

## Short Reviews

*Towns and Local Communities in Medieval and Early Modern England.* By David M. Palliser. 23 × 15 cm. 280 pp., 7 figs and maps. Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2005. ISBN 0-86078-974-8. Price: £57.50 hb.

David Palliser, editor of the recent *Cambridge Urban History 600–1540*, previously reviewed in this journal, is the leading historian of medieval towns in England. He has always taken an interest in what archaeology can tell us — among much else, he is one of many readers of the Medieval Britain and Ireland section of this journal (this was second only the Viking burial in website hits in the last year), although he is not without criticism of some of the shorthand description and analysis found there prior to 1987. Together with the Dyer brothers, Palliser has over many years contributed to scholarship from discussion of sources to interdisciplinary analysis of medieval urban, and to a lesser extent rural, culture in which archaeology and history play key roles. He continues to do so. Here we have thirteen pieces from town origins to medieval migration, the latter apparently a deeply historical subject in the period of Palliser's focus, 1140–1540, but one which nonetheless resonates for archaeologists who ceaselessly notice the extraneous and the extraordinary in their studies of medieval material culture. A survey of migrants and minorities and when they were present is valuable for the archaeologist.

Starting out as a student of Tudor York, Palliser was tempted back into the Middle Ages where much of his subsequent publication is focused. This sample selection of his work, chosen late in his career, includes reproductions of papers published widely dispersed at home and abroad, the common Variorum format. There are also new pieces: an introductory essay on the origins and growth of English towns (a succinct overview from prehistory to the end of the Middle Ages) a second on 'Town and Village formation in medieval England' (splendidly interdisciplinary) and a third on 'Towns and the Crown in England: the counties and the county towns'. For medieval archaeologists perhaps the key piece is his masterly overview 'The Archaeology of British Towns, 1066–1530', originally published in 1987, but now with the addition of a short post-script which generously praises what has been achieved in archaeological publication since then, but which maybe could have pressed harder for more of the backlog to have been produced! It makes a useful comparison with Christopher Gerrard's recent *Medieval Archaeology* (2003).

Palliser's work is always based on exemplary wide reading across disciplines and his contributions to debates ('origins', 'typologies', 'town and village', 'town walls', 'periodisation', etc.) are essential reference, informative and scholarly. His overall conclusion that it is continuity which is more significant than change is surely correct. Beginning from an old-fashioned, historical, notion that if not 1485, then 1500 was a key moment, his views have shifted to a more 'archaeological' break point of 1540–60 in England. This is noteworthy as the Reformation changed England, but for a journal which covers both Britain and Ireland, we should remember that Reformation began in Scotland only with John Knox in 1560, and whether 'Reformation' has any meaning at all for most of Ireland is doubtful. However, Palliser strays confidently beyond England in his 'Archaeology of British Towns' piece and makes reference to Scotland, Ireland and the continent in his town walls and migration papers. Periodisation demands different dates to suit both academic and editorial purposes: everyone, including Palliser, acknowledges the Black Death as a revolutionary turning point, but no one argues it ended the Middle Ages.

Medieval studies seem as popular as ever: a rise of 20% attendance (including Professor Palliser and a significant increase in archaeologists) at over 1,200 at the Leeds

International Congress in Summer 2006 attests this (or were we running for company in the face of government attacks?). Next year the focus is 'Medieval Cities', for which this volume is valuable preparatory reading, but at nearly £60 we may have to go to the library rather than have this work on our own shelves.

TOM BEAUMONT JAMES

*Archeologia urbana a Siena: L'area dell'Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala prima dell'Ospedale. Altomedioevo.* (Biblioteca del Dipartimento di Archeologia e Storia delle Arti — Sezione Archeologica, Università di Siena, 11). By Federico Cantini. 21 × 29 cm. 263 pp., 121 b&w figs. and pls., 51 tbs. Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2005. ISBN 88-7814-248-4. Price: €25.00.

This well-presented volume derives from the author's doctorate and considers the late Roman and early medieval finds and sequences predating the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala which was founded in Siena in the 11th century. This is the first publication linked to long-running archaeological and architectural analyses of the upstanding hospital complex which will in time host a sizeable city museum; these future outputs promise much for displaying a coherent image of Siena across time and for enhancing debates on the character of early medieval and medieval Italian townscapes. The hospital lies south west of the cathedral and north of the high ground of Castelvecchio, which formed the focus of Roman and Early-medieval Siena; nonetheless, both hospital and cathedral lie within the confines of the Roman town, giving scope to identify its evolving urban character.

