

Short Reviews

Early Medieval Cemeteries. An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West. By Guy Halsall. 15 × 21 cm. 92 pp., 9 figs. Skelmorlie: Cruithne Press, 1995. ISBN 1-873448-07-4. Price: £6.50 pb.

This book is written as an introductory text to the cemetery evidence from approximately A.D. 350 to A.D. 750. It is aimed primarily at archaeology and history undergraduates (p. 2), and ranges across England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Scandinavia.

The book contains five chapters, of widely varying lengths. The longest is the first, 'A descriptive account of early medieval burial practice'. This consists of a gallop through the various burial customs in early medieval Europe, with relatively detailed sections on England and Northern Gaul. The second chapter, 'Graves of the rich and famous', contains very brief descriptions of Childeric's grave, Sutton Hoo Mound 1, Arnegundis' grave, and Vendel-Valsgårde, summarized in barely six pages. The third chapter, 'Dating Burials', is the second longest and covers dating techniques and chronologies for Northern Gaul, England, Scandinavian, Southern France, and Spain. The fourth chapter, 'Interpreting Cemeteries: Ethnicity and Religion', has quite a good section on ethnicity, but an all-too-brief discussion of religion. The final chapter, 'Interpreting Cemeteries: Society and Economy' has an abbreviated discussion of social approaches to burial analysis and virtually nothing on economic aspects.

Inevitably, compression is evident throughout. Some omissions are surprising: for instance, the burials under Cologne Cathedral are only mentioned in relation to dendrochronology in Chapter 3. Other statements are made out of context: for example, the rather doubtful claim that 'many Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are located away from habitations, possibly on territorial boundaries' (p. 11) is kept for the section on Northern Gaul. More critical, particularly in an introductory text, is the poverty of illustrations, with Chapter 1 being a particular offender in this respect. One of only three figures in this chapter is of the Hypogeum of Dunes; worthy enough, perhaps, but given the focus of the chapter it is frankly astonishing that there is no illustration of a more typical burial — indeed, the only illustration of a grave is to be found on the back cover of the book.

Stylistically, the design of the book serves to irritate rather than clarify. Leaving aside the ogham at the head of each page, it was some time before I realized that what I had taken to be missing chapter headings were in fact 'carved' into the grave markers illustrating the start of each chapter. Inexplicably, the first mention of a cemetery name is printed in bold, but the poor reproduction quality left this distinction all but invisible. The first mention of a word which appears in the patchy glossary is marked with an asterisk, again for no apparent good reason. More useful would have been the provision of an overall bibliography and an index.

The book suffers from its ambition, and to be fair it is doubtful that a volume three or four times its length would have satisfied. In short, the book will leave every reader wanting more, which is perhaps the intention after all.

JEREMY HUGGETT

Reconstruction and Measurement of Landscape Change. A Study of Six Parishes in the St Albans Area. (B.A.R. British Series 236.) By Jonathan R. Hunn. 22 × 30 cm. vii + 345 pp., 84 figs., 98 tables. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1994. ISBN 0-86054-763-9. Price: £42.00 pb.

This is an unusual work, and one which is hard to review, for while in many ways an innovative and impressive piece of research which pioneers a number of new approaches to the history of landscape, it is also a sporadically irritating volume. Jonathan Hunn sets himself the ambitious task of studying the long-term landscape history of six parishes in the St Albans area of W. Hertfordshire. The volume starts with the late pre-Roman Iron Age, and ends with the present day. The author's aim is not to examine every aspect of the landscape's development — although a great many are touched upon — but rather to measure the degree of continuity and change in the physical structure of the environment over this immense period of time.

What is particularly impressive is the writer's firm command of both archaeological and documentary evidence. Chapter 2, a detailed discussion of the 'Pre-medieval period', presents a comprehensive summary of known archaeological information concerning settlement and land use in the area. The discussion of the complex dyke systems in the immediate vicinity of St Albans and their relationship to local topography is particularly interesting: here, as elsewhere, the writer displays a keen awareness of the subtleties of the local terrain. The discussion of the Roman-British and Anglo-Saxon landscapes is competent and useful, within the limits of the available data. More compelling, however, is the chapter on the medieval period, in which the reconstruction of various aspects of the landscape is presented on 25 monochrome plans, based on a variety of (mainly documentary) sources. This is followed by the fourth chapter, covering the modern period, the core of which is a detailed and careful programme of cartographic analysis which attempts to quantify change in such things as the average size of fields and the extent of woodland and parkland in the area from the mid 16th century until the 1980s. The material on field boundaries is especially interesting.

However, although the volume contains much that is worthwhile and interesting, it is not without its problems. Many of the diagrams — on which so much discussion relies — have not been reproduced very clearly, and even when legible the accompanying keys and captions sometimes leave unsolved cartographic mysteries. More importantly, some of the textual information presented, while of considerable interest in its own right (and of much potential use to other researchers) seems to be poorly integrated into any overall argument or arguments. Occasionally there is a sense of historical stamp-collecting, of amassing and presenting information for its own sake. This is not the only recently published archaeological volume in which individual pieces of historical information are presented in this way, as if they were sherds or post-holes, their form and context destroyed by excavation, rather than material still accessible at the local record office. While some of the copious appendices are very useful — such as that discussing the changes in field names on the Gorhambury estate — the purposes of others eluded me, such as the long list of post-medieval field names. Above all, the volume's structure is often episodic: it is not always clear why one section follows another, and the conclusions to each chapter often seem somewhat circumscribed. The final section of the volume, which deals (among other things) with the evaluation of landscape, including such matters as 'Access and Leisure Evaluation', seems to combine vagueness and planning-speak to an alarming degree — but that, perhaps, simply reflects my own prejudices.

Yet to avoid signing off on a negative note, the strengths and values of Hunn's work need to be reiterated. The volume contains a vast amount of useful information, and a number of original suggestions and observations, and it will be of considerable interest not

only to local researchers in Hertfordshire, but to landscape historians and archaeologists more generally.

