c) dating. Of these, (b) and (c) are answered very convincingly, but (a) seems to me to remain clouded, status often being assumed rather than established. Because of the time-scale of the project, a sampling strategy was used: 60 of the 319 parishes were selected to cover different geographical regions, avoiding modern development and excluding towns. The 380 medieval houses found were supplemented by 70 recorded elsewhere and by 50 known from earlier work. Even after this impressive survey, the opportunity for much future work remains, as it is estimated that the whole county contains some 2,500 open-hall houses (rather less than the 3,000-4,000 originally expected).

In methodology, the most important innovation is the systematic application of dendrochronology (in conjunction with the Nottingham Tree-Ring Dating Laboratory). In all, 74 buildings were sampled, with felling dates obtained for 53, ranging from c. 1309 to c. 1591. However, not all dating questions were satisfactorily resolved. Preliminary assessment found many houses whose timbers had very wide rings, while NE. Kent had many buildings of elm. Houses assigned to the earlier 14th century proved particularly difficult, and only three could be dated. Even though individual features, such as scarf joints, crown posts and mouldings, were only very approximately datable, the combination of features, location, size, status, etc. provided an objective dating framework. Using this, undated buildings were assigned date ranges, generally of 20-40 years. It is a pity that no formalization of this process was attempted, which could have been extended by others. Overall, however, considerable confidence can be felt in the dates obtained.

The buildings fall into three chronological groups. Only three buildings predate the mid 13th century; they are all of stone and are interpreted as minor residences, possibly hunting lodges, of non-Kentish baronial families. Between the late 13th and the mid 14th centuries gentry houses with ground-floor halls were built. These are predominantly of aisled construction, including also variants, such as base crucks instead of the aisle posts of the central truss. Subsidiary stone buildings survive (e.g. the chamber at Old Soar, Plaxtol), but in purely timber-framed structures the ends have almost all been replaced.

The flood of new Kentish houses is dated from 1370 onwards, after a building gap of some 30 years. Notably, many of the houses appear of sub-gentry status. Although the houses show no clear-cut dividing lines, a group of houses associated with major gentry stand out by their size and the quality of their timberwork. Four house types are identified, of decreasing average size: cross-wing houses; Wealdens; end-jettied houses; un-jettied houses. Their appearance among standing buildings is also broadly in the same sequence and, in particular, the early dating suggested for end-jetty houses has been disproved. The roots of the Wealden house are firmly identified in the combination of two-storeyed end blocks (often jettied), the trend to higher side walls of halls with the abandonment of aisled construction and, especially, the Kentish liking for hipped roofs. With all these components

in place, the Wealden seems to have appeared more or less fully formed in about 1370; unusual structural details in the earliest examples show the hesitancy explicable in a new development.

The crucial question of what preceded these earliest complete non-gentry houses is resolved by consideration of their aisled predecessors and the lack of evidence for their ancillary rooms. The key failing seems to have been the use of low end rooms under hipped roofs. The only clear example (Dormer Cottage, Petham, dated to 1340–80) has no more than a cupboard at first floor level over the end bay. With the increasing desire for good solars and chambers, these low ends would have been replaced by cross-wings. The development of the Wealden also made complete rebuilding (often in stages) an attractive option. These ideas on the need for early houses both to be of permanent construction and to be modernizable before they can survive, will be of great significance to those examining the earliest houses in other regions.

One chapter collects the many small structural hints about house function. In halls, the principal trend was the elaboration of decoration, with dais beams becoming almost universal after 1410. Floored ends first produced elegant chambers with decorated crown posts, over plain service rooms, while the prestige ground-floor parlour seems only to have emerged around 1500. Double service doors were standard, but the partitioning behind them has often left no trace, and this space may have been flexible in use, perhaps doubling as a widow's or guest's chamber. The few detached kitchens are probably survivors from many more, superseded from around 1500 by added kitchen wings. Despite all the details examined, the discussion of function is superficial, and it is assumed that the mere name 'hall' or 'solar' gives sufficient information. Roles played by the hall in the medieval household are only discussed briefly in relation to major gentry houses.