The substantial, multi-period hospital extends across three stepped terraces; the investigations were themselves complex, comprising excavation of twelve roofed rooms/areas. Despite the loss of some stratigraphy due to the built fabric and growth of the hospital, most rooms featured up to 2 m of deposits, enabling seven periods and 42 phases to be identified, from Roman times through to the 12th century. The phasing includes a late Roman monumental structure, probably an aristocratic house and baths (I), dark earths (III), burial activity (IV), a rubble curtain wall (V — potentially, therefore a very rare instance of a new Early-medieval urban defence), and huts in timber and stone (VI, VII) (31–62). Although, typically, no Early-medieval coins were found (some late Roman issues were present, however — 235–8), the deposits were well represented by ceramic finds, some glass (nearly 400 fragments) and metal finds (98 pieces). The metal objects and glass are considered by other contributors, who identify functions linked to the broad sequences noted (from domestic, funerary to functional) (M. Belli, 205–12; M.C. Galgani and M. Mendera, 213–34). Cantini's own emphasis is on the pottery, ranging from late Roman African imports (122 fragments) to red polished and red banded wares, lamps, amphorae and glazed vessels (nine fragments), but with coarse and plain domestic wares (jugs, pots, bowls, etc.) numerically dominant (63–204). His report here comprises summaries of the material, fabrics and forms, catalogues of the types (with tables and line drawings), and brief comparisons with other Tuscan contexts. His conclusion (239–43, plus comparison with a rural hilltop site at Montarrenti, 245–8) argues that the hospital site by the 6th century was peripheral to a reduced but active habitat; the site effectively features rubbish from this habitat which displays a diminishing access to non-Italian imports yet a maintained demand for a variety of ceramic forms and types derived from regional and local workshops. The same forms predominate into the 7th and 8th centuries when the area comes back into the urban frame, with a crude curtain wall established; various timber huts are active through into the 10th century (and beyond) by when stone building finally resumes and a higher grade of ceramics begins to appear.

NEIL CHRISTIE

*The Saxon and Medieval Settlement at West Fen Road, Ely: The Ashwell Site.* (East Anglian Archaeology, 110). By Richard Mortimer, Roderick Regan and Sam Lucy. 21 × 30 cm. x + 186pp., 90 figs., 12pls. and 32 tbs. Norwich: Norfolk and Norwich Heritage Trust, 2005. ISBN 0-9544824-1-7. Price: £20.00 pb.

This report details the results of excavations undertaken by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit in 1999 and 2000 on a fen-edge site covering some 3 hectares on the western limits of the City of Ely. Reflecting the former prominence which the West Fen Road held as a cross-island routeway prior to the canalisation of the Ouse, the intervention produced an impressive 16-phase occupation sequence extending from the Iron Age to the 15th century.

The defining characteristic of the settlement throughout its core phases — the Middle Anglo-Saxon to the early post-Conquest Periods (8th–12th centuries) — is a staggering profusion of ditches (over 15–20 km worth), cumulatively accounting for two-thirds of all excavated features. As first established in the second quarter of the 8th century, the ditched boundaries defined a modular arrangement of eight roadside enclosures 45 and 60 m wide: those with buildings forming residential units and those without animal pens or paddocks — a familiar combination seen at such sites as Riby Cross Roads, Lincs., and Yarnton, Oxon. Within an essentially stable and gradually evolving settlement narrative (particularly evident in the long-term continuity of major boundaries), phase 9 (1100–1200), is highlighted for heralding the beginnings of characteristically medieval farming and settlement pattern, with such innovations as the laying out of ridge and furrow (with rare physical evidence in the form of hand-dug strip-field divisions) and the replacement of earth-fast buildings by those of sill-beam construction.

Recent settlement archaeology is bringing new evidence to bear on a significant escalation in rural production coinciding with England's 8th-century economic boom (more familiarly associated with the rise of emporia and coinage) and the inception of West Fen Road is very much seen in these terms. Characterisation as a low-status, non-specialist 'producer settlement', both in its Middle Anglo-Saxon and subsequent phases, follows from an evaluation of both internal evidence (modest-sized buildings, low-level craft production, broad-based agricultural regime, infrequent imports, coinage and jewellery) and its dependent status *vis-à-vis* Ely's ecclesiastical nucleus — successively an Anglo-Saxon double monastery founded by Ethelredra in c. 678, a reformed Benedictine house established in 970, and seat of an Episcopal see. Further refinement is brought to the discussion when an analogy is drawn between what essentially represents the growth of an extensive, yet low-density, zone of suburban occupation outside an ecclesiastical precinct and the concept of a Late Saxon small town — a class of settlement 'occupying an ambivalent place between our notions of urban and rural conditions' (148).

