

## Short Reviews

*Handbook for British and Irish Archaeology. Sources and Resources.* Compiled by Cherry Lavell. 17 × 24 cm. 421 pp. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7486-0764-1. Price: £29.95 pb.

One of the many important roles undertaken by the Council for British Archaeology has been as a publisher of abstracts and bibliographies for the profession. This was mainly through its publication of the *Archaeological Bibliography* (1940-80) and *British Archaeological Abstracts* (1969-91), though from this reviewer's experience the profession's support and use of these two series was never one hundred *per cent*. Cherry Lavell, formerly of the C.B.A. and the compiler of *B.A.A.*, has been a sterling fighter in the field of archaeological bibliography and indexing, and in her retirement has been preparing the book under review.

The book is divided into six sections, of which the sixth, the select archaeological bibliography, equates to about half of the book. The other five sections cover guides to published and unpublished sources (1 and 2), periodicals (3), organizations and societies (4) and photographic sources (5), and all six are broken down into a number of sub-sections. The select bibliography is possibly the section that most users will turn to, but in the library of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales sections four and five have been of great value in handling enquiries from members of the public.

In the select bibliography, which consists of twenty sub-sections, with the 'period treatments' broken down further, short descriptions are given for most of the books cited. The compiler has starred those items of most value, from a single star (very useful) up to three stars (essential), a helpful tool for those approaching a subject for the first time.

The compiler is to be congratulated in this book. She would be the first to admit that no bibliography or subject handbook can hope to be completely up-to-date and totally exhaustive, but she does not claim as such for this *Handbook*. As she writes in the introduction, which should be read by all users, 'By now, so much material is available that I can only provide a "first-resort" guide to it'. No doubt those who consult the *Handbook* will come up with material for any future edition; for example, there are a few more titles in the Irish county series published by Geography Publications (p. 15). However, one major photographic source excluded is the collection at Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments associated with its guide books, exhibitions, interpretation panels and publicity, currently standing at around 12,000 images and growing.

JOHN R. KENYON

*Making English Landscapes: Changing Perspectives.* (Bournemouth University School of Conservation Sciences Occasional Paper 3; Oxbow Monograph 93.) 17 × 24 cm. vii + 120 pp., 27 figs. and pls. Edited by Katherine Barker and Timothy Darvill. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1998. ISBN 1-900188-50-3. Price: £18.00 pb.

This slim but interesting volume is of papers presented to Christopher Taylor at a symposium held in 1995 to mark the 25th anniversary of the publication of his *Dorset*, one

of the two volumes which launched the excellent *Making of the English Landscape* series. Taylor later contributed *Cambridgeshire* to the same series, the only author to bag a pair.

Perhaps the best, and certainly the most enjoyable, paper in this collection is Taylor's own rumination — wry, amusing and thought provoking — on *Dorset's* place in landscape history (his preferred term; most other authors in the volume claim to be practitioners of landscape archaeology), and developments in the subject since it appeared. This is an essay to set alongside his earlier *confessio* about his changing ideas on Whittlesford, which appeared in 1989 (M. Aston, D. Austin and C. Dyer (eds.), *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England*, pp. 207–27). Although, as Taylor's editor at Hodder & Stoughton, notes, *Dorset* is a damn fine book, it is gratifying to see just how much progress has been made since its publication, especially in medieval settlement studies. In the wake of a more complex descriptive vocabulary — settlement shift and shrinkage, the polyfocal village, and changing plan form — has come at least a glimmering of an understanding of causality.

Della Hooke bravely continues to wade through place-name and charter evidence, attempting to untangle meaning from mute word labels. Taylor (p. 13) expresses his scepticism about the contribution place-names can make to settlement studies, and at times Hooke herself sounds almost despairing of ever making much sense of the word patterns. Clearly there will never be a Rosetta Stone for such studies; rather progress will be gradual, term by term and region by region. The atlas, insofar as it will ever be compiled, is clearly going to be kaleidoscopic, with changes in meaning both in time and space. Again, the detached observer can see not only how much progress there has been since 1970 but also what a loss of innocence there has been — greatly to the subject's benefit — among its relatively few practitioners. Thankfully their idealism and curiosity remain.

Historic landscape character mapping is likely to be an important tool in the successful conservation of historic landscapes, rather than just the sites and monuments within them. Peter Herring and Nicholas Johnson describe a methodology developed for Cornwall. While hardly rocket science the wider application of such mapping would do much to transfer the understanding of the historic countryside built up over the last 50 years from volumes like *Dorset* and specialist journals into the working documents of planning authorities. The need to think hard about what it is that is being mapped forms one of the themes of wide ranging papers by Peter Fowler on Northumberland and by Tim Darvill. The latter, undoubtedly the most intellectually challenging in the collection, also explores current approaches to historic landscapes amongst theoreticians including hermeneutics, time-space geography, politics and perception, human eco-dynamics and the differing social structuring of space. Tom Williamson's paper on parks, warrens, pigeon houses, fishponds the like in the post-medieval period also ventures beyond the merely descriptive, and as well as providing one of the best expositions available of what he terms 'intermediate forms of exploitation' examines how the configuration of the physical landscape 'can inform us about changing attitudes to nature in early modern England, and about the changing relationship between man and the natural world.'

