

## REVIEWS

- 1.—*The Roman Inscriptions of Britain, Vol. I: Inscriptions on Stone*, by R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright. Large 4to., pp. xxxiv + 790, 19 pls., and over 2,000 figs. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1965. Price 12 guineas.

Every *corpus* of archaeological material must rest on a corporate basis. It is indeed the existence of a mass of uncoordinated and physically scattered material, the product of a host of workers, that gives rise to the need for a logical ordering of the accumulation which shall, within defined limits, cover the *whole* field. The objective is no less than totality; and those who address themselves to such a task are launched on an adventure in perfectionism.

Three generations ago, as scholarship goes, Francis Haverfield saw the need, set the goal, and began to shape the means of reaching it. Robin Collingwood then took up the work (still hardly begun) and carried it forward with a high heart, never realising perhaps—even he—how much yet remained to be done. Now Richard Wright has brought it to a triumphant conclusion.

The magnitude of the effort required to achieve a total synopsis of so wide, so old, and so well tilled a field can hardly be exaggerated. And the moment of completion constitutes a kind of breakthrough, different from but no less valuable than many of those often less arduously won in technology. At that precise moment a line is drawn across the history of the subject; and from that moment a fresh and unimpeded start can be made by all concerned. For what we have here between the covers of a single volume is an up-to-date reading, precisely documented and accompanied wherever possible by a facsimile made from a contact-

drawing, of every inscription on stone of the Roman period (including *Aliena* and *Falsa*) found in Britain up to the end of the year 1954. The grand total of the number of entries under all headings is exactly 2,400; and eight Tables of Concordance with the older standard source-books, printed in double columns, occupy no less than 27 pages, that for the *Journal of Roman Studies* alone covering 40 separate volumes. Thus any scholar wishing to take up afresh the reading of any given stone is armed at once with every aid short of autopsy that he could possibly require as a basis for further study.

In the wider field of synthesis, and the drawing of historical deductions, much will be possible with this volume as it stands. But the real harvest will be gathered only with the publication of the nexus of Classified Indexes which must (inevitably) come at the end of Volume II. Meanwhile an essential Index of Sites is provided here, and with its help the general reader and less specialised students—the majority, after all, of those who will use this book—will be able rapidly to find the current interpretation of any stone in which they may be interested.

Of these interpretations, or more particularly readings, many are obvious, most are assured, a few are debatable. We may well accept that, as has been said of a very different field, “the best work in this kind is never done”. Just how many or how few readings remain open to challenge will depend, in the ultimate, on the temperament of the individual. But the right of challenge is confined to the very few whose scholarship entitles them to it; and this book is addressed to serving also a wider audience.

It is more important to realise the extent to which, since Collingwood set to work, our reading, and therefore our understanding, of these stones has advanced. As he went about making his “contact-drawings” Collingwood repeatedly found on the stones more letters, and sometimes words, than anyone had found before; and he was enabled also to make corrections to the previously accepted versions.

These he duly published, and not least usefully in his catalogue of our Society's own collection (1926). The effect, in the area of our Society's special interest at all events, was startling. He released no less than a flood of epigraphical revisions of the highest quality by the hands of younger men. During the period 1934-1944 the pages of *Archæologia Aeliana* are studded year after year with the most brilliant recensions of old, long accepted, and often lamentably uninformative readings, which had, nevertheless, satisfied the world since the days of Hübner and Bruce. Alongside these exciting advances the publication of an exceptional crop of fresh discoveries, expounded by a group of scholars who had set themselves entirely new standards of expertise, went steadily forward. And what may justly be said in the field of pure epigraphy is no less true of the work of evaluation. These results now take their proper place in the new *Corpus* alongside such of the older readings as have stood the test of time. All that is lacking is the thrill of the argument upon the development of which each new reading was established.

The way of the author of such a work is beset by many temptations: bye-paths that he must not follow, hobby-horses he may not ride. Of these the present work is remarkably free. No one aspect has been favoured at the expense of another. Here the rules have been set, and under them the game played out to the end. Nothing is over-emphasized; nothing has been skimped.