TOM WILLIAMSON

Urban-Rural Connexions. Perspectives from Environmental Archaeology. (Symposia of the Association for Environmental Archaeology 12.) Edited by A. R. Hall and H. K. Kenward. 21 × 30 cm. vi + 170 pp., 57 figs. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1994. ISBN 0-946897-81-6. Price: £28.00 pb.

This volume of eleven contributed papers contains the proceedings of a meeting of the Association for Environmental Archaeology, organized by the editors at the University of York in 1991. As they acknowledge, the papers are diverse in scope, extending from the primarily biological to the essentially historical, with plenty of traditional environmental archaeology in between. The volume is important for those working in environmental archaeology, especially in an urban context, but is also very useful reading for anyone with a general interest in urban archaeology.

The first paper in the volume, by Erik Schia, is sadly a posthumous contribution. It throws a wide range of questions at the environmental data, with very effective results, looking especially at the importation of goods into the town. In eleven pages the author takes us rapidly from Oslo, in the context of its distant economic hinterland, to a consideration of the information to be drawn from the biological remains, from building timber and from artefacts, before returning to medieval Oslo as a whole. Appropriately the final paper in the volume, by Groenman van Waateringe, also takes a broad view of the past, utilizing the data from a very much wider range of excavations to look at urban-rural connections in the Netherlands between the 7th and the 16th centuries. Zoological and botanical data provide meaningful results for examination of the rural and pre-urban economies, and the growing differences between the rural and urban environment in the later Middle Ages. As to whether the bioarchaeological data can really offer more than the written sources, the author's answer is an unequivocal yes. The detailed analyses presented here provide ample support for this assertion.

The intervening papers also include much of importance for the urban archaeologist. Anyone who has encountered the dark earth deposits found in the later horizons of a number of Romano-British towns (Cirencester might be added to the author's list) will be fascinated by Macphail's paper on the reworking of urban stratigraphy by human and natural processes. While museum stores groan under the weight of soil samples from urban and other excavations, Macphail demonstrates here the effective contribution to be made from the latest techniques of soil science and in particular the use of photomicrographs. He highlights important implications for reconsidering the archaeology of late Roman London and other towns. There could be similar implications for the study of late Roman and early medieval Paris, considered here in a contrasting paper by Ciezar and others.

Other papers in the volume contain much of equal interest. Kenward and Allison look at the rural origins of urban insect fauna, and have much to say on today's antiseptic urban environment and its implications for conservation. Noddle's examination of the goat is more anecdotal but nevertheless interesting reading. Three other papers focus on particular towns, Van Haaster providing a very short synthesis of plant resources and environment in late medieval Lübeck, Wilson considering animal husbandry and marketing in and around medieval Oxford, and Maltby looking at the meat supply in Roman Dorchester and Winchester, the last particularly well integrated into the national context.

In their initial introduction the authors recognize the difficulty in making sharp distinctions between urban and rural settlement; nevertheless most of the papers do focus on the urban-rural connection, into which this volume certainly provides new insights.

ROGER LEECH

Environment and Economy in Anglo-Saxon England. (C.B.A. Research Report 89.) Edited by James Rackham. 22 × 30 cm. vi + 151 pp., figs., pls., tables. York: Council for British Archaeology, 1994. ISBN 1-872414-33-8. Price: £28.00 pb.

The proceedings of a conference held in 1990 are collated into this volume. There are thirteen papers which attempt to review the impact of environmental archaeological work in the previous decade on our understanding of Anglo-Saxon settlements and landscape, mainly through a series of case studies.

Oliver Rackham, Ian Tyers and others review the evidence for changes in woodland from the documentary and dendrochronological data respectively. Four papers use archaeobotanical data to discuss variations in landscape usage, agriculture and crop processing in case studies from different parts of England (Peter Murphy — East Anglia and Essex; Lisa Moffett — Stratford; Gill Campbell — Upper Nene Valley; Francis Green — Wessex). Pam Crabtree's paper discusses animal exploitation in East Anglia and includes useful comparisons between the faunal assemblages from West Stow and Wicken Bonhunt. Harry Kenward and Enid Allison report their preliminary conclusions about the insect assemblages from an early Christian rath at Deer Park Farms, County Antrim and demonstrate some surprising similarities and interesting contrasts with urban assemblages.

Three papers examine environmental data from urban sites. Jennifer Bourdillon summarizes the evidence for animal provisioning in Saxon Southampton; James Rackham reviews recent archaeobotanical and archaeozoological work from London including evidence from the mid Saxon settlement on the Strand; Terry O'Connor discusses possible changes in the economy and environment of York between the 8th and 11th centuries.

Most of these papers rely heavily on previous work by the authors or are provisional appraisals of new data. Environmental archaeologists will need to consult the more detailed analyses upon which these summaries are based to evaluate fully the interpretations presented here. However, most of the authors make enlightening observations and show that environmental archaeology has an important role to play in studies of historic periods. This relevance is made clearer by the papers by Martin Carver and Alan Vince, in which they demonstrate clearly how environmental archaeology can be used in answering questions about developments in the Anglo-Saxon economy. The book will serve as an useful introduction to the subject and hopefully will encourage further integration of environmental archaeology with other branches of the discipline.

MARK MALTBY

The Medieval City Under Siege. Edited by Ivy A. Corfis and Michael Wolfe. 17 × 25 cm. x + 292 pp., 33 figs., 10 pls. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995. ISBN 0-85115-561-8. Price: £39.50 hb.

Despite the recent proliferation of studies on medieval warfare, the role of sieges remains determinedly under-researched. This is curious because the capture of towns and castles, and hence the domination of their surrounding territories, was the primary aim of

medieval commanders. This substantial book makes an important and stimulating contribution in redressing the balance.