Although the typography of the volume is clean and clear, and the papers well edited (I only spotted one error: Sharp's *Northumberland* came out in 1969, not 1937), there is neither index nor list of figures. Indeed, for a book about the landscape the volume is in general poorly illustrated; some of the chapters are entirely without figures or plates, while many of the latter (all black and white) are badly reproduced. But even if you avoid buying it, read it.

*The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham. Part V: Catalogue of Cremations (Nos. 2800-3334).* (East Anglian Archaeology 67). By Catherine Hills, Kenneth Penn and Robert Rickett. 29.5 × 21 cm. viii + 252 pp., 161 figs., 6 pls., 21 tables. Norwich: Field Archaeology Division. ISBN 0-905594-12-6. Price: not stated.

This report is the fifth and final catalogue from the excavation of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham, Norfolk. It consists of cremation burials from the excavations that took place in 1980 and 1981 in the south-western part of the site. Not surprisingly this book follows the model adopted in earlier volumes. And as the title of the book states this is again a catalogue with the emphasis firmly on the presentation of the data, although there are valuable specialist reports on artefacts and environmental evidence. Particularly important is the discussion of the rare Glaston-type brooch which may suggest links between the Spong Hill community and southern Germany. Morris considers the evidence for wooden lathe-turned vessels at Spong Hill and elsewhere, concluding, rather worryingly, that they were probably a very common grave good. This serves to remind that a detailed published study of accessory vessels is long overdue. The scheme of categorizing the pots on the basis of stamps has been retained and with the addition of the pots in this volume the number of stamp-linked groups has increased, with many extant groups being enlarged. One obvious shortcoming is the note on the pottery fabric. A more in-depth analysis would have been welcomed.

The quality of the report is very high indeed: the reproductions of the photographs are good and the decorative schemes on the pots are clearly visible. There are no colour photographs but this does not present any real difficulties except in the case of the glass beads which have their colour represented by different types of shading. The other illustrations are excellent, a combination of line shading and dot stippling, the latter resulting in drawings of great detail. The pots are reproduced at an adequate scale but on most pages too many have been squeezed together. A valuable set of figures shows the association of cremations in the ground, vital for understanding cemetery organization, while another set gives the position of bone, grave goods and other items within the urn. The report comes with detailed plans of the cemetery showing the sector covered by this book and one placing the area in the context of the whole site.

The catalogue is logically laid out being easy to move from the text to the figures of the pot and any grave goods or vice versa. It provides the detail expected from today's cemetery publications although there are some inconvenient omissions, e.g. there are no grave-pit dimensions and one has to calculate them from the relevant plans. Also the age and sex of the occupant, where identifiable, are not given, and in this case the reader has to consult a separate volume (*Part VIII*: McKinley 1994). The obligatory table, listing each burial and its associated goods, has been included. However, this is a large site and with this catalogue a very considerable amount of data has now been made available. With the availability of computers today, is it not time to put such catalogues on to CD ROM thus giving more flexible and powerful ways to search the data? For example, it would be a simple task to examine whether any association existed between a particular pot stamp and grave good. Complaints could be voiced about the lack of interpretation and integration with previous reports but this was not the aim, rather it is to the authors' credit that they have succeeded in bringing this final catalogue to publication and disseminating the evidence for what is still a very important cemetery. One waits with anticipation the publication of an interpretative volume.

NICHOLAS STOODLEY

*Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*. Edited by Guy Halsall. 16 × 24 cm. 230 pp. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998. ISBN 0-85115-713-0. Price: £40.00 hb.

This collection of papers is very much written for historians, although there is material of interest for those archaeologists who are working on early institutions and territorial organization. The material covered by the book is pan-European and, in this respect, provides a useful companion to the Davies and Fouracre edited volumes on dispute settlement and on power and politics in early medieval Europe. Halsall's substantial introduction sets the scene for the succeeding articles by providing an overview of the various interpretations and situations where violence might be found in the early medieval world. Subjects covered in the succeeding articles include regicide (N. B. Aitchison), infanticide (Nancy L. Wicker), rape (Julie Coleman) and urban violence (T. S. Brown). Further topics include the ritualization of warfare (Janet Nelson) and female violence (Ross Balzaretti). In certain cases, some form of diagrammatic presentation of the mechanisms of power, domination and exploitation would have been appreciated. Such an approach would have provided archaeologists with clearer opportunities to test their own models, based largely on landscape archaeology, for the reconstruction of systems of governance and administration.

The emphasis in many of the articles is toward a ritual explanation for certain aspects of violence in early medieval society; the reality of daily life probably provided a good many acts of violence of a far less pre-ordained nature. In summary, a volume of interest to medievalists in general, although the book is expensive and this will doubtless deter many non-specialists who might have otherwise bought a copy. The quality of production is good and the volume is well bound — how about an affordable paperback?