Maps of the differential patterns of house type, survival and date are related to the regions of Kent, though this section seems to lose sight of the correlations already established between the three factors. The discussion is made very confusing for the general reader by the numerous references to individual parishes and even locations within parishes. More immediately understandable are two maps of the density of the medieval houses, per 1,000 acres and as a proportion of households recorded in 1557 communicant lists. Although some areas (Romney Marsh and Thanet) are virtually blank, in such places as the small parish of Pluckley the fourteen medieval houses may have served up to 40% of its households, confirming Kent's reputation as a county of medieval houses.

After the excitement of Sarah Pearson's study, the two other volumes are in a much lower key, though both provide invaluable information. The 'Gazetteer' succinctly describes the 414 medieval houses surveyed, including the sparse evidence for the owner's status, but unfortunately omitting references to previously published houses. Plans and sections only are included, both simplified by the exclusion of later features. The absence of cross-references to the many photographs in the other volumes is a pity.

The enigmatic and unexplained title of *The House Within* conceals a very detailed survey of structural techniques in medieval Kentish houses. It is most effective in its illustrations, with splendid perspective views of frames and joints (the work of Allan Adams), and outstanding photographs. The book is organized functionally, starting with a chapter on plan and form, continuing with frames, roofs, walls, doorways, decoration and smoke control. The information is excellent and as a source book it will be invaluable. However, the overall impression is that of a catalogue describing, for example, four locations for jetties and eight ways of constructing them; the effect is not helped by the turgid writing style. Only in the last chapter, 'Medieval Houses Today', does it capture the imagination, in demonstrating how highly disguised houses can be made to reveal their medieval origin and development. It is a pity that the book did not start by dissecting a similar but less altered example, to show the features in the context of a specific medieval house.

Taken together, these three volumes provide a magnificent and stimulating record of the R.C.H.M.E's work. They advance not only our knowledge of the county's medieval houses, but also our ability to understand and interpret houses of all types. So many new and important ideas are put forward that even a full review can only pick out some highlights and look forward to their development and application in future studies.

N. W. ALCOCK

Meaningful Architecture: Social Interpretations of Buildings. (Worldwide Archaeology Srs. No. 9).

Edited by Martin Locock. 16 × 23 cm. 312 pp., figs., pls. Aldershot: Avebury, 1994. ISBN 1-85628-708-4. Price: £42.50 hb.

This book begins with the editor's bold and jargonistic statement of theory — announcing the death of materialistic and functional interpretations of buildings, and advocating instead that they should yield insights into social mentality. Architectural decisions were the result of choices and negotiations, he argues, and should be interpreted in the light of the social structures and mentalities of the past.

Some of the following essays proceed in the same style, such as the highly theoretical contribution on Minoan palaces, but the dozen authors interpret their brief in different ways. For example, Laurence argues that planning and replanning of Roman cities was influenced by changes in the urban elite, especially in the transition from Republic to Empire; and S. Scott shows that the more elaborate British Roman villas of the 4th century reflect the move of the rulers of the province from town to country. These are convincing interpretations, but they do not reflect much influence from the Post-Modern deconstructionism lauded in the introduction.

Six of the thirteen essays deal with medieval or early post-medieval architecture, and will be of most interest to readers of this journal. All have valuable points to make about the relationship between buildings and society. The mentality that helped create buildings of a particular form and decoration is most easily observed in the case of churches and monasteries, and we learn from Soden about the influence of patrons (mainly in the late 14th century) on the Charterhouse at Coventry, and Gallagher demonstrates that the plans of Augustinian houses in Scotland, a number of which had direct links with the monarchy, exhibit repetitive geometric relationships in their layout. In a vigorous iconoclastic study of Carolingian palaces, Samson takes the glib modern notion that these buildings expressed the unity of the Carolingian empire, and shows the mishmash of messages that they projected. Their references to the Roman, barbarian, and Byzantine past failed to present a coherent image. We are reminded by the dynasty's inconsistent pretensions of the architecture of modern dictatorships. Schofield examines the layout of houses in medieval London, considers the social and institutional constraints in which building took place, and analyses patterns of access to commercial, domestic, storage and service space within buildings. He makes the point that not all high-status houses proclaimed themselves to passers-by, as they would have been screened from the street by rows of shops and poorer houses built along the frontage. Two articles are concerned with lower-status rural houses. B. Scott explores sceptically the idea that Scandinavian house types came to the Scottish isles with the Vikings, and Alcock traces the social dimensions of vernacular buildings of the 15th to 17th centuries, using documents to reconstruct the use of the interiors. He sees the form of the buildings as conditioning their use.