The expansion of urban life in the Middle Ages ensured that great wealth was to be found in the cities. Its owners were, naturally enough, fearful of the target it presented to hostile forces, and urban defences were strengthened to protect both life and property. Cities could therefore offer formidable resistance to besieging armies, as many of the contributors make clear. Papers on German cities by Michael Toch, the *bonne villes* of France by Michael Wolfe, and Iberian frontier municipalities by James Powers all emphasize that the combination of stone defences, sheer size and weight of numbers, urban arsenals, availability of skilled work forces and ready access to cash made cities military forces in their own right. As Powers emphasizes, a fortified town was 'both a unit of economic activity as well as a defensive and offensive outpost'. Little wonder, then, that the defences of these commercial and population centres were not readily destroyed.

These observations indicate that the function of a fortified town was the same as that of a castle, but on a larger scale, a point which the book fails to make and one reinforced by the synonymy of Latin terminology for castles and cities. As Denys Pringle reminds us in his indispensable archaeological survey of urban defences in the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, towns were frequently built around castles. The results of Pringle's meticulous field work in Palestine throw much light on the blending of Christian and Muslim styles of fortifications as towns evolved, and he provides some particularly interesting commentary on barbicans.

Given the overwhelming physical evidence for the strength of urban defences, Eric McGeer and Paul Chevedden explore the poliorcetic challenge which they pose, the latter presenting a highly technical discourse on artillery in late Antiquity. By the end of the medieval period it is still difficult to discern major changes in siege warfare, with advances in weaponry and defensive architecture being broadly matched. The three final chapters by Kelly de Vries, Michael Mullet and Bert Hall echo this, rightly questioning the whole concept of a military revolution in the early modern period at all. As Wolfe writes, 'fortified towns often led the way in the development of the new armament industries associated with gunpowder weaponry, as well as elaborated new styles of fortifications to blunt a cannon's force'.

The book suffers a little in its uneven treatment of warfare itself (not all the contributors match Powers' understanding of the subject), but the focus of the book — urban responses to military threats — is uniformly dealt with in assured and authoritative tones.

SEAN McGLYNN

A Short Architectural History of Worcester Cathedral. (Worcester Cathedral Publications 2.) By Philip Barker. 19 × 26 cm. 123 pp., 121 figs. and pls. Worcester: Philip Barker and the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, 1994. ISBN 0-9516274-2-2. Price: £9.50 pb., from Worcester Cathedral Appeal Trust, Chapter Office, 10A College Green, Worcester WR1 2LH.

After a few pages of this well-written book it becomes clear that its title is slightly misleading. This is not so much a short architectural history of a splendid medieval church, but an outline archaeological analysis of its fabric — and none the worse for that. It is not a book concerned with the subtle variations and developments of architectural styles. Instead its author demonstrates how the evidence of the fabric itself can show how the building has evolved, and then compares this with known historical events in the cathedral's

past. The advantage of this approach is its relative objectivity; the archaeological evidence is clearly presented and the manner in which the conclusions are drawn is set out for inspection.

The coverage is slightly biased towards the earlier phases of the cathedral's history at the expense of the later medieval ones. This is understandable. Despite 19th-century restorations, the bulk of the church belongs to the 13th and 14th centuries and the evidence is fairly straightforward. It is the intriguing survivals of the 12th century and earlier periods that have to be explained and placed into context — particularly the splendid 11th-century crypt and the possible fragments of the pre-Conquest church. The story is continued right up to the present day and includes a useful chapter on the latest restoration programme.

There is a basic glossary of terms at the end of the book, and a comprehensive bibliography. If there are any complaints, they are mainly concerned with the illustrations. The book is certainly not short of illustrative material and most of it is well chosen to back the text. Presumably to keep costs down there is no colour, which is unfortunate; monochrome does little justice to the fragments of medieval wall paintings or to Peter Schofield's reconstruction painting of the church in the early 12th century. There are, perhaps, a few too many monochrome photographs and too few detailed survey drawings (such as the very informative elevation of the SW. transept). This may be because only some parts of the cathedral have so far been surveyed in this way.

Nevertheless, this is a good introduction to Worcester Cathedral. It has enough illustrations and an easy-to-read text to appeal to the general cathedral-going public, and enough academic integrity to satisfy the more serious student of architecture and building archaeology. The book answers many difficult questions about the church's development and, deliberately, asks many more. It is to be hoped that the on-going research and recording at Worcester will, funds permitting, eventually result in the more expansive monograph that it deserves.

RICHARD K. MORRIS

In Harvey's House and in God's House: Excavations at Eynsham Abbey 1991–3. (Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph 6.) By G. D. Keevil. 22 × 30 cm. v + 46 pp., 18 figs., 5 pls. Oxford: Oxford Archaeological Unit, 1995. ISBN 0-904220-10-9. Price: £9.50 pb.

This monograph summarizes the results of two small, developer-funded projects in the precinct area of Eynsham Abbey. The first concerns a moat at the south-western edge of the monastery, on a plot of land which seemed to have been purchased by the abbey in the 13th century in order to create fishponds, while the second focuses on buildings adjacent to ranges of the main cloister of the monastery. The importance of these excavations lies in their potential for providing a broader context for the understanding of Eynsham Abbey, a site of considerable importance to monastic studies, which has also been the subject of more comprehensive excavations in the vicinity of the Great Cloister. Eynsham was established as a minster church at least as early as 864 (and perhaps a century before this date); it was subsequently founded in 1005 as a Benedictine monastery during the wave of late Saxon reform, and finally refounded in 1109.