ANDREW REYNOLDS

*Vendel period bracteates on Gotland. On the significance of Germanic art.* (Acta Archaeologica Lundensia. Series in 8°, 27). By Märta Gaimster. 17 × 25 cm. 302 pp., 158 figs. Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1998. ISBN 91-22-01790-9. Price: £19.95; SEK 264 pb.

While the gold bracteates of the Scandinavian Migration period have been extensively studied, less attention has been paid to the bracteates of the Vendel period. These so-called E-bracteates are less numerous and less widely spread than their predecessors — of the c. 280 E-bracteates known, only about a dozen have been found outside the island of Gotland. Besides, they are less eye-catching than the gold bracteates, the majority being made from bronze. Above all they show a rather monotonous design, consisting of an animal triskele under a semi-circular feature. Though this feature has been interpreted as a human head, the motif has generally been regarded as obscure or 'degenerate'. It is therefore to be welcomed that Märta Gaimster has chosen this neglected group as the subject for her thesis.

Despite their uniform design, Gaimster is able to establish two main types, to which four smaller groups of deviating bracteates are added. Though only sketchy definitions are given, types and groups can be conceptualized with help of the illustrations. Applying Karl Hauck's method of 'contextual iconography', a detailed analysis leads Gaimster to interpret the semi-circular feature of the E-bracteates as a profile human head. The animals of the triskele below are always turning against the face of this head, indicating a fixed iconographic relationship between these elements. On the Stora Vestergårda group, identified by Gaimster as the earliest E-bracteates, the iconographic context is enhanced by other details, like a snake-like animal and features resembling an arm and a human foot. Through these the head is related to the imagery of the Migration-period bracteates

and to their interpretation as depicting Odin wielding shamanic healing powers. The significance of the animal triskele seems more enigmatic.

Gaimster's dating of the E-bracteates involves a discussion of the horizontal stratigraphy of the Ihre cemetery on Gotland and of Scandinavian and Continental disc brooches. The bracteates occur through the Vendel Period into the early Viking Age. Generally Gaimster seems to argue for a late beginning of the Vendel period (c. 600?), based on iconographic comparisons with Continental material, passionately opposing 'the aesthetic perception of style' seen as fundamental to traditional dating. While it stands to reason that stylistic development cannot be seen as unilinear, I must remain highly sceptical about both Gaimster's use of dating through iconographic parallels and the late date she proposes for the transition from the Migration period. The 'traditional' dating to the mid 6th century relies on many other arguments than style, and the material in question cannot just be moved into the 7th century. Basically, I would also argue that iconographic themes, like those adduced by Gaimster, can be much more durable than stylistic traits. This is demonstrated by the iconographic continuity from the Migration-period bracteates argued by Gaimster, and by the longevity of the stereotyped motifs of the E-bracteates themselves.

MORTEN AXBOE

*The Gododdin of Aneirin. Text and Context from Dark-Age North Britain.* Edited by John T. Koch. 15 × 23 cm. cxliv + 262 pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7083-1374-4. Price: £14.95 pb.

This is a very ambitious book. It may be three books in one: its author attempts to provide a substantial account of the historical context of the Old Welsh epic known as *The Gododdin*, to offer a full description of its textual and linguistic history, and to edit and translate the text. In addition the book contains an edited account of the manuscript evidence and full textual and critical apparatus. The writer gives the reader who is interested in early British history, literature or philology a collection of materials unusual in its scope and original in its content. Each section of the book is valuable in itself but the chief appeal will be to traditional historians and philologists rather than to more interdisciplinary scholars.

Having said this, all who are familiar with this material through Sir Ifor Williams's *Canu Aneirin*, K. H. Jackson's *The Gododdin* or the same author's *Language and History in Early Britain* will find much to think about here. The author is of the opinion (and I think most people now would agree with him) that *The Gododdin* should not be considered as a single epic poem but rather as a series of death-songs or elegies. This perspective is not controversial and is well-argued. Equally well-argued but much more controversial is Professor Koch's scepticism about the possibility of claiming the single authorship of *Aneirin* (or *Neirin*). It is plainly the case that the poem(s) as found in the 'Book of *Aneirin*' is not the same as that which was composed in the late 6th century. The interpolated nursery song 'Peis Dinogat', which I am delighted to see retained in such a radical edition, demonstrates this as well as anything else. However, a codicological tradition changing over perhaps more than 600 years and the interpolations and scribal interventions which such a long period inevitably involves is one thing. A critical argument based on a view of the status of poets in the 6th century and the wisdom or otherwise of using modern ideas about authors in the criticism of early Welsh poetry is quite another. Professor Koch is right to remind us of the dangers of forgetting the particular conditions under which the text was produced originally. Whether he is right, on the basis of these dangers, to cast

doubt on the idea of a single author (Aneirin) for the majority of the elegies is less certain. I do not feel convinced that Aneirin — on the evidence of the text and what I believe to have been the conditions under which poetry was produced in early Britain — was, in essence, a literary invention but Professor Koch puts forward an argument which may well persuade others. He does at least remind us that we should take nothing for granted.