In many other countries an enterprise on such a scale could only have been undertaken under the auspices of the state, and most probably by a team of full-time workers. It is common knowledge that but for the enlightened and pertinacious support of the Administrators of the Haverfield Bequest over a period of nearly half a century this volume could never have been produced at all. It may not be so generally appreciated that the editing, or authorship—for it amounts almost to that—has rested throughout on the backs successively of two men only; and that neither has ever given up (unless, it may be, for a sabbatical year) his pro-

fessional commitments as a full-time university teacher. The ready support of learned specialists—often too short-lived—and some technical assistance they have indeed enjoyed. But the ultimate burden has been theirs alone. In terms of unity of approach, and (especially in the last stages before going to press) of consistency in presentation, that has been of enormous advantage to the book. The question remains whether such a system, with all its advantages to the consumer, is altogether fair either to the health, or to the careers, of those who accept to serve under it.

Inevitably the volume is bulky. It does not, for example, commend itself as a travelling companion in a railway-carriage; though, given a stout book-rest, it is by no means unsuited to the bedside, for browsing over a few favourites before putting out the light. But its proper place is on the student's desk, where it will remain in constant demand, and where nothing else will ever quite be able to replace it.

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J. D. COWEN.

2.—H. M. and Joan Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, Vols. I & II, pp. i-xxviii and 1-734, 362 text figures and 280 plates, Cambridge University Press 1965. Price £10-10-0.

These two volumes contain a descriptive catalogue of the surviving English churches whose fabric reveals features characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon period. The individual churches are described in alphabetical order, but for convenience of regional reference the churches are arranged alphabetically by counties in an appendix. The Anglo-Saxon architectural features are exhaustively described in the text and lavishly illustrated by line drawings, plans and half-tone plates to a grand total of 642, almost all of them the work of the two authors. Hitherto, students of Anglo-Saxon architecture have depended upon Clapham's *English*

*Romanesque Architecture before the Conquest* published in 1930, and upon the second edition of Baldwin Brown's *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* published in 1925. It is a measure of the advance made during the last 40 years that whereas Baldwin Brown listed 237 churches, this catalogue contains over 400, and in every instance the description rests upon close and detailed study by the authors at firsthand.

It should be said without any qualification that these two volumes, the outcome of some thirty years of study in what the authors regarded as their leisure time, constitute a work of major importance, even though it is not yet complete. A third volume is to contain the detailed arguments for assigning particular churches to the age before the Norman Conquest, an attempt to establish a more precise system of chronology and a discussion of the different architectural styles prevalent in different parts of the country. This task will fall upon Harold Taylor alone since unhappily Joan Taylor did not survive to see the publication of the two volumes to which she contributed so much.

The counties of Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire are represented in the catalogue by 59 churches, of which 32 are in Yorkshire. Since the days of Baldwin Brown and Clapham many of these northern churches have been examined afresh, by others as well as by the Taylors, often with striking results. In particular, radically altered opinions are now held about St Paul's at Jarrow, with its subsidiary eastern chapel, and about St Peter's at Bywell which is now placed in the eighth century. Current excavations at Jarrow will surely yield much important information about the early monastic buildings. Perhaps the most notable contributions made by the authors to the new interpretation of northern churches will be found in their accounts of St Andrew's at Hexham and of All Saints at Ledsham in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the latter now recognised for the first time as belonging to the eighth century.

Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire, in striking

contrast with their eastern neighbours, yield only 6 churches, and 4 of these are in Westmorland. A glance at the maps may suggest other anomalies of distribution, but those who use these volumes must constantly remember that they are not a catalogue of all Anglo-Saxon churches, but only of those churches which contain architectural remains of the Anglo-Saxon period, and these cannot be more than a fraction of the total number that once existed. Looking at the county of Durham alone, the names of Gateshead, Chester-le-Street, Hartlepool and Durham itself do not figure in the catalogue because no Anglo-Saxon architectural remains have survived there. And to look further south, the names of Ramsey, Ely, Thorney and Bury St Edmunds will not be found, although they were among the most important centres of Benedictine monasticism in the 10th and 11th centuries.