The moat was excavated in advance of a water pipeline cutting across part of the site. From a topographical reconstruction of the precinct based on documents (from Bond 1992), it is believed that the moat was part of a secular site owned by Harvey, son of Peter, who sold his house, courtyard and croft to Eynsham Abbey between 1213 and 1217. Given the degree of earthworking activity associated with the construction of the moat, there were high levels of residual material. The authors of the report were confident, however,

in attributing a mid 12th-century date of construction for the moat, and a period of use lasting up to the early 13th century. It was possible to determine the dimensions and details of construction of the moat, and environmental evidence was important in establishing the nature of the surrounding area. In particular, the absence of evidence for certain insects suggests that the site was not used for human habitation or for storage of grain. There is no discussion of the function to which the moat was put, always a thorny problem where moats are concerned. If there was indeed an absence of human habitation and storage facilities, how did the moat relate to Harvey's house, courtyard andcroft?

Excavations in the area of the refectory of the Great Cloister were necessitated by an expansion in the cemeteries of the churches of St Leonard and St Peter. Robber-trenches and floor sequences indicated a possible kitchen connected with the late Saxon abbey, and a medieval building that formed an extension to the W. range, interpreted as a guest hall on the basis of its domestic hearth. Functions were attributed largely through analogy with the familiar plan of monastic houses. At points in the report the constraints can be felt of both developer-funding and the necessity to mitigate damage to archaeological deposits: 'there was an inevitable degree of frustration in being unable to determine the nature and extent of previously unknown buildings' (p. 31).

This monograph is an admirable attempt to integrate small-scale, developer-funded projects into a wider context of research. However worthy, one cannot help longing for the publication of the results of the more comprehensive excavations that took place in the Great Cloister of the Abbey and which are promised for a subsequent volume.

ROBERTA GILCHRIST

Palais Médiévaux (France Belgique). 25 ans d'archéologie. Edited by Annie Renoux. 21 × 29 cm. 185 pp., many figs. Le Mans: l'Université du Maine, 1994. ISBN 2-904037-19-5. Price: not stated, pb.

Palais Médiévaux is a short account of numerous structures in France and Belgium. First, 34 examples of lay palaces from France and seven in Belgium are introduced. Second, 24 examples of archiepiscopal and episcopal palaces are included. The book ends with four abbots' residences.

Given limited space and funds the work is largely devoted to very short accounts of the various palaces set out as outlined above. There are three brief synthetic essays at the beginning, which gather up some trends and details by period: the 'high' Middle Ages — the 5th to 9th centuries; the central Middle Ages — the 10th to 13th centuries; and 'the end of the Middle Ages' — the 14th and 15th centuries.

The archaeological approach of the volume reveals changes in archaeological techniques, and the problems these have bequeathed to the present: purely architectural studies, antiquarian excavations and so on. The conclusion on the 5th to 9th centuries is that, archaeologically speaking, Carolingian palaces in France remain *terra incognita* (p. 9). But by no means all the difficulties arise from out-dated work. At Locronan (Finistère), for example, the remains are dated to the mid 9th century but the documents, as is so often the case, begin in the 12th.

However, there is evidence of recent work and approaches as shown by the reference to Leenhardt's work on pottery assemblages in Normandy (1987) in the bibliography for Caen. Here it is valuable to see William the Bastard (Conqueror) and Henry I Beauclerc's significant contributions to the development of their Norman ducal palace. There are some splendid survivals; for example among the bishops' palaces — always urban — three successive palaces, medieval, Renaissance and 18th-century all survive at Viviers (Ardèche).

Maps, plans and reconstructions abound in the volume unfortunately, no doubt again due to minimal funds, all in different styles and with differing scales. There are no archaeological sections. With regard to the period from the 10th to the 13th century Annie Renoux and Pierre Demolon conclude, 'L'heure des synthèses n'est pas venue', and this could equally apply to the surrounding periods.

But this book is a brave attempt to get the subject launched and to try to make headway, often in unpromising circumstances. The decision to spread the net comparatively wide in gathering up 'palaces' is an advantage at this early stage of the study of the subject. The authors freely admit that the entries in this book are only a small sample of the many sites which would qualify. Indeed, the question of definition of a palace is not discussed here, although it has been, according to the 'Introduction', addressed by the group on another occasion. Three of the lay residences included in the essay on the 14th and 15th centuries — Rouen, Nancy and Beauvoir-en-Royans — were called palaces at that time. Similarly Reims, Sens and Troyes among the ecclesiastical sites enjoyed the appellation 'palatium' from time to time in the Middle Ages (p. 118).

The study of French and Belgian medieval palaces is a well-worthwhile exercise. Annie Renoux's book makes a start. Plainly there are mountains to climb. One is in assembling materials from a wider selection of sites and so enabling a synthesis to be made. Another matter which must be addressed, from this early stage in the proceedings, is that of the sites in their landscape context — using maps, documents and archaeology in harness to reconstruct the world of forests and gardens, deerparks and fishponds in which these buildings were set. Ecology is an aspect of study which must be included and which would undoubtedly lead to exciting discoveries.

TOM BEAUMONT JAMES

Medieval London Houses. By John Schofield. 22 × 29 cm. vi + 272 pp., 264 figs. and pls., 4 maps. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-300-05578-1. Price: £40.00 hb.

This book is a great treat but also a bit of a fraud. It is the compendium of John Schofield's extensive and admirably detailed research, over more than 20 years, into the medieval houses of the City of London. It is the book of the thesis and, one suspects, of much more subsequent research and thought. It is a fraud to the extent that we have already read much of it in earlier instalments and so it exposes the dilemma that faces many scholars in the current climate of 'quick fix' research: if one is pursuing the kind of painstaking research that takes decades rather than months, does one go into print with gobbits of it as they are ready, and so risk a carping review saying that there is nothing new here? Or does one hang on to the bitter end and risk gaining a reputation as non-productive, simply because this kind of major project does not suit the value-for-money model that has translated so uneasily from political ideology into academic and field archaeology? Schofield has chosen the former path. So if I can carp a little about the sense of *déjà-vu*, it is with sympathy for his plight.