Professor Koch's editorial method and rationale is perhaps the most innovative aspect of the book. Readers who are familiar with more conventional editions of early Welsh poetry may find some of the typographic conventions he adopts slightly obtrusive but they will also find a clear explanation and rationale for their use. More difficult is the central argument that the gap between composition (late 6th century) and the beginning of the extant manuscript tradition (late 13th century) requires a highly reconstructive approach to the text. I can understand Professor Koch's arguments and acknowledge that they are well supported by his historical scholarship but I wonder whether he has really asked all of the right questions. While a reconstructed text set against a comprehensive consideration of the MS readings is of great value I thought that this value would have been enhanced by greater attention to the social context of the later MS tradition. The history of textual recension is well drawn here but there is surely another layer of history to be exposed which would further authenticate (if that is the right word) Professor Koch's reconstruction. But it is unfair to criticize a book that is already satisfying a number of different demands on the grounds that it is not working within yet another discipline.

This is a book for specialists. Those who want to find a basic account of early British history, the poems of Aneirin or early Welsh literature will not find it here and those who want a translation will probably be better served elsewhere. Professor Koch has, however, provided a challenge and a stimulus to those already familiar with the field and to those his book can be strongly recommended.

JOHN SIMONS

*The Vikings in Norfolk.* By Sue Margeson. 19 × 24 cm. 48 pp., 48 figs. and colour plates. Norwich: Norfolk Museum Service, 1997. ISBN 0-903101-655-3. Price £7.50 pb.

Our prehistorian colleagues with their current distaste for invasions might, on the basis of the archaeology alone, dismiss the notion of a Viking invasion, regarding this as a misguided exaggeration of the material evidence. The Old English Chronicle leaves us in no doubt about real events and the scale of the invasion. This still leaves us with a puzzling dearth of material remains: the Scandinavians seem to have had an extraordinary ability to merge with the local culture whether it be in Ireland, Normandy or Russia, adopting the native language and culture but acting as a sort of catalyst. This was as true in Norfolk as elsewhere, but Sue Margeson in this booklet has assembled the evidence, such as it is, now published after her untimely death.

It has the meat for the scholar but is written so briefly in such simple terms that it can be read by an A-level student or serious visitor to Norwich Museum. It is well illustrated describing the familiar decorative styles although perhaps museum-oriented; and plans of Thetford and Norwich are hardly adequate treatment without more about trade and pots to support the account.

A few technical points deserve mention. There is no scale for brooches which might be button size or as big as saucers. This applies to many of the illustrations. Thetford and Norwich were ports so surely the direction of river flow to the sea ought to be shown. The

lay-out and spacing of lines is wasteful and unattractive. Nevertheless these criticisms should not detract from what is an admirable guide to the subject within the county.

MICHAEL THOMPSON

*A Study of the Impact of Imparkment on the Social Landscape of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire from c. 1090 to 1760.* (British Archaeological Reports, British Series 258.) By Twigs Way. 21 × 30 cm. v + 380 pp., 141 figs. and pls. Oxford: Archaeopress, 1997. ISBN 0-86054-909-7. Price: not stated pb.

*The Archaeology of the Landscape Park: Garden Design in Norfolk, England c. 1680-1840.* (British Archaeological Reports, British Series 268.) By Tom Williamson. 21 × 30 cm. iii + 330 pp., 53 figs. and pls. Oxford: Archaeopress, 1998. ISBN 0-86054-881-3. Price: £36.00 pb.

It is now fifteen years since Chris Taylor's deceptively slight Shire Book on *The Archaeology of Gardens* (1983) appeared. Since then — and Taylor must shoulder at least a share of the responsibility — there has been one of those strange and apparently unbidden explosions of activity in a subject area which occurs every now and then. Since the early 1990s parks and gardens research has begun to be pursued actively in almost every English and Welsh county, and the first fruits of those labours are now appearing in county-focused monographs. Inevitably each has particular approaches and biases, and that is certainly true of the two surveys noted here, despite the shared blue jacket.

Way's study, it gradually becomes clear (the prelims are badly mangled and the promised acknowledgements, presumably recognizing the work's paternity, are missing) is in fact her doctoral thesis. The main text, although less than 100 pages long, is heavy going and in places exceptionally long-winded. I suspect little, if any, rewriting took place, and the publishers are doing neither themselves nor their young authors any favours by such a *laissez faire* attitude to textual content. A volume editor is named; he should fall on his red pen for such laxity. One of the reasons why Way's study is heavy going is that her analysis of Cambridgeshire's medieval and early modern parks is an almost entirely impersonal one; these are landscapes largely devoid of named individuals. Instead, totals are counted and graphs drawn as questions of date, distribution and location are approached empirically. Way has clearly put huge effort into this — her warnings, for instance, about the inadequacies of the subject indexing in many of the volumes of the calendared medieval state papers are well founded — and her conclusions are generally plausible and mostly supported by her figures, though the sample size is limited. She produces, for instance, what is the most accurate national chronology yet for park creation, demonstrating that the quarter-century after 1325 saw almost four times as many parks licensed as any other. Why this should be, which is the really interesting question, remains for the moment unanswered. She also looks at the religious as imparkers, noting that abbots and bishops were well in the van when it came to making hunting grounds. For those familiar with hunting churchmen from legal or literary sources this will come as no surprise; the hunting parson has a long ancestry. Furthermore, she assembles an impressively long list, with a bit of special pleading, of instances in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire where imparkment led to 'settlement disruption', that is the removal or relocation of villages or parts thereof. This was one of the causes of trespass and park break, which forms the subject of her final chapter. Park break could also occur during inter-gentry factional feuding, when a rival's park — his landscape of status and privilege — became the subject of ritual abuse and damage by a gang of huntsmen dressed and equipped as if for war. The language of the reports of such actions tends to the formulaic, as too it appears did the acts

