

## REVIEWS

J. Collingwood Bruce: *Handbook to the Roman Wall with the Cumbrian Coast and Outpost Forts*, 13th ed., edited and enlarged by Charles M. Daniels. Newcastle upon Tyne 1978, x + 355 £4.95

A NEW Handbook is always a major event. Thirteen years have elapsed since the last edition, years of considerable activity, both in work on the Wall and thought about its problems, and a new Handbook was urgently required to reflect this. It must seem particularly appropriate to this Society that it is edited by a President in office and published amid preparations for the Tenth Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall.

Every successive editor of Bruce's handbook must face the problem of deciding how much of the past to retain, how much to add to meet the needs of the present. Sir Ian Richmond in the twelfth edition set himself to revise the diction of the first edition of 1863; Mr. Daniels has chosen to retain as much as possible of the wording of Sir Ian in his eleventh and twelfth editions. So here once again is the best and most complete account of the Wall from Wallsend to Bowness, given in Richmond's words, with important additions by Mr. Daniels, particularly extensive on Wallsend, Corbridge, Housesteads and Chesterholm, but including also important new evidence on Newcastle, Rudchester, Carrawburgh, Carlisle and Bowness. The text has been very carefully worked over, as comparison with earlier editions makes clear.

The introduction presents the greatest challenge and Mr. Daniels has risen to it. He has introduced into Richmond's text important modifications or additions to reflect the amount of theorizing that has gone on in recent years about the method of building the Wall and its subsequent history, far less clear now than it seemed in 1963. Moreover, he has added new sections, on bridges and culverts and temporary camps, but above all on the Cumbrian coast and the outpost forts. The discussion of these and the Stanegate system in the introduction, and the description of them in the text, along with the Wall proper, adds over a hundred pages of fresh material in this Handbook compared with the previous edition. The case for inclusion needs no argument; as Mr. Daniels points out it is only to return to Bruce's own practice. Also in the best tradition of Bruce is the addition of a number of drawings of inscriptions and sculptures, mostly prepared by Mrs. Daniels.

Comment in detail on the text would demand a review article. Points of general comment may be made. When Bruce wrote the *Wallebook*, soon retitled Handbook, in 1863, he did so in the comforting knowledge that he was about to produce, in his third edition of *The Roman Wall* (1867) a full account of the frontier works. The first editor to modify seriously what Bruce had written, R. G. Collingwood, omitted all but the Roman material directly concerned with the Wall from the Hand-

book, in part to make room for an account of the discoveries since Bruce wrote. As there has never been a fourth edition, or its equivalent, of *The Roman Wall*, the Handbook has perforce had to become a condensed substitute. In the process it has lost any relevance to the other needs of the Wall visitor, by way of details of routes and access to sites, amenities, opening times, etc. The process is carried further in the present edition by the omission of maps, though the reader is urged to use the map of *Hadrian's Wall* in conjunction with the Handbook. The photographs (increased from one to four in the twelfth edition) have also gone, so the reader is given no visual impression of the monument. A Handbook that has neither maps nor photographs, and that gives no practical help to the Wall visitor to match its magnificent descriptions of the Roman remains is far removed from what Bruce tried to do in 1863.

A second point of general comment is the decision to stick to Richmond's text as far as possible. This reflects a general conservatism in the Handbook over the years, but its appropriateness must be questioned in this instance. It would be good to retain something of the flavour of Richmond in the descriptions, and the odd apt quotation, but not when it obscures what Mr. Daniels himself is saying. The painstaking care with which Richmond's words have been preserved leaves inevitable doubts when those words reflect views that the present editor has by implication abandoned. Is this intention or oversight? Those sections where there is no model to follow are written with great freshness and insight, and the reviewer hopes that Mr. Daniels will set himself free in subsequent editions to write his own words. Sir Ian Richmond has three editions to his credit, his views are well documented, and it is impossible to guess what he would write today.

There are a few slips, such as *Historia Augusta* for Cassius Dio (p. 6) and some uncorrected printers' errors, e.g. "linked" for "lined" (p. 4). The old woodcuts have not come out so well in this edition; they are too dark or too light and detail is lost, cf. p. 96 and p. 97 in the twelfth and p. 121 and p. 122 in the thirteenth. But these are minor blemishes which may be put right in the fourteenth edition. What Mr. Daniels has done is to take into his hands the single most precious book to the Wall student, precious for what it is and what it symbolizes in continuity with the past, and made it more valuable than before.