As every schoolboy knows, most of the medieval city of London burnt in the Great Fire of 1666, so at first sight Schofield's research material is unpromising — 17 fragments of secular buildings is not much to go on. But his net is cast wide to take in the results of excavation, documentary records, contemporary graphic evidence and written accounts and later illustrations. His studies have yielded impressive results and they are lavishly presented here in this richly illustrated volume. He considers the topography of the City, reviews house types, looks inside to consider individual rooms and goes on to present evidence for their furnishing, and concludes with a consideration of construction methods. Other researchers in the field are presented with a wealth of material, and I have already

plundered the book countless times for material to illustrate arguments or make comparisons. Much of this material has appeared elsewhere: the typology of houses based on Treswell's surveys, the discussion of property boundaries, the overview of building types, for instance, but it is helpful to have it presented in one place. Having said that, there are some completely new sections, and principal amongst these is the very useful gazetteer which contains much that is previously unpublished, including an interesting reconstruction of the oft-quoted house of St Paul's, Bucklersbury.

One might have wished for more analysis and synthesis. There is a foray into access analysis, but this is disappointingly underdeveloped. The discussions of furnishings and of building materials are largely descriptive and provide a wealth of information. Yet a consideration of these matters in a broader context may have much to tell us about the importance of moveables in defining the syntax of space on the one hand and craft competence and organization on the other. These are areas rarely tackled by archaeologists who all too often regard such historically specific matters as beyond their scope and so risk misunderstanding much of the social context of historic buildings. This book is a treasure-house of information on the London house and certain to become a standard work on the construction and appearance of medieval urban buildings: the next step is a consideration of what these houses meant.

JANE GRENVILLE

The Medieval Garden. By Sylvia Landsberg. 23 × 22 cm. 144 pp., 88 figs. and pls. (36 in colour). London: The British Museum Press, 1996. ISBN 0-7141-2080-4. Price: £12.99 hb.

Landsberg is a garden historian who has created a number of gardens in the medieval style, at Southampton, Winchester, Shrewsbury and for Bayleaf Farm at the Weald and Downland Museum. This attractive and well-illustrated study is written from that perspective, but is informed by writing on garden history (notably the work of John Harvey, although strangely that by Dyer on the peasant garden is omitted) and landscape and garden archaeology. Although, inevitably, many of the illustrations are of herbers, the intimate, enclosed formal gardens adjoining the greater houses, equal emphasis in the text is given to other classes of designed landscapes, European as well as British, such as 'pleasure' or 'little' parks, and to the countryside beyond which supplied materials for the garden. Despite the effort which has clearly been devoted to its design, the book contains a several textual slips, most of them relating to the archaeology: Chris Taylor, for instance, appears as Charles, and we have the 'Deserted Medieval Villages Research Group'. Occasionally, too, the synthesis of the archaeological information creaks. These are things which can be put right when the book is reprinted, which it deserves to be. For those new to the subject it is probably the best available general introduction currently available.

PAUL STAMPER

Medieval Pottery in Staffordshire, A.D. 800-1600: A Review. (Staffordshire Archaeological Studies 7.) By Deborah A. Ford. 21 × 27 cm. 62 pp., 22 figs., 7 pls. Stoke-on-Trent: City Museum and Art Gallery, 1995. ISBN 1-874414-08-4. ISSN 0266-4992. Price: £4.99 (pb.) + £1.00 p. & p., from City Museum and Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3DW.

In the wake of Geoff Wainwright's endorsement of synthetic studies in *Medieval Ceramics Studies in England* (1994) this review of ceramic studies within a county is amongst

the first to be published. Such publications will prove a boon to county archaeologists by highlighting geographical and chronological ceramic lacunae, and they are a first step to recognizing the ceramic resource available, and its potential, within a given area.

The author gives an entertaining and lucid critique of the reasons for ceramic research and the life of 'born-again' potsherds. She writes from the perspective of one inside a museum, who is familiar with the 'finds mountain' — selection, dispersal or disposal of finds before accessioning — and sets out the current archaeological climate. This requires the museums receiving excavated material to make a series of related decisions concerning the merits of the artefacts from each site. This overview provides a framework for making such decisions, and makes the best of the paucity of finds. 'If you do not know how important a site's assemblage is, at what level do you report it?' 'How does one suggest any meaningful programme of fieldwork if one does not know which areas of the county are potentially important, and which not?'

Staffordshire benefited from the first-hand observations of the scholarly Robert Plot in 1686. He was hugely impressed by the potter's craft and recorded his research in a survey of the county which has provided a platform for subsequent researchers to build on. The author makes the point that many archaeologists have little or no training in the best use of historical sources, and that the results of historical research and archaeological finds analysis are rarely merged.

From as early as the 13th century many of the production centres were close to the coal measures and coal was the preferred to wood as a fuel. This must have necessitated a change in kiln technology which ought to be verifiable in the archaeological record.

Ware, vessel construction, glaze and firing are all considered and Debbie Ford has of necessity concentrated on typologies, because of the absence of any groundwork by the early pioneers in ceramic studies in the region.

The complex line-impressed decoration on Stafford green-glazed ware (Pl. 1) suggest that some potters had a great sense of spatial design, so giving us an insight into 'the people behind the artefacts'. One minor quibble here: museum photographers are still not good at including scales in their photographs, a lack of attention to detail which exasperates archaeologists! The line drawings in the catalogue are all well signposted, and convey changes in capacity as well as technological differences which may reflect individual potters or workshops.

This overview of some 90 individual find-spots contrasts with over 700 sites from the Oxford region, recently published in *Oxoniensia* 1994, and suggests that Staffordshire is indeed suffering from a paucity of post-Roman ceramic evidence. And yet this county was to become the cradle for the world-famous Staffordshire Potteries in the 17th century: was there no continuity from earlier potting traditions?

This survey is invaluable; it should commend itself to a wide range of *Medieval Archaeology* readers, and is offered at a price affordable by all. It should also stimulate more work in this forgotten period of Staffordshire's history.

