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THE PLACE-NAMES OF BERKSHIRE, PART I; MARGARET GELLING: English Place-Name Society, Vol XLIX: *C.U.P.*; 1973; 285 pp. £6.

This work has been long awaited by those concerned with Early Berkshire. The slender volume by F. M. Stenton was excellent for its day, but it is now over sixty years old and was concerned with general points rather than comprehensive detail. And detail is certainly the characteristic of the present volume which is the first of three. It begins with a general section that includes County, Road and River names and then deals with place names from the former eastern edge of Berkshire to Newbury. These are arranged under the long abandoned Hundreds and within each hundred under towns (modern boundaries) and modern civil parishes; and each of these sections covers names of lesser features, roads, notable buildings and fields. Suggested origins are given for all major and some minor names, and they are overwhelmingly Saxon or later. This, of course, is entirely right in terms of the available evidence, but it must be remembered that there is normally a considerable gap between the presumed time of origin of a name and its first surviving appearance in writing. And the facility with which soldiers in two world wars evolved English versions for native place names is a point to remember.

This work involves some thousands of names, and its compiling has been the task of one person. It is easy for those living locally and interested in their surroundings to criticise points of interpretation and to note omissions. But to detail a couple of such points out of each hundred or so names would be to negate the 98% success rate. It is likewise easy to find unpublished local documents that contribute further bits of information; but that such are unpublished is a reflection on other individuals and organisations. It is obvious that the present volume is a first step in the systematic place-name study of Berkshire. The derivation of most lesser names, street names and field

names, is not given, for the scope of the task and the size of the volume make this impossible. But here is a splendid opportunity for individuals and groups interested in local history in discovering further names and in investigating origins. All such individuals and groups should buy this volume and use it as a starting-point for their own investigations. Once the evidence is collected the expert can then be asked to interpret, and the end of such an operation should be an enormous enrichment of Berkshire's topography and history.

C. F. SLADE

SILCHESTER: THE ROMAN TOWN OF CALLEVA: GEORGE C. BOON. 379 pp. pls. 40, Figs. 42. *David & Charles* 1974. Price £8.50.

Mr Boon is to be congratulated on this revised and expanded edition of *Roman Silchester* (1957). Although the archaeology of the town has not progressed much by subsequent excavation, many interpretations based on the results of earlier research have had to be modified in the light of the ever growing body of comparative material from Britain and the rest of the empire.

Excavations, particularly on the inner and outer earthworks have yielded important information about the early town (Ch. 2). However, with a suggested date close to the conquest for the inner, and a Claudio-Neronian context for the outer defence, there is still little structural evidence to associate with the earliest artefacts found at Silchester. We know almost nothing about the probable pre-Roman dykes (Fig. 5, A-E) and their function and relationship to settlement; we are ignorant, too, of the nature of the 'Salient' earthwork, which Boon compares with the pre-Roman enclosure at Pond Farm, itself not yet assessed (p. 37). Of the later town, definitive publication of the 1961 re-excavation of the church by the late Sir Ian Richmond is shortly to appear, but

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Mr Boon has included his own interim observations and interpretations (Ch. 14).

The account of the town—its plan, defences, water supply, public and private buildings, etc.—is thorough and the comparative material excellently researched. Despite the ravages of the Victorian excavators, further work on the development of the town could still be profitable. In a reassessment of the basilica (pp. 112–16) Boon argues for only one north-south colonnade instead of two, although the excavators had found little evidence to support either case.

Much meticulous work has gone into the study of the objects from the town and the footnotes provide a fascinating quarry for comparative reading. It is unfortunate that, with so much material jettisoned or inaccurately provenanced, quantitative comparisons cannot be made with other towns to further assess the functions and development of Calleva's buildings. There is still much to be done on individual categories of finds; petrology might confirm whether the Nero tile (p. 44) is a stray from Italy and perhaps put to rest speculation about an imperial tilery or involvement in the town at that date. Similar work on all the Silchester stone might also indicate how rare a use was made of Portland stone which was employed for the Tutela and Sarapis heads (p. 59).