These essays provide examples of a range of social interpretations of buildings, and indicate a number of possible conclusions about mentality and culture that can be drawn from architectural evidence. Most of them hinge on combining documentary and material evidence, and draw heavily on historical models such as cultural hegemony and the

development of notions of privacy. One might have expected that new advances in archaeological method would not be so dependent on other disciplines. Why is it necessary to justify this approach by disparaging other ways of looking at buildings? In fact earlier writings on architectural history (by Barley, Coulson and Emery, to name but a few) showed a full awareness of the ideological implications of building design, so one theme of these essays is not quite as innovative as the editor would have us believe. Material, economic and functional approaches have their roles in the study of buildings, though as these essays show, they should be combined with an understanding of the culture and mentality of the society that produced them.

CHRISTOPHER DYER

Medieval Boat and Ship Timbers from Dublin. (Medieval Dublin Excavations 1962–81, Series B, Vol. 3). By Seán McGrail. 21 × 30 cm. xii + 178 pp., 34 pls., 137 figs. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1993. ISBN 1-874045-06-2. Price: £15.95 pb.

For good reasons maritime archaeologists have been looking forward to the publication of the Dublin ship timbers. The material, excavated in the years between 1962 and 1981 mainly at the Wood Quay and the Fishamble sites, consists of nearly 400 items dating from the late 10th to the mid 13th century. It is the most comprehensive material known from the Atlantic islands, and it contains a wealth of information about shipbuilding and seafaring in the high Middle Ages. But Seán McGrail's work is also interesting as an example of how to publish a class of finds which is likely to be much more common than shipwrecks: boat and ship elements reused in new constructions or scrapped after dismantling a vessel. Most excavations in medieval harbour towns are likely to produce evidence of this kind, but hitherto the publications of such materials have been few. A. E. Christensen's publication of the Bergen finds has stood virtually alone for most of the years since 1978, although a few other contributions have been made, e.g. by Peter Marsden in his book *Ships of the Port of London* (1994).

The publication of the Dublin ship timbers details the many finds in a 57-page catalogue, with entries on each timber or, when found fastened to each other, each timber group. Most timbers are carefully described with numerous measurements and angles, but only about a third of them are illustrated. The drawings given are reasonably detailed and include relevant cross-sections, but the reproduction quality is often poor. Many readers will want the drawings rather than the many metric data presented, as the latter are difficult to compare with other finds not recorded in exactly the same manner.

There is, however, a strict methodological idea behind the many measurements taken. McGrail built his recordings on the working hypothesis that 'within a particular tradition, the size of fitting used is related to the size of the parent vessel' (p. 61), and to that end he specifies a number of measurements to be taken and a calculation of 'moulded size' (the product of the width and the thickness of certain timbers, e.g. keels, stems and framing timbers). This makes it possible for McGrail to distinguish between different vessel sizes even on the basis of single or few timbers, and he is thus able to demonstrate that post-1169 ships were generally larger than their Hiberno-Norse predecessors. The method has a flaw, however. The working hypothesis treats dimensional variations only as indicators of changing vessel sizes; alternative interpretations such as changing traditions, or varied vessel types, should have been examined. As it stands, the second of McGrail's main conclusions — that there were no marked changes in shipbuilding techniques during the period covered by the finds (p. 68) — is of little value. In mitigation it may be argued that no other comprehensive finds, except those from Bergen, have been published to an extent that really allows detailed comparisons on a large scale. A thorough publication of ship

finds like Skuldelev 1 and Lynæs is often called for in the text, and a new analysis of the Dublin finds is also advocated (p. 602).