of trespass and damage themselves, with pales uprooted, deer carcasses left to rot, and parkers forced to jump into their own lodge moats.

Williamson's study is very different in its approach, and is far more focused on specific parkland landscapes, landscapes moreover peopled by named owners, agents and designers. Although avowedly concerned with the ordinary and provincial, rather than the exceptional, the volume contains numerous interesting case studies of gardens, parks and wider estates, many of them under aesthetic transformation. While concerned primarily with the later 17th to 19th centuries the volume will be of considerable interest to those working on Norfolk's medieval landscapes, which were far more often adapted and incorporated in the new settings than swept away.

PAUL STAMPER

*Archaeology of Cambridgeshire. Vol.1 South West Cambridgeshire.* By Alison Taylor. 126 pp. 29 × 25 cm. Many figs. and colour plates. Cambridge: Cambridgeshire County Council, 1997. ISBN 1-870724-84-4. Price £9.95 pb.

In addition to Sir Cyril Fox's famous work *The Archaeology of the Cambridge Region* (1923), the county has almost completed its Victoria County History (nine out of twenty volumes), has two county volumes of the R.C.H.M. and Christopher Taylor's volume on the topography, while the authoress of this work as County Archaeological Officer for many years has been concerned with compiling its Sites and Monuments Record. Not surprisingly therefore the first volume of this *Archaeology of Cambridgeshire* is astonishingly thorough: 60 parishes dealt with in three columns on each of its 126 pages. There are well over 200 illustrations: in colour and black and white, air photographs, village plans, architectural drawings and photographs of outstanding objects found in the villages. Each parish has an introduction, prehistoric and Roman section and one on the Middle Ages, rounded off by one on the development of the village, for it is village morphology that is the main interest. By different shades an attempt is made to distinguish original from later development. Village greens so important for understanding the settlements are shown in green and particular attention is paid to the manorial sites, but little to church architecture. The book concludes with a village bibliography and an invaluable table of village populations since Domesday and parish areas in hectares. It is essentially a history of villages.

The reviewer can only dip into a work of reference of this kind. The Saxon finds, not least the Barrington brooch on the cover, are of great interest, and the coprolite industry is another matter of interest. In the last analysis it is village development that is the central theme (pp. 7-10), and it is interesting to work through the book comparing the factors that are supposed to have influenced settlement with what happened in each village. Here existing lines of communication before settlement deserve attention. Among later factors the Black Death is given a minor role, and the moat at Guiden Morden (p. 9) following the 1381 rising is of interest although I am not too happy about the peasants being spectators and the real rebels landlords and shopkeepers!

The book is quite usable by an ordinary member of the public for presentation is one of its strongest points. It must prompt thoughts as to whether the Royal Commission was too hasty in abandoning village inventories in favour of rather more pretentious subject treatment.

MICHAEL THOMPSON

*Medieval Housing* (The Archaeology of Medieval Britain). By Jane Grenville. 17 × 24 cm. ix + 230 pp., 84 figs. London: Leicester University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7185-1478-5. Price: £59.95 hb.

Although this book touches on the Anglo-Saxon period and has much to say on some aspects of aristocratic housing, its main focus is vernacular houses from c. 1100 to c. 1600. It is a field of study in which major works of synthesis were written several decades ago, since when, an outpouring of articles in national and local journals has brought forward fresh evidence and raised new questions for debate. Jane Grenville has undertaken the daunting task of digesting these multifarious publications and has produced an invaluable, up-to-date survey which points the way for future research.

Grenville outlines the way in which academic disciplines tend to develop from data collection and classification towards the emergence of different, and sometimes conflicting, theoretical propositions from which new research takes its direction. Her book is ample testimony to the fact that her field of study is now reaching this mature stage. While acknowledging the pioneering work that has already been done in the classification of building materials, roof-types and carpentry techniques, she does not seek to give an exhaustive account of these topics. Instead, she constantly selects appropriate material to give a clear and balanced view of rival positions, drawing on wide-ranging evidence from excavation, standing buildings and documentary sources. Should we explain changes in house plans largely in terms of technical improvements or of social/symbolic trends? Are the earliest surviving peasant buildings evidence for the date of the first durable structures or of the first houses adaptable to subsequent needs? Is the widely accepted view that the hall diminished in importance in the late middle ages really sustainable? Are medieval town houses simply an adaptation of rural forms to a restricted street frontage, or do they also reflect the diversity of urban trades? These, and many more questions, are discussed in a lively and stimulating way. All in all, it is a book bursting with ideas that should be quoted, discussed and challenged for years to come.