B. DOBSON

*Viking Age York and the North*, ed. by R. A. Hall, iv + 73 pages (incl. 40 figs. and 7 pages of plates), *Council for British Archaeology Research Report No. 27*, 1978. ISBN 0 900312 65 3.

ANGLO-SAXON and Viking-age York owed much of its appearance and development to a Roman predecessor. But the existence of the legionary fortress and its associated settlement inevitably diverted excavators' attention away from the city's early medieval phases. Only 20 years ago visitors to York found the archaeology of the pre-Norman medieval city represented by casual finds picked up from building sites

and road construction—a miserable record of a period when it had been the most important political centre in northern England, when it had been ruled by a succession of distinguished archbishops and both Anglo-Saxon and Hiberno-Norse kings, and when it had offered a market-place to traders whose links went out to Ireland, Scandinavia, France and Frisia. Within the last few years, however, there have been radical changes in the city's archaeological policy and the formation of the York Archaeological Trust in 1972 marked a major step towards ensuring a properly balanced excavation strategy. The papers in this slim volume represent the first results of this increased attention to medieval archaeology in the city as well as giving us the work of scholars who have re-examined artefacts and documents which have long been familiar.

Professor Sawyer and Dr. Smyth open with just such seemingly familiar material. Their interpretations of the documents, however, are far from traditional: all who thought St. Cuthbert's body was taken from Lindisfarne in 875, for example, might care to ponder on Sawyer's arguments for a much more complex migration. Allied to their papers is one by Professor Dolley, the doyen of a new school of numismatists which emerged in the 1950s, who confronts a series of difficult problems in his vigorous survey of the York mint. In a generously illustrated paper Mr. Lang is able to draw upon the sculpture found beneath the Minster to show that our previous ideas about insular Viking art need major revision to take account of the impact of the metropolitan workshops. Mr. King's publication of his excavations at Ribbleshead is equally disturbing to conventional views, for it raises the contentious issues of the use of marginal land and of density of population—matters also examined by Professor Sawyer.

Pride of place in the volume, however, goes to three papers written by members of the Trust. The editor, Mr. Hall, surveys the topography of Viking York in an article whose modest tone belies its importance whilst Mr. MacGregor assembles and illustrates a wealth of new evidence to illuminate the trading and manufacturing sides of the city's life. The final paper by H. K. Kenward *et al.* provides a fittingly explosive climax to an effervescent book as it first casts a sceptical eye over archaeologists' assumptions about the environment and then presents us with an exciting picture of the ecology of Viking-age York. Here we see the other face of a city whose political and military importance is attested by the chronicles and coinage, whose artistic pre-eminence is witnessed by the sculpture and metalwork, and whose trading links embraced most of Europe: "a town composed of rotting buildings with earth floors covered by decayed vegetation, surrounded by streets and yards filled by pits and middens of even fouler organic waste"!

The whole book is well edited and pleasingly produced. The only complaint can be that there is no index.

RICHARD N. BAILEY

Alan Young: *William Cumin: Border Politics and the Bishopric of Durham 1141–1144* (Borthwick Papers No. 54), 1978 (38 pages) 80p.

THIS PAMPHLET presents the interesting hypothesis that William Cumin's bid for possession of the see of Durham was originally part of the strategy of David I of Scotland for control of the northern English counties but subsequently a freelance ambition. It traces Cumin's whole clerical career and establishes him as founder of the Scottish baronial family of Comyn.

C. M. FRASER

### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### *The Archaeology of York:*

Vol. 4, fasc. 1, *Riverside Structures and a Well in Skeldergate and Buildings in Bishophill*, by M. O. H. Carver, S. Donaghey and A. B. Sumpter (54 pp. 20 plates).

£4.75

Vol. 16, fasc. 1, *Selected Pottery Groups AD 650–1780*, by Jane Holdsworth (43 pp., 8 plates).

£3.30

Vol. 17, fasc. 2, *Roman Finds from Skeldergate and Bishophill*, by Arthur MacGregor (66 pp.).

£2.50

Vol. 19, fasc. 1, *The Analysis of Archaeological Insect Assemblages: A New Approach*, by H. K. Kenward (68 pp., 4 plates).

£4.75

All the above are distributed by the Council for British Archaeology.