The Middle Anglo-Saxon occupation sampled by the current excavation forms part of a more extensive settlement subsequently examined in a smaller, yet still sizeable, intervention on the opposite (north) side of the West Fen Road by Northamptonshire Archaeology. Although some attempt has been made to include the results of this recent work, one wonders whether an opportunity has been missed to integrate the two sites in a collaborative venture, although this would have admittedly required holding back the publication date. Of course, this is criticism not of the authors themselves but of the system of competitive tendering under which both sites were excavated, one of the negative effects of which has been to fragment archaeological results to such risible levels of localisation.

While the dearth of photographs in the stratigraphic narrative leaves the reader largely ignorant of the physical character of the archaeological remains, particularly the buildings, the report is otherwise produced and edited to a high standard. The final comment should go to the lead author who, along with his previous study of

Cottenham, has now made two substantive and important contributions detailing medieval settlement origins and continuity in Cambridgeshire. That such thorough levels of contextualisation have been achieved within the framework of developer-led archaeology is all the more to his credit.

GABOR THOMAS

*Gathering the People, Settling the Land: The Archaeology of a Middle Thames Landscape — Anglo-Saxon to Post-Medieval.* (Oxford Archaeology, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 14). By Stuart Foreman, Jonathan Hiller, David Petts. 22 × 31 cm. 122 pp., many b&w and colour figs., maps, plans and pls.; one CD-Rom. Oxford: Oxford Archaeology, 2002. ISBN 0-904220-31-1. Price: £9.95 hb.

As an excavation report, *Gathering the People, Settling the Land* is affordable, well designed and accessible to non-specialists. The monograph combines the Anglo-Saxon/post-medieval results of two commercial projects in the middle Thames Valley — the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme and the Eton College Rowing Course Projects. The prehistoric and Roman-period results are published in companion volumes. Largely following the traditional format for excavation monographs, the volume begins with a summary chapter of the background to the projects, liberally illustrated with colour GIS maps, and the excavation methodology. The second chapter sets out the archaeological and historical background for the Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest periods. Two chapters describing the Anglo-Saxon period excavation results and summarising the specialist reports follow these introductions. While specialists and others might find the lack of printed catalogues of finds and detailed specialist reports frustrating, their absence in the printed volume does create more flow within the description of remains and the following interpretation chapter, which is a benefit in terms of accessibility and understanding by non-archaeologists. All specialist reports are fully reproduced in the accompanying CD-Rom. Later and post-medieval excavation results and specialist reports follow this same pattern and a very brief conclusion closes the volume.

Although Early Anglo-Saxon period evidence was largely absent, material was abundant for the Middle Anglo-Saxon period — a series of pits, some very large, without accompanying linear or structural features. Through positing different models of deposition processes for the pit fills and careful analysis of pit contents, the authors suggest that the features could be the result of relatively short events (or even one event) such as assembly. This is certainly a feasible argument and may inspire re-consideration of other pit groups, perhaps only partly excavated, for similar social contexts. The authors state at the beginning of the discussion of the later and post-medieval archaeology (late 10th–18th centuries) that the project considered the later periods a lower priority than the Anglo-Saxon material both during excavation and post-excavation and this factor does influence the balance of material in the published volume. This is a shame, particularly as the discussion suggests the medieval site is unusual in many respects. The archaeology itself does not help in bridging the gap between the early and later medieval periods, as activity on the sites appears to have ended in the later 8th century beginning again in the 11th century.

The printed volume is generously illustrated and well written. The accompanying CD-Rom contains specialist reports, an interactive site map, a digital version of the text and background information on the projects. Instructions for use are printed in the monograph. The CD-Rom is relatively easy to install and navigation is through a web-based system with which most users will be familiar. In browsing the interactive map, I did run into problems loading individual feature plans and the instructions for

moving the footprint plan were incorrect (you are instructed to use the right mouse button when you should use the left). These are mostly minor technological issues and should in no way detract from what is an attractive and usable appendix. Overall, the monograph successfully balances the traditional and technological approaches to publishing large-scale excavation results and the product is both a valuable archive and resource and an innovative interpretation of the archaeology.

MEGGEN M. GONDEK

*The Malvern Hills: An Ancient Landscape.* By Mark Bowden. 22 × 28 cm. 69 pp., 58 b&w and colour figs., maps, and plans. London: English Heritage, 2005. ISBN 1-873592-82-5. Price: £8.99 pb.