Even if the treatment of the more trivial ship timbers might call for further discussion of recording and publication principles, the Dublin finds reveal a wealth of different wooden objects from medieval seafaring, and this book presents and discusses them in detail. As a background to the record of the Dublin finds, the elements of clinker-built ships are described on the basis of previous knowledge. In two later chapters (3 and 4) the Dublin finds are discussed in considerable detail against this background. The discussion of the rigging details seems particularly enriching. The two last chapters of the book give conclusions, partly on the finds and their significance for the interpretation of the medieval Dublin harbour, and partly on current and future research patterns and needs. Some conclusions on the ship material have been mentioned briefly above, and only a few additional remarks are necessary here. Finding the clinker-built vessels well adapted for berthing on a tidal beach, McGrail believes that the wharves were built primarily to avoid flooding of the town. He does, however, point out that with the growing capacity of the ships, the impetus to build cargo handling facilities would increase. Thus the change from front to back-braced water-front revetments in the late 13th century might after all be influenced by their harbour function, but unfortunately the Dublin ship timbers come to an end before that period and thus cannot throw any light on this question.

Medieval Boat and Ship Timbers from Dublin is, in spite of its few drawbacks, a book that will find widespread use among North European archaeologists dealing with ships and seafaring in the medieval period. Its discussions and descriptions of general construction features in clinker-built vessels will make it attractive to students of maritime archaeology, and it will also be an inspiration to others facing the difficulties of publishing large numbers of ship fragments.

JAN BILL

The Foundry: Excavations on Poole Waterfront 1986–87. (Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, Monograph Series No. 14.) By David R. Watkins. 21 × 30 cms. 96 pp., 57 figs. and pls., 54 tables. Dorchester: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 1994. ISBN 0900-341-386. Price: £9.95 pb.

A pet hate shared by many archaeologists is the 'postal address' approach to excavation report titles, in which an important project languishes anonymously behind an irrelevant modern street name: 'Excavations at 33 High Street, 1983' is as misleading as it is meaningless. Here is one such: this detailed account of the first controlled excavation of a late medieval shipbuilding site in England (a major discovery of international interest) surely demands a better title if the results are to reach the audience they deserve, since the eponymous (and defunct) foundry offers no clue to the true significance of this project. The report is an account of the waterfront excavations conducted in advance of redevelopments at Poole, Dorset which exposed the boatyard and its timbers. The main chapter headings ('Introduction'; 'Excavations'; 'Specialists Reports'; 'Synthesis') also diminish the importance of the boat timbers, which surely merit a chapter of their own (rather than subsuming them amongst the clay pipes and fish bones) since they represent the reason that eight out of ten people will buy this report. This review will focus on this aspect, rather than on the post-medieval developments which are also described in this report.

The scene is set by David Watkins, who describes the phases represented. These range from 15th-century foreshore deposits which included residual early — mid Saxon pottery as well as the boatyard, to 16th-century reclamation deposits and evidence for subsequent

developments. The careful assessment of the 61 boat timbers is by Gillian Hutchinson, the sole surviving nautical archaeologist in the National Maritime Museum and author of the recent book on *Medieval Ships and Shipping*. She does not seem to have been asked to comment on the treenails, clenched bolts and roves (which are not illustrated), or on the broad context of the shipbuilding site. However, she does describe the reused timbers derived from broken-up vessels and the roughed-out elements grouped in preparation for the construction of a new vessel, including keels, floors, futtocks, stem-posts and mast-crutches in her catalogue. She concludes that the reused elements were derived from at least three vessels, and produces an outline reconstruction of the broad type of coasting/fishing boat represented, a modest clinker-built vessel 7.8 m long with a single mast. This major, thought-provoking contribution is supported by Steven Allen's consideration of the tool marks, conversion techniques and wood-working technology represented, although none of these aspects or any parent log or parent tree studies are illustrated in detail.