A disappointment, however, is the high price for a fairly slim volume and the quality of the printing of the photographs which varies from adequate to frankly poor. The publishers should at least be persuaded to bring out a much less expensive paperback edition so that this book gets the wide readership it deserves.

EDWARD ROBERTS

*A Definitive History of Dore Abbey*. Edited by Ron Shoesmith and Ruth Richardson. 19 × 25 cm. 240 pp., 115 figs. and pls., 7 colour pls. Herefordshire: Logaston Press, 1997. ISBN 1-873827-84-9. Price: £19.95 hb.

In the 19th and early parts of the 20th century it was common for vicars and other worthies to produce accounts of the history and architecture of individual monasteries. These were often very useful and are still of relevance today. However, there have not been so many of them published in recent decades. In any case the aspects of monasteries which interest scholars today, 100 years later, are somewhat different: there is now, for example, much more concern with the economy, agriculture and industrial activities of an abbey.

So it is with some interest that *A Definitive (sic) History (sic) of Dore Abbey* was read for review. Although titled 'history' there are categories of information here which we should hope and expect such a book would contain in the 1990s. Interest in such topics as the role of patrons, in founding and guiding a monastery, the layout of the buildings, the extent of

the precinct and the support provided by the lands and the estates are all areas of intense study today.

In this we are not disappointed. A galaxy of well-respected scholars cover just about every aspect of this site. In particular, Ron Shoesmith, reviews the evidence of Dore before the abbey — this was a well-settled area and the site was used as an early monastic site, one of a large number in SE. Wales and the southern Welsh borders. Stuart Harrison in three key chapters examines the stunning architectural legacy of Dore: David Williams, one of our foremost Cistercian scholars, and Joe Hillaby, look at the history including cults and patrons and the Dissolution.

However, readers of *Medieval Archaeology* will be encouraged to see separate chapters on the Monastic Precinct (Richard Stone), and the Engineer Monks (Francis Evans) each well illustrated with plans and photographs. The estates and granges, also a current topic of interest, are covered by David Williams, well known for his research on such topics in Wales and again the chapter is well illustrated with maps and diagrams.

There is much else of great interest here. The surviving vestments, the restoration by John Scudamore in the 17th century (from which the roof, screen and communion rails date) the wall paintings, tombs and bells are all covered.

So the book can be highly recommended. Indeed if we had similar volumes for each of our great abbeys, we could, from them, begin to rewrite anew the history, architecture, and impact of these establishments on their landscapes.

One problem still seems to remain. Dore was a daughter house of Morimund Abbey in Burgundy — indeed the only daughter house in Britain. All the other Cistercian houses in Britain were either founded from Cîteaux or her daughters, or from Clairvaux, Bernard's great foundation, or her daughters. Why this odd one? David Williams ventures an explanation (p. 15), that there was contact between Robert of Ewyas, the founder, and the monks of Morimund, but this reviewer thinks there must be more to it than that, and that the real reason is, unfortunately, lost in history.

MICK ASTON

*Medieval Grave Slabs of County Tipperary, 1200–1600 A.D.* (British Archaeological Reports, British Series 262.) By Denise Maher. 21 × 30 cm. viii + 103 pp., 56 figs. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1997. ISBN 0-86054-923-2. Price: not stated pb.

Archaeology of the later Middle Ages in Ireland had suffered from a lack of esteem because of that period's close identification with the Anglo-Norman ascendancy. Only now are the castles, abbeys and towns attracting the analytical attention of scholars. The ruined parish churches and tomb sculpture are still the preserve of art-historians, and only rarely do the lesser chapels and the surviving grave slabs provoke interest among the active archaeologists. It is into this weed-choked field that the author has ventured, partly to record slabs that are in real danger of total defacement by the weather, but more especially to understand the values and priorities of the society that created them and the religion that inspired most of them.

Tipperary was a border region in close touch with the entry ports of Waterford, Cork and Limerick, but its north-west was still a superficially colonized region. The political, social and economic background is clearly indicated, as is the post-1350 Gaelic resurgence.

The survey catalogues 107 slabs at 22 sites (85 of them at nine religious houses), and maps show significant distributions. There are informative descriptions of the cross designs and symbolic iconography. However Maher's Group 4 is described as a seven-armed cross when it has eight arms (with four or eight spokes) but only seven terminals

because one arm continues downwards to form the cross shaft. The date ranges proposed are fairly cautious, but more could have been made of the initial links with England: the Group 2 'head slabs' are a common type in the Bristol region and the S. Wales littoral — an important factor when one thinks of Waterman's paper on the import of Dundry stone to SE. Ireland. It is unfortunate that petrological examination was only undertaken for two slabs. Similarly designs 14 i-k and 15 b, c, f are typical of the Purbeck school of marblers, who also used Lombardic characters for their inscriptions. Purbeck fonts were imported into Ireland but the fine detail obtainable from the Kilkenny marbles soon satisfied the local markets; it may have done so for the grave slabs.