This short volume is the result of a Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England project from 1999 to 2002 carried out at the request of the Joint Advisory Committee of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The survey was undertaken on three fronts: a general survey, mostly from aerial photographs; historical documents, and specific earthwork surveys of particular sites. The overall results have added significant new information to an area which has seen relatively little previous work except on the prominent Iron-age hillforts, medieval castles, moated sites and deserted settlements. Given the dependence on aerial photography, new discoveries related to earlier prehistory are naturally scarce. The apparent absence of neolithic monuments on the Malvern ridge leads to the speculation that this is a ritual avoidance, although this would need to be established on a rather firmer basis than at present. New surveys of the major hillforts at Midsummer Hill and British Camp on Herefordshire Beacon are interesting, but only a handful of other sites can be dated broadly to the Iron Age, making it difficult to assess the possible roles of these hillforts in the wider landscape. Consideration of the Roman Period is largely limited to pottery production, although some of the enclosures considered earlier in the volume must belong here.

Despite the appearance in the early medieval period of a handful of documentary sources, the archaeological and standing building evidence is almost entirely absent. That the Malvern ridge was a border region from the early 7th century A.D. might either imply abandonment of a contested area or occupation for military purposes, neither of which is readily investigated archaeologically, although a campaign of fieldwalking might be of some help here. The later medieval period provides a far wider range of evidence in the form of three castles, although the role of the ringwork on Herefordshire Beacon continues to provoke debate. While there are a number of moated sites, their small size and peripheral location on poorer soils leads to the conclusion that the claims to status they represent are at a fairly low level. Some traces of deer parks are still visible in the landscape. More interesting are a number of examples of probable medieval cultivation traces visible under 'ancient woodland' demonstrating the degree to which the boundary between cultivated areas and woodland has oscillated, rather than a simpler story of continual erosion of woodland cover. The main discussion is over the religious landscape of priories, churches, possible chapels and holy wells, with the Malvern Hills represented in medieval literature such as the foundation legend of Great Malvern (located near to two important wells) as a 'desert' suitable for occupation by hermits engaged in religious struggle. Ironically, in the post-medieval period hermits once again occupied the land, but this time as romantic legend assisted by landscape architects and cave constructors.

While the result of the new surveys and compilation of existing records do not allow a clear narrative of the Malvern Hills to be given, they do amply demonstrate

the archaeological potential of this largely neglected landscape, and provide food for thought for a number of research projects which will hopefully be inspired by this volume and the fascinating landscape it records.

NICK THORPE

*Castles of Shropshire.* By Peter and Anne Duckers. 16 × 24 cm. 192 pp., 103 b&w figs., 25 colour pls. Stroud: Tempus, 2006. ISBN 0-7524-3645-7. Price: £15.99 pb.

This compact book offers a new guide to the numerous castles that dot Shropshire's historic landscape. The county was one of the most densely castellated areas of medieval Britain, and the significance and research potential of these sites lies largely in their group value. With the prominent exception of Ludlow, the physical remains are largely unimpressive, as the book's many photographs demonstrate. In terms of structure, the volume continues the proud but now somewhat tired tradition in castle study of publishing site-by-site gazetteers, with a brief accompanying introduction. The net result is that while the volume contains a wealth of detail it actually affords relatively little impression of overall patterns and processes of castle building, while the crucial broader context of the region's characteristic border society and landscape remains beyond the book's horizons.

The core of the volume comprises entries for some 140 sites. These present concise accounts of the surprisingly varied field monuments, along with relevant historical data (characteristically, in a border region with a proliferation of private fortifications, those sites that are documented are actually in the minority). Notably, while the introduction stresses that these castles were built for strategic reasons, the book's photographs and maps often tell quite a different story — many sites were also manorial centres, frequently lying next to estate churches and rooted in the settlement pattern. Some gazetteer entries are a little out of date — none more so than for Whittington, where an important and well publicised new survey has offered a re-appraisal of the site, including the identification of one of Britain's earliest medieval gardens. On the production side, photographs are plentiful and demonstrate considerable industry in fieldwork, although from the ground the earthworks of mottes and ringworks are notoriously difficult to capture on film, and many look very similar. The aerial photographs are more effective, however.

Overall, the volume gives the distinct impression that the authors have overlooked or ignored some important recent developments in castle study. This criticism aside, the book does have significant value as an illustrated guide to Shropshire's castles that features many sites not described adequately elsewhere — most notably in the 1908 volume of the *Victoria County History* that was previously one of the key sources for researchers interested in the county's fortifications. On the whole, this book will be useful to anybody interested in tracking down and visiting Shropshire's many castles, but probably no more than that.