The discussion of the context of this activity is by David Watkins, who tackles many questions, including whether the timbers were in a dry or wet store (i.e. if they were stacked above or below the high water mark). His assessment of the relationship of the ancient features to the contemporary sea level takes the form of a series of figures in which the features are plotted against modern tidal values and suggested lower levels. While it seems, on the evidence provided, perfectly reasonable to postulate that high tides reached a lower level relative to the land in antiquity, there is less evidence to support the suggestion that the relative tidal range remained the same: arguably the amplitude may have been less pronounced if the highest tides were significantly lower. This point needs to be resolved, since it has a direct bearing on whether the timber stores lay above the Mean Neap high tides, as the excavator seems to imply, or below them, as this reviewer suggests, given the water-laid nature of the deposits around and over them.

This report demonstrates most eloquently the great value of excavating ancient foreshores, since these were not always seen as peripheral areas devoid of activity. At the Poole site, there was a build-up of c. 1 m of deposits in the 15th century alone, the result of a combination of deliberate consolidation of the foreshore and natural sorting and silting. The excavator poses the question why the sound timbers were left by the boat builders and the townsfolk. He suggests the site was inundated, although the horizon thought to represent that event, Stratum F, included many wood chips while the overlying layers, Strata G and H, also contained clenched bolts, roves and treenails (p. 61) which seems to imply that boat-building or repair continued on the site after the timber store had supposedly been abandoned. It may be worth mentioning that even larger 18th and 19th-century ship's timber are still to be found eroding out of the Thames foreshore in London: those green and slimy timbers set in a muddy foreshore clearly did not appear as an attractive resource to anyone either.

All in all, there is much food for thought here. Only a handful of medieval shipbuilding sites have been excavated in northern Europe, including the Fridbrodre River on the island of Falster in Denmark (1070–80); the Mangernes site, on the island of Radøy, Norway; and the urban sites at Wolin (late 9th century) and Szczecin (late 11th century), in Poland. However, ship-breaking (and presumably ship-repair) sites are represented by the large assemblages of ship timbers reused in later waterfront structures found in London, Bergen and Dublin, for example. In this élite group of major sites the Poole excavation rightly belongs, a medieval maritime project of international importance: it is to be hoped that its misleading title will not prevent the report attaining the wide readership the material merits.

Die frühmittelalterlichen Lesefunde aus der Löhrrstrasse (Baustelle Hilton II) in Mainz. By Egon Wamers. 21 × 30 cm. I-VIII + 267 pp., 112 figs., 3 tables. Mainz: Archäologische Denkmalpflege (Amt Mainz), 1994. No ISBN. Price not stated, hb.

The prosaic title of this the inaugural volume of the series *Mainzer Archäologische Schriften* disguises a masterly catalogue *raisonné* of the early medieval finds from an important site in Mainz. The site, outside the line of the Roman city wall that ran along the left bank of the Rhine, has yielded to rescue archaeology the hulls of Roman ships, with rubbish of Roman date strewn underneath and inside them (G. Rupprecht, ed., *Die Mainzer Römerschiffe. Berichte über Entdeckung, Ausgrabung und Bergung*, 2nd ed., Mainz, 1982). By the 9th century the river bank was 20 m or more further E., and it is on this line that the Carolingian city wall was built and, in 1981, construction work on the Löhrrstrasse site began.

Despite its archaeological promise, the extent of the building site (approaching 4000 sq. m) combined with a shortage of personnel, time and funds meant that the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege in Mainz could manage only a watching brief during the contractors' work. Several metres of soil were removed and dumped at various locations in Rheinland-Pfalz and Hessen, and it was on these secondary sites that all but a handful of the catalogued items were discovered.

The story does not end there. Since most of the finds were made by private individuals, some of whom seem even to have tailed the lorries from the building site to the dumps, there followed close on a decade of detective work, evoking a whole range of reactions, from ready co-operation to threats of physical violence.