MAUREEN MELLOR

The Middle Ages in the North-West. Edited by Tom Scott and Pat Starkey. 15 × 22 cm. xiii + 278 pp., 34 figs. and pls. Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 1995. ISBN 0-904920-31-3. Price: £15.00 pb.

At first glance this collection of papers appears eclectic and disjointed, but closer consideration reveals that the diversity of approach and the wide range of subject matter

are effectively combined to create a book of value. The papers were originally presented at a conference held in Liverpool in 1993. It was jointly organized by the Centres of Medieval Studies of the Universities of Liverpool and Toronto, and this gives the volume a pronounced transatlantic flavour. The intention of the organizers was to have a conference which ranged broadly over the history, archaeology and literature of the North-West (of England) from the early Middle Ages until their end. The subject matter stretches from landscape archaeology, through Viking studies, to literary and historical examinations of poetry, sagas and mystery plays. The contributors include leading authorities and young scholars. Most of the papers are well written (although several of the literary discussions make no linguistic concessions for the non-specialist) and overall the book has been well edited.

Archaeology is by no means the dominant discipline here and the volume does not set out to provide a cultural history of the North-West of England. Nevertheless archaeologists have much to benefit from the varied nature of the contributions. For instance there is a series of papers considering the literary evidence for battles in the Viking Age and later, by David Klausner, Ian McDougall and Marc Cohen, authors who will not be familiar to most archaeologists, but who have some valuable insights. They contribute to an improved understanding of the literary context of the evidence for significant events such as *Brunnanburh*. Critical analysis of the sources for such events is essential when most of the details drawn upon by historians and archaeologists comes from poets and saga writers. Equally important for the medievalist is an appreciation of the cultural significance of literary sources. In addition to the battle poetry studies a major component of the book consists of discussions of *Gawain and the Green Knight* and the *Pearl*. This naturally draws the reader into some consideration of contemporary literary theory, which again is no bad thing for those concerned with medieval culture.

By comparison the archaeological papers are fairly traditional in their approaches to the data. The two landscape studies (by Nick Higham and Graeme White) will be of fairly restricted local interest, but the synthetic papers on Viking art and archaeology (by David Wilson and James Graham-Campbell) are convenient summaries of current thinking which will be of wider appeal.

Not surprisingly Chester figures prominently in many of the papers. Two in particular illustrate the value of close examination of local traditions. Alan Thacker's discussion of the formation of a cult of the defeated King Harold identifies a remarkable case of historical denial that was promoted in the North-West following the Norman Conquest. Sally-Beth MacLean shows that the post-Reformation survival of mystery plays reflects a resistance to the wholesale removal of Catholic forms of worship in the North-West. For medieval archaeologists her paper is particularly valuable because, perhaps better than any of the papers, it blends textual and material evidence in constructing her argument, much of which will be of wide interest to those concerned with popular worship and faith.

For those with a particular interest in any aspect of northern medieval England this book will be essential. It can be recommended more widely for its useful discussions of issues of general importance to medieval archaeology (e.g. the impact of the Vikings on the W. side of the Irish Sea; the political significance of early medieval battle literature). This reviewer's only complaint is that the title would have more accurately reflected its content had it included the word England.

Guides to Ancient and Historic Wales. Clwyd and Powys. By Helen Burnham. 15 × 21 cm. x + 220 pp., figs., pls. H.M.S.O., 1995. ISBN 0-11-701575-X. Price: £11.95 pb.

Gwynedd. By Frances Lynch. 15 × 21 cm. x + 220 pp., figs., pls. H.M.S.O., 1995. ISBN 0-11-701575. Price: £11.95 pb.

Dyfed. By Sian Rees. 15 × 21 cm. x + 241 pp., figs., pls. H.M.S.O., 1992. ISBN 0-11-701220-3. Price: £11.95 pb.

Glamorgan and Gwent. By Elisabeth Whittle. 15 × 21 cm. x + 216 pp., figs., pls. H.M.S.O., 1992. ISBN 0-11-701221-1. Price: £11.95 pb.

Every year it seems that more guide books are produced on every conceivable subject, though on examination many turn out to be barely portable coffee-table picture books or poorly compiled reworkings of already out-of-date and equally derivative guides. It gives some pleasure, therefore, to be able to report that the whole of Wales is now covered by a set of four guides which provide clear, concise accounts of sites using recent information where relevant.

The Cadw guides cover the four areas of Wales that were served by the Archaeological Trusts. Though none are written by staff from such organizations, all are from the pens of people who are active in Welsh archaeology, and who know the areas well. Each volume is divided into period chapters, of which the 'Early Medieval Period', 'The Age of the Castle', and 'The Medieval Church' are relevant to readers of this journal. Each chapter is prefaced by a brief introduction to the period, written from the perspective of the archaeology and history of that region, and the particular emphasis of the author. This gives each volume a character of its own, which balances the desirable features of standardization of presentation which is characteristic of this series. The criteria for indexing, however, were variable, only Gwynedd having general site types such as mottes included. In subsequent editions such entries would be helpful in the other volumes for those with particular interests.

Illustrations take the form of photographs (quite a few being from the air) and line drawings in a clear and simple style. These include many early medieval inscribed stones, and plans of castles and religious buildings. There is a small selection of reconstructions. The written entries begin with the site number and name (which links to a map or maps at the end of the volume), the type of site, its date, O.S. 1:50,000 map number, and six-figure grid reference. There is also an accessibility classification which is much to be commended. Directions to the site are picked out in italics, followed by an academic reference where appropriate. The descriptive text for each site varies from just a few lines to over a page.

The range of sites covered is larger than the chapter titles might at first imply. Under the heading of 'The Age of the Castle' are many types of monument, including town plans, houses, dovecotes and land boundaries. 'The Medieval Church' includes both parochial and monastic establishments, and other significant ritual sites such as holy wells and pilgrimage sites. Churches in use, however, have been excluded, which must be remembered by those touring.