OLIVER CREIGHTON

*Leper Knights: The Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem in England, c. 1150-1544.* (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 20). By David Marcombe. 16 × 25 cm. xx + 320 pp., 3 charts, 40 figs., 7 maps, 9 plans and 8 tabs. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003. ISBN 0-85115-893-5. Price: £45.00, \$75.00 hb.

The knights of the Order of Lazarus of Jerusalem, or the 'Leper Knights', were one of the more unusual military orders to emerge from the Crusades. Founded originally as

a hospital in Jerusalem, they were formed as a particular response to both the scourge of leprosy, and a shortage of fighting men. Catering principally for afflicted members of the knightly class, the order became increasingly militarised in the 13th century after a series of Christian setbacks in the Holy Land, particularly the fall of Acre in 1281.

In England, the Order's headquarters were at Burton Lazars (Leics.) where, according to Marcombe, they remained for nearly 400 years until their suppression in the mid-16th century. The book provides detailed thematic sections dealing with early development, lands and patrons, decline in the 14th century and revival in the 15th. It also examines the knights' role in social welfare, the parish and their dissolution and consequent dispersal of lands. However, though claiming to provide a combination of documentary and archaeological sources, the study is particularly biased on written sources, presenting a broad and detailed survey and analysis of the documentary sources, with special reference to the 15th and early 16th centuries. As a result, the work does have certain limitations which are made particularly apparent with regard to the detailed analysis — and consequent arguments — surrounding the status of the house at Burton Lazars, and, to an extent, the comparative sites of Harehope and Tilton. For Burton Lazars, the book provides a detailed examination of the available sources, particular the 15th-century cartulary. It also examines the results of a previous and somewhat limited topographic survey. As a result, it comes up with some useful conclusions regarding the site's status as a possible preceptory, but the argument is not conclusive and not fully convincing. As Marcombe himself confirms, 'if the documentary history of the order is sketchy, its above-ground archaeological record seems to be equally poor' (25). The site at Burton Lazars has, to my knowledge, not been subject to any recent detailed survey, and as a result one is left considering the potential value of applying modern archaeological survey techniques to the site, particularly those of geophysics. Such a detailed survey may have provided useful archaeological information which would have helped bolster Marcombe's hypothesis and shed more light on this nationally important site. In particular, it might provide some information about its development before the 15th century; a period of its history that we know very little about.

However the book does, overall, provide a timely addition to current studies of the military orders, providing a good survey of a comparatively little-known religious institution. It may also help to inform and provide a framework for future archaeological research.

SIMON ROFFEY

*Peñaferruz (Gijón): El castillo de Curiel y su territorio.* (Serie Patrimonio, 7). By José Avelino Gutiérrez González and others. 21 × 30 cm. 523 pp., many figs., maps, plans, pls. and tbs. Gijón: Ayuntamiento de Gijón, 2003. ISBN 84-89880-77-8. Price: €30.00 pb.

Peñaferruz was once an isolated medieval castle to the south of Gijón (Asturias) in northern Spain. Because of its hilltop location and the remains of stonework visible at the site it came to be identified as an Iron-age site in the 1950s. No investigation took place until 1997 when the site was partially examined as part of a local strategy to study the archaeology and history of Gijón. Financial backing came from the local city council, local government and the universities of Oviedo (where the author lectures) and Madrid.

The book is divided into two parts. The first presents the results of the excavations with a detailed account trench by trench, and an array of specialist reports, including geophysical prospection (radar, resistivity and magnetometry), finds such as pottery,

metalwork, flint, jet and worked bone and environmental analyses including animal bone, molluscs, pollen, charcoal, modern ecology, and even the conservation of excavated objects. The second part concentrates on the landscape around the castle, examining documents, maps, aerial photography, field-walking, ethnography and place-names, in order to chronicle the development of the area.

Such a focus might not seem novel to the British reader, but in the context of Spanish medieval archaeology not only the content, scope and techniques stand out, but also the detailed analysis and careful presentation. We must remember two things here. First, the medieval period in Spain is, at best, largely ignored in regional research agendas (though nothing so formal exists for most parts of the country); at worst it is treated as an obstacle by those with interests in earlier periods. In such a harsh academic climate, the role played by the local council in funding and supporting this project and its publication is remarkable. Second, there are techniques here which are common in Britain but still alien to Spanish archaeology, such as geophysics and intensive field-walking. That this project makes use of these methods at all is to the credit of the director of the project and reflects his interdisciplinary approach.