This study is particularly useful in drawing attention to the limited use of iconography; the symbols of the Passion occur on two 15th-century slabs though more common later throughout Ireland, whereas in England such symbols are usually confined to stone fonts and timber screens. The crude use of heraldry occurs on four slabs as if the carvers barely understood its conventions and purpose. By contrast the black letter inscriptions are confidently handled with particularly fine initial letters. The author includes two detailed photographs of unfinished inscriptions showing the carver's techniques. The photographs are a commendable feature of the monograph and augment the drawings.

Whether the limited use of interlacing does represent a late medieval Celtic revival may be resolved by future fieldwork. However an important start has been made on an otherwise neglected branch of medieval archaeology. The author and her colleagues at Cork should be encouraged to explore more widely these valuable lines of stylistic and funerary enquiry.

LAWRENCE BUTLER

*Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art.* (Manchester Medieval Studies.) By Christa Grössinger. 14 × 22 cm. xiii + 173 pp., 62 pls. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7190-41104. Price: £13.99 pb.

Despite the dozens of general books on the history and literature of medieval women, this is the first to address the topic from the perspective of art history. Grössinger emphasizes social history over aesthetics, and concentrates on the art of northern Europe c. 1400–1540, giving particular attention to England, Germany and the Netherlands, and to the media of woodcuts and the marginal arts. She explores the representation of female categories, including ideals of womanhood, such as the Virgin, Eve and female saints, portraits of actual women, popular caricatures and cultural categories such as witches and wild women. The cultural construction of these feminine categories is considered, although in places coverage is very general. The framework of analysis is drawn from opposing female categories of good and evil that were promoted by medieval theological and medical sources. Hence the book is structured into four chapters: the history of misogyny, 'the good woman', 'the evil woman' and 'the ages of woman'. The treatment is uneven, however, with the majority of the book given over to 'the good woman', and rather cursory treatment of lifecycle and ageing through 'the ages of woman'. This model of female representation would have benefited from consideration of the broader medieval tendency to represent the world through binary oppositions. 'The good woman' was chaste, charitable, obedient and humble towards her husband; she was moderate in all things, kept her eyes downcast and never laughed or showed any emotion. In contrast, 'the evil woman' was rebellious, vain, lustful and a gossip; as such, she forms a far more attractive subject, and it is in this shorter chapter that Grössinger provides many original insights. Her work on misericords, in particular, illuminates the caricatures that stemmed from

women's perceived weaknesses. Representations of the devil Tutivillus, for instance, show him writing down the snatched conversations of gossiping women during church services, to be revealed later when their souls are judged. Instances of this genre show the 'World turned upside-down', with meek husbands defeated by overpowering wives in the 'Battle for the Breeches'. Representations of medieval women provide information on aspects of life seldom elaborated in other sources. Thus Grössinger reviews illustrations of childbirth and childcare, depicted especially in relation to the Virgin and St Anne. Illustrations of domestic life illuminate gender roles, the socialization of children and material details of the interiors of houses and bedchambers. A good bibliography is provided for the history and art history of medieval women, although no appraisal is attempted of art historical approaches to the representation of women. The book's stance is narrative, with no engagement with the more theoretical approaches of feminist art history or medieval studies. For example, while women's production of art is briefly mentioned (e.g. through embroideries) there is no consideration of the particular imagery or themes linked with femininity or female religiosity (in contrast see J. Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, University of California Press, 1997). Nevertheless, Grössinger provides a much needed, well-informed, and highly readable introduction to the representation of women in medieval art.

ROBERTA GILCHRIST

*The Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol: Part I* (Bristol Record Society's Publications Vol. XLVIII). Edited by Roger H. Leech. 14 × 24 cm. xxviii + 219 pp., 10 maps and 4 pls. Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1997. ISBN 0-901538-18-3. Price: £19.50 including postage and packing, hb.

An account of tenement histories within the early walled town north of the Avon, and also of the walled Marsh suburb is found here. It has followed 'best practice' in working back from the present, and thus, like Keene's monumental *Survey of Medieval Winchester* (1985) is bristling, in addition to medieval matters, with all sorts of more modern information bringing some property histories down into the 18th and on occasion to the 19th centuries. The aims of the volume are understandably narrowly set: it concentrates on secular land use, and does not survey social and economic developments. There was not room for that, and in any case, in the past Bristol has attracted much analysis in the Record Series and elsewhere; a R.C.H.M.E. volume of the town houses of Bristol is on the way.

If topographical study is ancient, dating back in Bristol at least to William Worcestre before 1500, it is also modern. The reader learns early on of help to the author from digital maps and computerized datasets. The real problem is how to make more generally available materials emanating from these enormously valuable and versatile tools. The possibilities which arise from the conjunction of S.M.R.s and historical documentation through computer applications are an area of particular interest to readers of this journal, so it is to be regretted that the topographical study of Bristol does not mention archaeology. Perhaps the Bristol Record Society should establish a website where computerized data could be made available — as the Southampton Records Series is currently doing. This would not only heighten interest in the history of Bristol, but would also do what the internet does best, sell books.