Once successfully — if not always safely — tracked down, each object was rigorously catalogued by Egon Wamers, with Christian Stoess and Peter Berghaus doing the same for coins and coin-brooches respectively. The items, numbered from 001 to 322, have been related to other recent finds from Mainz, prefixed 'M', and from Mainz-Kastel, prefixed 'W' (for Wiesbaden?), as well as to old finds now in the Landesmuseum in Mainz, prefixed 'A' (for *Altfunde*). All are admirably illustrated.

As a patent consequence of the detection methods used on the dumps, most of the objects in the catalogue are of metal. Finds of Roman date which did not appear in *Die Mainzer Römerschiffe* are due to be published by Gerd Rupprecht, the head of the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, in a subsequent volume of *Mainzer Archäologische Schriften*. Dr Wamers has, however, included in the current volume the late Roman objects belonging to the Migration period, as well as the Merovingian material. The bulk of the catalogued finds are of 9th and 10th-century date, although there are later medieval and post-medieval entries, as well as a section on finds relating to metalworking.

The discovery of almost 100 Carolingian and Ottonian brooches prompted a reappraisal of the subject, and there are few people better qualified than Egon Wamers to undertake this task. Whether or not represented in the finds from the Mainz site, each type and sub-type of German brooch dated between about 800 and the early 11th century is examined and discussed. Up-to-date distribution maps and appendices with details of all published and some unpublished examples provided an invaluable research aid, particularly as earlier publication was in many instances in obscure periodicals. It is a simple matter, for instance, to see from the relevant map (Abb. 34) and its related appendix (Liste 5) that a copper-alloy disk-brooch with a simple cross in champlévé enamel (*Kreuzemäilfibel*, Type 3), four examples of which have been found in Norfolk, has a distribution embracing western Germany and the Netherlands, with concentrations at the mouth of the Rhine, on the Baltic coast and, particularly, in Mainz (sixteen examples, eight from the site under discussion). English finds of the rather rarer disk-brooches with the rudimentary bust of a saint in cloisonné or champlévé enamel (*Heiligenfibeln*), which have a roughly similar distribution on the Continent (Abb. 47), are recorded (Liste 11) from Thetford (two

examples), from spoil from the site of the Billingsgate fish market, and from Wetheringsetcum-Brockford, Suffolk.

One of the greatest contributions Dr Wamers makes to scholarship is a re-evaluation of the diverse evidence for the dating of many types of brooch. For instance, his succinct and convincing reinterpretation (pp. 65–76) of the chronology of the cemetery at Maschen (Kreis Harburg, Niedersachsen), which has long provided an 8th-century date for both *Kreuzemäufibeln* and *Heiligenfibeln*, completely removes that century from consideration in the dating of these important classes of object.

Die frühmittelalterlichen Lesefunde aus der Löhrrasse is an admirable publication of finds from spoil removed from a building site close to what must have been the commercial heart of medieval Mainz. The complete reappraisal of Carolingian and Ottonian brooches inspired by the finds has elevated an excellent catalogue into the last word on the subject.

DAVID BUCKTON

La Monetazione nell'Italia Normanna. (Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, Nuovi Studi Storici — 28). By Lucia Traviani. 18 × 25 cm. viii + 487 pp., 44 figs., 3 maps, 25 pls. Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1995. ISSN 0391-8475. Price: L100,000 pb.