This set of volumes emphasizes the regional character of the Welsh past, with relatively few inscribed stones in the Clwyd and Powys, but an extra chapter entitled 'Long Dykes and Short Ditches'. Dyfed, in contrast, has many more stones listed. Examples of mottes are most dominant in Clwyd and Powys, and moats feature there and in Glamorgan and Gwent.

Overall this is a fine series which is good to use and easy to carry about. The clear double-column text and integrated illustrations can be examined even on an exposed and windy site. Both I and my students have found them most valuable; Cadw, the series editor Sian Rees, and all the other authors should be congratulated on their efforts. It may also

be a landmark in British archaeological publishing in being the first official series to have been completely authored by women.

HAROLD MYTUM

Die Sachkultur des Mittelalters im Lichte der archäologischen Funde. (Euopäische Hochschulschriften: Reihe XXXVIII, Archäologie; 42.) By Sabine Felgenhauer-Schmiedt. 21 × 15 cm. 295 pp., 37 pls. Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang (2nd edition), 1995. ISBN 3-631-47805-4. Price: DM36 pb.

This volume is one of the latest in a series of single-author handbooks on the subject of medieval and later archaeology in Europe to have emerged in the past decade or so. It follows hard on the heels of Helen Clarke's guide to medieval archaeology in England (1984), ditto Niels-Knut Lieb Gott on Denmark (1989) and Günter Fehring on Germany (1987 and 1992). In line with an increasing number of continental doctoral and professorial theses, the book appears as a reprint in the 'handy' pocket-sized format of the European University Studies series, a means of publication which allows such works to be distributed widely and relatively cheaply. It is a pity that scholars on this side of the English Channel have not yet managed to exploit this particular medium. With such a synthetic work, the pocket-sized paperback format is ideal, encouraging opportunistic reading in trains, planes, automobiles, etc.

The title of Felgenhauer-Schmiedt's book translates roughly as 'The material culture of the Middle Ages in the light of archaeological discoveries'. Geographically the study encompasses German-speaking central Europe, with a particular focus on the transalpine region of Austria and its immediate neighbours, while chronologically it covers the 'high' to late medieval through to early modern periods. As elsewhere on the continent of Europe the material study of these periods is now emerging as a separate and increasingly formalized discipline, and it is this process of development in central Europe — hitherto only sparsely documented — which provides some of the most interesting reading for the western and northern European observer. Accordingly Felgenhauer-Schmiedt prefaces her book with an introduction to the development of medieval and later archaeology in the German-speaking orbit of the Continent, with sub-sections on the archaeology of towns, castles, rural settlements, vernacular buildings, roads, churches and short reviews of the contribution of archaeology to an interdisciplinary study of economic, social and cultural history.

The first part of the book proper comprises an archaeological survey of the main categories of medieval material culture in central Europe: discussion ranges from basic material descriptions to distribution patterns. Included here are the mass products of pottery, metalwork, treen and bone, as well as the more exclusive articles such as glass, jewellery and precious metal. In the best tradition of Austrian material culture studies, the author also points to the importance of integrating the physical record with the historical evidence provided by contemporary documentary and pictorial sources, the latter being so rich here in contrast to other parts of Europe. The meat of this volume concerns the material evidence for a series of everyday activities in the medieval and early modern periods, ranging from the personal and domestic to the industrial and the devotional. The following areas of daily life are discussed in the light of recent archaeological and environmental research: house building and interiors, diet, clothing, work (agricultural and craft), trade, hunting, reading and writing, games (children and adults) and activities associated with belief (from funerary practice to pilgrimage and votive acts). The volume ends with a select bibliography (most references appear in footnote form), an index and a series of plates which include objects, typologies and distribution maps.

The format of the book, and its thematic treatment of medieval and later life by individual activities ranging from work to play and belief, offers a refreshing antidote to the those more conventional European surveys which approach the subject along the standard (cf. 'Medieval Europe') divisions of countryside, churches, castles, towns and trade, craft and industry, etc. As such Professor Felgenhauer-Schmiedt's volume, with its emphasis on the contribution of artefact-based research and the value of interdisciplinary approaches, offers a useful, and now necessary, complement to the more traditional and site-orientated review of the archaeology of medieval and early modern Germany published by Günter Fehring (English transl. 1991). In an archaeological culture of ever-increasing specialization, such synthetic volumes rapidly become standard works of reference, both for students in search of a solid introduction to medieval and later archaeology, and advanced scholars who require a reference in a related field of study. Although still in its infancy in many areas of research, the historical archaeology of central Europe is a rapidly growing subject, which makes the timing of this volume and its reprinting in this handbook format both timely and apposite. Outside observers will now be able to judge for themselves how far the subject has developed in central Europe and how far it still as to go.

DAVID R. M. GAIMSTER

Greifswalder Mitteilungen. Beiträge zu Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie. Edited by Günter Mangelsdorf. 16 × 24 cm. 225 pp., figs. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995. ISBN 3-631-49302-9; ISSN 0948-7239. Price: DM32.00 pb.

The island of Usedom is sited in the Oder estuary in the (formerly East) German state of Mecklenburg, which forms part of the ancient region of Pomerania. The volume contains eighteen papers on the history and development of Usedom since the early Middle Ages.

After a discussion of the geomorphology of the island, a series of papers follows on the period of Slavic settlement, with special consideration of fortified settlements (*Burgen*), burials, pottery, hoards and coin finds, trade items and imports. Other contributors consider the origins of the Slavs on Usedom, their conversion and eventual Germanic take-over of the island. Later papers deal with deserted medieval villages, castles and, finally, the German and Swedish land-takings of the 13th and late 17th centuries respectively.

HELENA HAMEROW

The following publications were also received:

The Cambridge Illustrated History of Archaeology. Edited by Paul Bahn. 21 × 26 cm. xiv + 386 pp., numerous pls., many in colour. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. ISBN 0-521-45498-0. Price: £24.95 hb.