The book is beautifully produced, illustrated with full colour throughout, although the narrow font used does make it a little hard on the eye. Numerous photographs, terrain models and computer-produced drawings and plans illustrate all sections of the volume, together with more mundane finds and pottery drawings (sadly these are reproduced with a very weak tint, especially the synopsis tables). One further point: all 523 pages of glossy paper here cost the equivalent of £20.00! That would be inconceivable in Britain where the cultural budget of city councils of equivalent size to the Ayuntamiento de Gijón have rarely, if ever, funded a volume of such quality at such an affordable price. Some things *are* better in Spain.

ALEJANDRA GUTIÉRREZ

*Paisaje y señorío — La casa conventual de Ambel (Zaragoza): Arqueología, arquitectura e historia de las Órdenes militares del Temple y del Hospital.* By Christopher Gerrard. 17 × 24 cm. 427 pp., many figs., maps, plans and tbs. Zaragoza: Institución 'Fernando el Católico', 2003. ISBN 84-7820-677-9. Price: not stated pb.

The relationship between archaeology and the study of the Military Orders is in general, and especially in Spain, not as intense as is desirable. Historians working in this area of medieval studies tend to concentrate on written documents while the little archaeological research being done on the orders is usually self-centred. The book which has been co-ordinated by Christopher Gerrard on the Aragonese Templar and later Hospitaller convent house at Ambel breaks new ground in some areas. It is the result of archaeological campaigns by a team of researchers and students from 1993–8, but it far surpasses the usual dry archaeological report. The book, which is a joint effort of British and Spanish scholars from different fields, crosses many academic boundaries. It also stands away from the usual cut in historical periods, and deals with Ambel from the time of the establishment of the Templar commandery in the 12th century, to the privatisation due to the *desamortización* in the 1830s, and finally to the works of restoration of the present day owners of the building. The *longue durée* can be clearly perceived in Chapter 5, which is devoted to the architectural evolution of the convent house. This section puts into historical perspective the description of the building carried through in the previous chapter. These two parts are the core of the book, but the archaeological perspective has not been limited to the study of the fabric of the conventual compound. The village and the countryside around have also been studied from a joint archaeological and historical perspective (Chapter 3). The material culture of those living in the convent, from decoration to furniture and diet, is the object of Chapter 6. Chapter 7

classifies the important collection of graffiti to be found in the building; a rich selection can be seen in the accompanying drawings. Maps, plans and photographs are another asset of the book.

The weak point of this highly recommendable work lies not in its open and interdisciplinary archaeological approach, but rather in its excessively descriptive treatment of history. For example, Chapter 2 is a quick summary in 50 pages of the Military Orders in Ambel, but there is little insight on what they meant as innovative institutions in the 12th century or on how they varied in the long period of time covered in the book. The original imprint and the changing character of the orders must have surely been manifested at Ambel, but little of this appears in the book. Nevertheless its authors should not be blamed too harshly because there has been little historical research on military orders in Iberia beyond a formalist and institutionalised consideration of these religious orders. Instead the real potential of the book should prevail — an attempt at an interdisciplinary study which, although based on an archaeological approach, insists on a constant dialogue with history.

LUIS GARCÍA-GUIJARRO

*Hedgerow History: Ecology, History and Landscape Character.* By Gerry Barnes and Tom Williamson. 19 × 25 cm. viii + 152 pp., 69 b&w and colour figs. and pls. Macclesfield: Windgather Press, 2006. ISBN 1-905119-04-6. Price: £18.99 pb.

This short book summarises the history of hedgerow study in England, with a focus on the ideas of Hooper and Pollard, and then tests the various theories by presenting a survey of hedges in Norfolk. The first two chapters provide a well-judged bibliographical commentary on recent work on hedges. The analysis of Norfolk hedges demonstrates the inadequacy of the theory that hedges can be accurately dated by counting the number of woody species that they contain. From a sample of 2,800 hedges in 20 parishes scattered over the county, hedges known to have been planted before 1750 contain significantly more species than those planted after 1750: that is, the older hedges contain a mean of between five and six species in each sample 30 m stretch, compared with about three species in more recent enclosures. There is no great difference, however, between hedges planted before 1600 and those planted between 1600 and 1750. The number of species are analysed also in relation to soil types and the topography of fields. Archaeologists and landscape historians anxious to identify hedges of medieval date will be interested to find that hedges near to woodland contain many species, and particular combinations of species, but not, it is thought, because the hedges originated as narrow strips of mixed woodland left after assarting, but because the hedge planters obtained their saplings by digging up a variety of bushes and trees available in the nearby woods. The presence of plants found in hedge bottoms which have been taken to indicate the proximity of woodland, such as dog's mercury, is found in Norfolk to be correlated with heavy soils, and not necessarily a woodland environment.