Expanding interest in the medieval Mediterranean, and particularly in the relationships between Christians and Muslims, has recently been highlighted in a series of recent books focused on southern Italy (notably B. Kreuz, *Before the Normans. Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1991); D. Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge, 1992); H. Takayama, *The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Leiden-New York, 1993). Sicily and southern Italy lie at the geographical centre of the Mediterranean and, as such, have always been a cultural melting-pot; after Rome, Byzantines, Lombards, Arabs and later Normans vied for supremacy and each contributed substantially in terms of administration, law, and language. From the 1050s onwards the Normans succeeded in uniting much of this territory and in so doing inherited a widely mixed population. This mixture is witnessed on various levels: firstly in terms of a bifocality in Norman rule, with a basic division between a southern territory (Sicily and Calabria) and a northern one (focused on Salerno); secondly in terms of architecture and art, with the mainland largely revealing Byzantine roots whilst Sicily reveals a stunning fusion of Arabo-Byzantine-Norman culture, most pronounced at Palermo. However, a further important source exists for analysing Norman impact and Muslim/native survival, and for assessing the level of trade in the central Mediterranean, namely numismatics. Various studies have already been carried out on individual coin types, hoards and mints for the Norman Kingdom and its individual principalities, but Traviani's book offers a first clear and comprehensive synthesis of Norman monetary policy in Italy in the 11th–12th centuries.

This is a very scholarly and solid volume, supported by extensive notes and bibliography, covering in full detail the introduction, distribution and evolution of the principal coin types. Chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 69–186) analyse the gold tari; Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 187–234) the silver issues, notably the kharrube; Chapter 6 (pp. 235–340) the copper coinage; whilst Chapter 7 (pp. 341–61) discusses the technology and role of forgeries. All types are illustrated, primarily through line drawings in the end plates (between pp. 684–85 — presumably all are 1:1 in scale though this is not stated); the appendices (pp. 662–405) list all known hoards, stray finds and excavated coins, and enumerate the Arab legends found on the Norman coins. Importantly, Traviani sets out

full tables of concordance (pp. 607–19). For non-specialists Chapter 1 (pp. 6–97) offers an essential summary of the historical, administrative and economic contexts to Norman rule and the related coin sequence. Various key factors are highlighted, notably the attempted centralization of control and of coin distribution through the creation of just three state mints, in contrast to the profusion of mints evident in contemporary northern Italy; simultaneously, however, there was a clear awareness of local 'needs or perhaps traditions', in that lesser mints, such as in the old principalities of Amalfi and Gaeta, were allowed to persist (pp. 64–88). Local/regional needs are further reflected in the types of coins issued by the various mints, with N./S. Kingdom distinctions evident, notably in the Sicilian issues utilising Arab legends; no major changes are enforced (excepting, understandably, the introduction of Christian and royal iconography). A clear desire is thus reflected, via the coins, for a smooth transition in rule and maintenance of the trade flow. Travaini (pp. 69–97) does note, however, the overall reduction apparent in coin circulation in the Norman period compared with the relatively flourishing 10th–11th centuries in southern Italy and Sicily, which implies a level of economic contraction, and, potentially, also reflects the imposition of feudalism and a related diminution of the movement of coin outside the urban sphere. It would have been valuable had Travaini extended this discussion and commented on other economic and administrative activities — for example, the expansive and expensive church building campaigns and the foundation of castles. Similarly, whilst some comment is offered on archaeology, more was needed to understand the character and quality of the towns, their relationship with the countryside, their markets, the items of trade, and the general material culture of the Norman Kingdom. We simply hear, on p. 61, that Wickham argues that the S. had better quality material culture than the N. In Travaini's defence, however, one can note a relative dearth of good urban excavations (even that at Otranto, whilst valuable and informative, was restricted and covered an area outside the fortified port) and of rural survey, with the primary aims of archaeological scrutiny remaining fixed on the Greek and Roman presence.

Travaini's survey thus offers an important new source-book for analysing both the Norman presence in southern Italy and Sicily and the level of trade and cultural interaction in the central Mediterranean. As such it provides an excellent addition to the expanding body of publications reassessing and synthesising the numismatic evidence for medieval Europe (N.B. the *Medieval European Coinage* series edited by Philip Grierson, in which the volume by Blackburn and Grierson, *The Early Middle Ages, 5th–10th Centuries* (Cambridge, 1986) summarizes the pre-Norman coinage in Italy. Travaini (p. 6, n. 5) notes that her volume in fact forms a detailed expansion of part of a forthcoming volume in the series). It is to be hoped that such scholarly numismatic output will help encourage increased investigation into other aspects of early medieval and medieval Italian culture.

NEIL CHRISTIE