It should also be remembered that the surviving remains do not provide adequate evidence for coming to a judgement about the architectural achievement of the Anglo-Saxons. Any attempt to do this would have to take account of the extensive literary evidence as well as of new evidence such as is being won in the excavation of the Old and New Minsters at Winchester. It is the lesser churches that have tended to survive, and the greater that have perished. The more important the church, the more likely it was to experience successive rebuildings. The White Church at Durham could not survive the coming of the Norman builders, any more than could Oda's 10th-century cathedral at Canterbury. Yet one point that emerges very clearly from this catalogue is that it was in the Anglo-Saxon period that the village church became the characteristic feature of the English countryside that it has ever since remained. It is no less clear that these two volumes will remain the standard work in their field for many years to come, and that any further progress must rest upon the labours which their authors have brought to such abundant fruition.

PETER HUNTER BLAIR.

- 3.—Graham Webster and Donald R. Dudley, *The Roman Conquest of Britain A.D. 43-57*, B. T. Batsford (London), British Battles Series, 1965, pp. 216, 48 illustrations. £1. 10s.

The authors of *The Rebellion of Boudicca* (1962) now turn back to Britain under Claudius. This book is part of a Battles series. Two major battles are treated: the Medway (43) and that against Caratacus in 51. As the authors state in their preface, not a great deal can be said about either, the evidence being scanty. So the book is in effect an account of the governorships of Plautius and Scapula; and this is welcome, informative and stimulating. There are six chapters, six short appendices, fourteen pages of references; and plenty of illustrations, both familiar and unfamiliar (e.g. the eagle and standards intaglio from Great Casterton). Chapters 1 and 2 give the background to invasion, on each side of the Channel; 3 covers the invasion; 4 the "Shaping of the British Province A.D. 43-47"; and 5 the campaigns of Scapula. The sixth chapter, mainly on Didius Gallus, is something of an anti-climax—the capture of Caratacus, or perhaps the death of Scapula, might have made a better ending. The authors know the ground and new ideas are provided (e.g. on *Letocetum*, pp. 138-9). Criticism of points of detail will be possible, but the book will be read with profit as well as with considerable pleasure.

A. R. BIRLEY.

- 4.—W. Douglas Simpson, *The Ancient Stones of Scotland* Robert Hale Ltd. Price 25s. 0d.  
 W. Douglas Simpson, *Castles in Britain*  
 B. T. Batsford Ltd. Price 13s. 6d.  
 (Ed.) J. Collingwood Bruce and John Stokoe, *Northumbrian Minstrelsy*, pp. xxii + 191. Folklore Associates Inc., Hatboro, Pennsylvania, 1965. Price £4. 4s. 0d.

The author of the first two of the above books is well-known to readers of *Archæologia Aeliana*, who have learned to value Dr. Simpson's authoritative contributions to the knowledge and understanding of medieval military architecture. In the first Dr. Simpson seeks to survey in one volume the ancient monuments of Scotland. In other hands the result might have been a work of reference only, useful but arid. This book, however, has been written *con amore* and he would be a sad dullard who failed to read it with pleasure.

*Castles in Britain* is an introduction to the study of medieval castles in Britain. It is lucidly written, lucidly illustrated, and a model of good book production.

After some moments of painful hesitation, prompted by the garish jacket and the absence of manifest acknowledgement, the reader will recognise in *Northumbrian Minstrelsy*, marketed by Folklore Associates Inc., a reprint of the pioneer work published by the Society in 1882. As there has been an unsatisfied demand for copies of the original volume, a reprint of any sort will serve a useful purpose. The Society itself must bear some reproach that in these affluent times means had not been sought to publish a worthy new edition of the *Minstrelsy*. Inevitably in such a situation one turns for words to A. E. Housman and the reader is referred to the last two lines of his *Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries*.

J. PHILIPSON.