The research behind this book was thoroughly and rigorously conducted, and the results are presented in a series of carefully reasoned arguments. The explanatory models range widely. Soils are given much prominence, as multi-specied hedges are found most often on the heavier clays, partly because these were the areas which experienced early enclosure. Economic factors are taken into account, as it is argued that hedges were only created consistently with a single species (hawthorn) after about 1750, when specialist commercial nurseries could provide large quantities of plants. In a further application of economic reasoning, the different field forms are related to the farming systems of Norfolk's regions. Cultural factors are also given their due, as it is

argued that the straight hawthorn hedges of the agricultural revolution were designed to advertise to the world that 'improvement' had been carried out.

Hedges are important, it is argued, because they contributed to the character of a landscape, as it is and was perceived. We rely on air photographs and maps to give us a perspective which is inevitably two-dimensional. People in the past, relying on the view from ground level, would have been much influenced by the quantity, height, and appearance of hedgerows.

This is a well-presented book, in its writing, in its production, and in its plentiful illustrations, many of which are colour photographs. It will be read with profit by a wide public as well as specialists.

CHRISTOPHER DYER

*The Archaeology of Rabbit Warrens.* (Shire Archaeology, 89). By Tom Williamson. 15 × 21 cm. 72pp., 34 b&w and 13 colour figs. and pls. Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 2006. ISBN 0-7478-0616-0. Price: £5.99 pb.

Zooarchaeologically, rabbits are amongst the most challenging species to interpret on sites of medieval and post-medieval date. Their proclivity to burrow and become incorporated into the archaeological record is well attested, and often makes it impossible to determine their dietary contribution. Yet, as historical documents make clear, their exploitation was important, not only economically, but also socially, since they acted as a marker of status in the medieval period, and also had allegorical significance linked to the Resurrection.

This book, the 88th outing in the Shire Archaeology series, seeks to provide an alternative angle by which the nature of rabbit exploitation in medieval and post-medieval Britain can be explored — through the archaeology of rabbit warrens. The first chapter is given over to a history of the rabbit and of rabbit farming in Britain, and covers not only their role as markers of aristocratic status in the medieval period, but also their changing status in the later medieval and post-medieval periods, when they were much more numerous, had lost their status value, and were exploited on an increasingly commercial basis. The subsequent four chapters consider the astonishingly diverse range of accommodation and structures that were constructed within, and as part of, rabbit warrens; these include not only the more commonly encountered rectangular pillow mounds, and the often extremely well constructed artificial burrows within, but also round and cross-shaped pillow mounds, and a variety of boundaries and enclosures. The remaining chapters consider the archaeological evidence for the creation of traps, for both the rabbits themselves and their predators, and also the accommodation for the warreners, such as the well-documented Triangular Lodge at Rushton, Northamptonshire. There is even a gazetteer of some of the best sites to visit.

The book is superbly illustrated throughout, and includes images of sites, excavation plans of many different types of structure, and stunning aerial photographs. One of its stated aims is to highlight some of the characteristic features of warrens to prevent their confusion with buildings or ritual structures of earlier date. Although this is a relatively slim book, the level of detail, both descriptive and illustrative, serves to satisfy this objective to great effect. Overall, this is an accessible, clearly written, and beautifully illustrated guide, which will be a valuable asset to any field archaeologist or landscape historian.

RICHARD THOMAS

The following publications were also received:

*Medieval Celtic Literature and Society*. Edited by Helen Fulton. 16 × 24 cm. 304 pp. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005. ISBN 1-85182-928-8. Price: £50.00, €55.00 hb.

The roll call of authors of this collection of papers is impressively high-powered. Not unexpectedly, the range of subjects discussed is very diverse in date and location, although the papers do consistently examine aspects of how literacy and literature functioned in those social contexts in a way accessible to a specialist archaeological readership. In the final analysis, though, it is a book to be recommended for scholarly analysis of various forms of literary production, not as a primary source of information on Welsh, Irish, Cornish or Breton social history and culture.

*The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*. By Victor Watts. 20 × 26 cm. lxiv + 713 pp., 12 maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-521-36209-1. Price: £175.00, \$250.00 hb.

At first sight this volume looks like a thorough and creditably modernised replacement for Ekwall's rather elderly *A Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* as a convenient, one-volume reference work. It carefully includes modern place-names, provides historical spellings with each name included, discusses the probable etymology, and gives bibliographical references. But it is marred by many inconsistencies, errors, and, inexcusably in a lexical reference work, misprints. For a detailed, specialist assessment of its flaws readers are referred to Carole Hough's review in *Nomina*, 27 (2004), 133-42. A publication like this is of very little value to anyone if one does not know one can rely on what it says, and at this price the situation is a scandal.