In his discussion of the economic aspects of the town (Chs. 19–20), Boon is pessimistic about the role of Calleva as a market (pp. 53–6). He considers the town to have been self-supporting, although a projected population of some 1200 people (pp. 61–2), many of whom would have been unable to work, is difficult to reconcile with full-time farming and all the specialised trades for which there is evidence in the town; the more so, when one realises that many activities (tile-making, for example, p. 279) were confined to the summer months, when market gardening and the harvest were at their most demanding. The interpretations of the evidence cited in favour of the town producing surplus food (pp. 256, 290) may be easily reversed and suggested

as evidence of food brought in for resale. Moreover, as Boon admits (p. 258), there is only one convincing example of a typical late Roman corn dryer, which occur in number on smaller settlements.

The question posed in the foreword about the degree of success or failure of the town faces one with the problem of choosing appropriate evidence. Care has to be exercised in interpreting the town plan as aerial photography continues to supply details of previously unrecorded timber buildings (pp. 49–53). One wonders about the significance of the apparent lack of extra-mural settlement, the light density of presumed shops and the lack of rich finds like sculpture or mosaics, particularly of the latter in the fourth century.

One quibble about presentation is that more maps would have been useful to illustrate the various distributions of the buildings and structures to which a possible function has been assigned (part 2). However this book is a major achievement in Romano-British studies, which both the lay reader and the student will readily appreciate, and it must replace the 1957 edition.

M. G. FULFORD

THE IRON AGE IN LOWLAND BRITAIN:
D. W. HARDING. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*.
1974. 260 pp. £6.95.

Dr Harding will be well known to readers of this journal for his recent study of 'The Iron Age of the Upper Thames Basin', and for his earlier excavation at Blewburton. In his new book, he considers the British Iron Age and its continental relations over an area bounded to the north by the Jurassic ridge. His study is in two main sections: the first, an account of settlement and defensive sites in this area, supplemented by essays on house types, Iron Age economy, burials and religion; and, the second, a detailed analysis of ceramic and metal types, their chronology and cultural meaning. His main thesis is that the British Iron Age takes its impetus from three phases

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of continental immigration. In this, he reasserts views most ably expounded by Professor Hawkes since 1931, and challenges the more recent doubts of Professor Hodson and others.

Because the book is irradiated by this theme, the treatment of lowland Britain consistently emphasises certain areas and problems and is not as general an account as some might wish. Certain regions, for instance Dorset and Somerset, Kent and East Anglia, do not receive full treatment and the book cannot serve as a basic introduction to the Iron Age of these areas. On the other hand, it is really refreshing to read a general study of any period based mainly on work undertaken outside Wessex, and Dr Harding's emphasis on the Upper Thames Basin offers a welcome change of perspective. Inevitably this also means that many arguments are repeated from his earlier book, but the frequent reuse of actual illustrations from the other study is harder to justify and rather upsets the balance and freshness of the work. At the same time, an opportunity has been missed to illustrate more unfamiliar material and further distribution maps, especially of possible imports, would also have been useful. Summaries of the author's excavations on a series of important sites at Frilford, Blewburton, Pimperne and Woodeaton offer some compensation, but not for the final reports on these, which are now badly overdue.

As a basic text, students will probably find the first part of this book of particular value and Dr Harding's main strength lies in his approach to practical issues, as in his discussion of the structure of round houses or of the tactical problems raised by different

types of fort defence. His section on Iron Age religion is equally fresh and clear and gains greatly from his judicious employment of literary sources. The chapter on economy is another quite useful summary. In the second part, his most interesting and far ranging discussion is of fine metalwork. The weakest chapters are those on settlements and on burials and here, in each case, his concern with cultural history leads to an acceptance of rather partial or dubious evidence.

The second part can stand as a useful ordering of the data, whether or not the reader accepts Harding's main conclusion. Of necessity, it is mainly about pots. In fact the author is so consistently cautious that his case does not seem overwhelmingly strong. But, far from reducing the value of this material, his objectivity should ensure the lifespan of the book. In this, he is distinctly aided by the quality of the illustrations, and the whole of the second part can be welcomed as a well written introduction to the museum material. Dr Harding takes the view that the archaeological evidence for all the widely accepted or recorded Iron Age invasions is strictly defective and that for this reason we must be content with data of similar quality to establish those intrusions that still remain controversial. This will not do. He points out that Childean 'cultures' are hard to employ in this enquiry, but this is a better argument that cultural archaeology should no longer be the central concern of Iron Age studies. Political history is not confidently drawn from such data, and Harding's lucid discussion in the first part of this book offers insights into other fields of study. We will be well served if he follows these further.

RICHARD BRADLEY