Prehistoric Orkney. By Anna Ritchie. 19 × 25 cm. 128 pp., 106 figs. and pls. (incl. 11 colour pls.). London: Batsford/Historic Scotland, 1995. ISBN 0-7134-7593-5. Price: £15.99 pb.

Fortress Scotland and the Jacobites. By Chris Tabraham and Doreen Grove. 19 × 25 cm. 128 pp., 104 figs. and pls. (incl. 15 colour pls.). London: Batsford/Historic Scotland, 1995. ISBN 0-7134-7483-1 hb.; 0-7134-7484-X pb. Price: £25.00 hb.; £15.99 pb.

- Scotland's First Settlers.* By C. R. Wickham-Jones. 19 × 25 cm. 128 pp., 110 figs. and pls. (incl. 10 colour pls.). London: Batsford/Historic Scotland, 1996. ISBN 0-7134-7371-1. Price: £15.99 pb.
- Church Fonts.* (Shire Album 318.) By Norman Pounds. 15 × 22 cm. 32 pp., figs., pls. Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 1995. ISBN 0-7478-0293-9. Price: £2.25 pb. A useful guide in this popular series.
- Aerial Archaeology in Britain.* By D. N. Riley. (2nd edn rev. by Robert H. Bewley.) 16 × 22 cm. 64 pp., 43 figs. and pls. Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 1996. ISBN 0-7478-0322-6. Price: £3.95 pb.
- Recording a Church: An Illustrated Glossary.* (Practical Handbooks in Archaeology 7: rev. edn.) By Thomas Cocke, Donald Findlay, Richard Halsey and Elizabeth Williamson. 15 × 22 cm. 51 pp., many figs. York: Council for British Archaeology, 1996. ISBN 1-872414-61-3. Price: £6.50 incl. p. & p. from C.B.A., Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York YO1 2UA.
- Runes and Runic Inscriptions. Collected Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Viking Runes.* By R. I. Page. Edited by David Parsons. 17 × 25 cm. 346 pp., figs., pls. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995. ISBN 0-85115-387-9. Price: £49.50 hb.
- Early English Art and Architecture.* By Lloyd and Jennifer Laing. 18 × 25 cm. 246 pp., many figs. and pls., some in colour. Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1996. ISBN 0-7509-0462-3. Price: £25.00 hb.
- English Castles. A Guide by Counties.* By Adrian Pettifer. 17 × 25 cm. xxii + 344 pp., 38 figs., 16 pls. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995. ISBN 0-85115-600-2. Price: £25.00 hb.
- Archaeology in British Towns.* By Patrick Ottaway. 15 × 23 cm. xvi + 249 pp., 48 figs., 46 pls. London: Routledge, 1996. ISBN 0-415-14420-5. Price: £14.99 pb. Paperback version of a well-received 1993 publication.
- The Reign of Henry III.* By D. A. Carpenter. 17 × 25 cm. x + 480 pp. London: The Hambledon Press, 1996. ISBN 1-85285-137-6. Price: £40.00 hb. Historical essays, mainly on political aspects of the reign, but readers of this journal might note that titles include 'King Henry III and the Tower of London', 'King Henry III and the Cosmati Work at Westminster Abbey' and 'The Burial of King Henry III, the *Regalia* and Royal Ideology'.
- An Illustrated History of Late Medieval England.* Edited by Chris Given-Wilson. xi + 292 pp., 119 figs., and pls. (incl. 16 colour pls.). Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996. ISBN 0-7190-4152-X. Price: £60.00 hb.
- Charters of St Bartholomew's Priory, Sudbury.* (Suffolk Charters XV.) Edited by Richard Mortimer. 17 × 25 cm. xx + 105 pp., 1 fig. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996. ISBN 0-85115-574-X. Price: £19.50 hb.
- Bilan Scientifique de la Région Nord-Pas-de-Calais 1995.* Edited by Gérard Fosse. 21 × 30 cm. 127 pp., 43 figs. and pls. Lille: Prefecture de la Région Nord-Pas-de-Calais, 1996. ISSN 1240-8565. Price: not stated, pb. Well-produced volume giving summaries of archaeological excavations and surveys in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France during 1995; covers prehistoric to modern periods.
- Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands. 1: Abbildungen der Grabfunde.* By Lena Thunmark-Nylén. 24 × 31 cm. 394 pp., almost entirely pls. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1995. ISBN 91-7402-241-5. Price: SEK360.00 pb.

Pomorania Antiqua XVI. 18 × 25 cm. 356 pp., figs., tables. Gdansk: Muzeum Archeologiczne w Gdansku, 1995. ISSN 0556-0691. Price not stated, pb.

Multi-period volume of papers in Polish (with English summaries) including excavation reports.

Fasciculi Archaeologiae Historicae VIII. Edited by Andrzej Nadolski. 21 × 30 cm. 66 pp., figs., tables. Łódź: Polskiej Akademii Nauk Oddziału W Łodzi, 1995. ISSN 0860-0007. Price not stated, pb.

Papers in English and German on medieval tournaments and related matters.

Rossiyskaya Arkheologiya 1996. Nos. 1 and 2. 17 × 24 cm. 254 pp. (No. 1); 256 pp. (No. 2), figs., pls. Moscow: Institute of Archaeology, Russian Academy of Sciences, 1996. ISSN 0869-6063.

Multi-period collections of papers in Russian, with brief English summaries. Of potential interest to readers of *Medieval Archaeology* in No. 1: a report on the excavation of an 11th- to 13th-century pagan cult complex at Zvenigorod in the Ukraine, and a short general paper on medieval rural settlement and social change in eastern and central Europe between the 8th and 14th centuries. No. 2 includes: 'Rural Monasteries of the 14th-15th Centuries in the North-East of Moscow Principality . . .'; 'The Pre-Mongol Architecture in the Land of Polotsk'.