There are a few quibbles worth noting. It would have been helpful to have been supplied with a map of the whole of Bristol showing which areas have and have not been done to indicate the scale of work to come in successive parts. The index of people is exemplary: an index of matters would have taken the reader beyond the 'medieval

telephone directory' level. It would have been helpful to know precisely how the computerized maps and datasets informed the text as presented. But in the end this is a modestly priced book, packed with information which will be quarried for years to come.

TOM BEAUMONT JAMES

*Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties. 1 Resource and Assessment.* (East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Paper 3.) Edited by J. Glazebrook. 21 × 30 cm. 87 pp., 12 figs., 10 pls. Norwich: Scole Archaeological Committee, 1997. ISBN 0-9521848-1-8. Price £6.50 pb.

East Anglia, the birthplace of the Prehistoric Society, the scene of spectacular discoveries of gold torques in Norfolk and the ship-burial at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, with its rich contents that has so preoccupied post-war scholars and was one of the factors leading to the formation of our Society, cannot be ignored by present-day workers in the field. We must therefore welcome the *Framework* although whether that is the right word to describe it must be open to doubt.

Following an Introduction by D. Buckley there are seven chronological sections by different authors, except that the fifth and sixth are divided into rural and urban with post-medieval urban thrown in for good measure into the sixth. Each section is preceded by a map showing the position of the sites in six counties and is concluded by a bibliography of excavations since 1980. As a reference compilation it is an excellent piece of work but 'resource assessment' is surely a little pretentious: excavated sites by their nature are an ex-resource. Chance discovery and development and the precarious nature of 'resources' (financial) render firm research policies difficult to implement. Nevertheless this information is certainly necessary for assessing the likely character of what remains qualitatively rather than quantitatively.

The medieval archaeologist will learn a good deal from the two sections on this period in East Anglia. The value of field-walking, a speciality of the area is discussed. Cemeteries which have played such a significant part in the region are discussed although they are a good example of the unpredictability of discovery. The dating of the dykes seems to support Fox's date of 80 years ago although one would like to see a firm date on the Devil's Dyke itself. In the towns planning is easier and more profitable where the evidence is cumulative over the years. One could go on and on but it is best left to readers to explore their own particular interests in this admirable survey.

MICHAEL THOMPSON

The following publications were also received:

*Ancient Boats in North-West Europe.* By Sean McGrail. 19 × 25 cm. xxviii + 344 pp., 178 figs. and pls., 61 tables. Harlow: Addison, Wesley, Longman, 1998. ISBN 0-582-31975-7. Price: £25.00 pb.

Re-issue with corrections and additions (as a 'Preface to the paperback edition') of this well-received 1987 work.

*The Great God Pan: The Survival of an Image.* 16 × 22 cm. 48 pp., 53 figs and pls. London: Thames and Hudson, 1997. ISBN 0-5000-55030-1. Price: £7.95 hb.

The text of the 29th Walter Neurath Lecture explains how the image and concept of Pan, originally a rustic deity associated with the herdsmen of southern Greece, has re-occurred throughout history.

*Genghis Khan. The History of the World-Conqueror.* (Manchester Medieval Sources.) By Atamalik Juvaini. Translated and edited by J. A. Boyle with an introduction by David O. Morgan. 15 × 23 cm. lxxvii + 763 pp. Manchester: Manchester University Press/UNESCO Publishing, 1997. ISBN 0-7190-5144-4. Price: £24.95 pb.

New introduction and updated bibliography added to 1958 edition.

*Il Mar Nero. Journal of Archaeology and History*, 1. 17 × 24 cm. 290 pp. Many figs. and maps. Rome: Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l. Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme. 1994. ISBN in process of registration. Price: FF 200 pb.

A new journal of post-Iron Curtain studies of ancient and medieval aspects of the archaeology and history of the Black Sea region from the Scythians to the Ottomans. The medieval section 'Mar Nero Genovese' is not in this first issue archaeological, dealing with historical geography and aspects of Genoese rule.

*Knights and Peasants. The Hundred Years War in the French Countryside.* (Warfare in History Series). By Nicholas Wright. 16 × 24 cm. 144 pp. 6 figs. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998. ISBN 0-85115-535-9. ISSN 1358-779X. Price: £30.00 hb.

An expert re-evaluation of Michelet the historian through analysis of the peasant experience of the war in France in the 14th and 15th centuries. Interesting plans of fortified churches illustrate local responses to knightly, and mercenary, irruptions into villages.

*The Stone of Destiny. Symbol of Nationhood.* By David Breeze and Graeme Munro. 21 × 27 cm. 48 pp. Many figs. and pls. some in colour. Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 1997. ISBN 1-900168-44-8. Price: not stated, pb.

A colourful pamphlet to celebrate the return of the Stone of Scone to Scotland (though not to Scone).