*Charlemagne: Empire and Society*. Edited by Joanna Story. 16 × 24 cm. xvi + 330 pp., 9 figs. and maps. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-7190-7089-9. Price: £16.99 pb.

Dedicated to two late, great, scholars of the Carolingians, Donald Bullough (who believed nothing important happened in the Middle Ages after A.D. 1000) and Timothy Reuter, each of whose *œuvre* is represented in the fifteen essays included, this is necessarily a book with a historical focus. However, archaeology slips in at the end with a significant three papers: on coinage, and by Christopher Loveluck and Frans Verhaeghe who respectively head up chapters on rural and urban developments.

*The Archaeology of Medieval Scarborough: Excavation and Research 1987-2004*. (Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Research Report 12). By Trevor Pearson with contributions by Christopher Hall and Jenny Vaughan. 21 × 30 cm. viii + 152 pp., 83 figs., maps, plans and tbs. Scarborough: Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society, 2005. ISBN 0-902-41608-1. Price: £10.00 pb.

Covers 20 years of interdisciplinary research into the origins and development of Scarborough, especially between 1150 and 1550. Well produced and edited, this brings into focus the town beyond the well-known castle with its Henry II keep. Excellent value at £10.00.

*Sandlands: The Suffolk Coast and Heaths.* By Tom Williamson. 19 × 25 cm. xii + 64 pp., 40 b&w and 30 colour figs. Macclesfield: Windgather Press, 2005. ISBN 1-905119-02-x. Price: £18.99 pb.

Tom Williamson and Richard Purslow at Windgather combine to provide a highly illustrated and beautifully produced book in the Landscapes of Britain Series. Text and illustrations (many original maps and beautiful reproductions of historic maps and aspects of the landscape) are top quality.

*Medieval Dublin VI: Proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium 2004.* Edited by Seán Duffy. 16 × 24 cm. 256 pp., many figs., maps, plans and tbs. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005. ISBN 1-85182-885-0. Price: £19.95, €24.95 pb.

A richly archaeological collection of essays with a strong focus on Viking issues ranging through to medieval standards of living. Seán Duffy has edited a strong set of papers, and as President of the Friends of Medieval Dublin is forwarding our knowledge of that important era of the city's past.

*Ireland Under the Normans 1169-1333.* By Goddard Henry Orpen. 16 × 24 cm. xlv + 633 pp., 14 maps and tbs. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005. ISBN 1-85182-715-3. Price: £65.00, €80.00 hb.

This is a reprint as one volume of Orpen's classic four-volume work of 1911 and 1920. It is strengthened by a new introduction by Seán Duffy. Ireland was a very different country in 1911 — and in 1920 — from today, and this grand text remains controversial and thought-provoking. It should be read with Anglo-Irish relations both a century ago and today in mind.

*Duffield Frith: History and Evolution of the Landscape of a Medieval Derbyshire Forest.* By Mary Wiltshire, Sue Woore, Barry Crisp and Brian Rich. 18 × 25 cm. 176 pp., 36 figs., maps and tbs. Ashbourne; Landmark Publishing, 2005. ISBN 1-84306-191-0. Price: £19.99 hb.

A charming account of a Derbyshire Frith (forest) by 'four local historians'. The fortunes of the forest are traced from 1086 to 1633; the dates falling either side of 1399 at which date it passed from being a Lancastrian forest to being a royal one. Based on documentary research and fieldwork, the parks within the forest are identified and discussed.

*Provand's Lordship and Old Glasgow.* By Helen Avenell. 21 × 21 cm. 84 pp., many colour figs. and pls. Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, 2004. ISBN 0-902752-75-8. Price: £5.99 pb.

This is a popular-format account of a house built in 1471 by the Bishop of Glasgow for the priest in charge of an almshouse for twelve elderly men. With a foreword by Stephen Driscoll, this short work provides an account and context for this remarkable survival, supported by some lavish illustrations and reconstructions.

*Victims or Viragos?* (Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women, 4). Edited by Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless. 16 × 24 cm. 240 pp., 6 figs. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005. isbn 1-85182-889-3. Price: £24.95, €29.95 pb.

Editors Meek and Lawless preside over a wide ranging-collection of historical essays on women with a variety of medieval foci: Queen Emma and the succession crisis in England 1035-42, crusading women (prostitutes or pilgrims?), gendering powerful women, women and crime before the Black Death.