Reviews


Dr J. N. L. Myres has made a remarkable contribution to the history and archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon settlements and it is a pleasure to welcome a set of essays dedicated to him on a variety of archaeological subjects related to those settlements. The title is apparently borrowed from that of his 1970 Raleigh Lecture on History, yet the Angles on the Continent are not considered at all in this volume, while there are five papers on aspects of the Anglian settlement in eastern and northern England. On the other hand, apart perhaps from the editor's own contribution, the Saxon settlers of England do not feature, while the continental Saxons are represented by Peter Schmid's discussion of pottery in the later levels at Feddersen Wierde, Albert Genrich's of the cemetery at Liebenau and in particular a female grave assemblage of c. A.D. 500 and Hans-Jürgen Hässler's of Merovingian inlaid metal work in Lower Saxony. Finally the Jutes receive attention from Hans Neumann on some Roman Iron Age inhumation burial practices in southern Jutland and north Slesvig and from Egil Bakka on Scandinavian D bracteates on the Continent and in Kent. In view of the active role played by Myres in the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Sachsenforschung*, an international forum for Saxon studies, it is good to see that three German, one Danish and one Norwegian scholar should be invited to offer contributions in English here. They have not all been equally well served in the translation of their papers, with the three German papers being rather literally rendered into English when compared to Neumann's essay. It seems that Egil Bakka and Sonia Hawkes continue to work over the same material quite independently and a rather different view of the chronology of D bracteates to Bakka's will be published soon by Mrs Hawkes.²

The English contributions begin with Catherine Hills discussing the origin and chronology of the barred zoomorphic combs discovered in such numbers in her excavations at Spong Hill. An updated version of *The Fifth-Century Invasions South of the Thames*, published in 1965, might describe the editor's own paper. Vera Evison now seeks to demonstrate the existence of an increasing number of grave assemblages in England to match the Gallo-Germanic graves of the later 4th and earliest 5th centuries between the Rhine and the Loire.³ Her discussion of the dolphin-headed and related buckle series, formerly studied by Mrs Hawkes,⁴ appears to assume that these buckles were issued to troops. This ignores the suggestion by Mrs Hawkes that they may have been manufactured instead for female civilian use.⁵ Again, though she correctly identifies material made in the later 4th or the first half of the 5th century, she seems to ignore the heavy wear or damaged nature of many of these pieces, e.g. the Abingdon Grave 106 tutulus brooch, or the presence of associations in the same graves which indicate that very many of these objects were not buried until considerably later in the 5th or even the 6th century. Our understanding of the chronology of five-spiral cast saucer brooches is limited, but the view that they began on the Continent about A.D. 400 and were not later than the middle of the 5th century in England is not tenable. Nesse Grave 3 and Spong Hill cremation 2376 with their associated late equal-arm chip-carved brooches (Nesse Type)⁶ imply instead that they began on the Continent around, or even after, the middle of the 5th century. Equally assemblages such as Higdown Grave 2 with its small square-headed brooches demonstrate the casting of such brooches in England.
as late as the first half of the 6th century. Nevertheless we must thank her for revealing a fascinating quoit brooch from the 19th-century excavations at Bénouville, Normandy, for illustrating the two iron bow brooches from Highdown (in fact from Grave 30) and a late Roman buckle from Amiens, as well as for publishing four grave assemblages from the second Mucking cemetery. She dates the latter to the first half of the 5th century, but the small-long brooch from Mucking Grave 987 fits uneasily such an early date of deposition.

Leslie Alcock's interesting social analysis of the rather limited quantity of Anglian graves in Bernicia is used to support Brian Hope-Taylor's thesis of a small and predominantly aristocratic Anglian presence in a basically British kingdom. The minimalist interpretation of the Anglian contribution to Bernicia may have been over-exaggerated, however, as Roger Miket has recently suggested. A collaborative study of Illington-Lackford pottery by Barbara Green, W. F. Milligan and S. E. West differentiates between a northern and a southern group. Their discussion of the fabrics present is based on simple visual examination and a programme of more rigorous fabric analysis might prove productive here. David Brown's stimulating paper suggests that a swastika design found on a Suffolk-provenanced enamelled disc might have its origins in a 6th-century pottery stamp design. The yellow enamel is achieved by melting yellow glass beads and his attribution of the disc to an East Anglian workshop in the late 6th or early 7th century has important implications for both hanging bowl and Sutton Hoo studies. The Wharram project's contribution to the question of continuity in the landscape of Yorkshire between Romano-British farmsteads spaced at half-mile intervals and nucleated villages of the late Saxon settlement pattern is the very suitable theme of John Hurst's concluding paper. Unfortunately there is very little archaeological evidence at present for the settlements of the early and middle Saxon periods there. The fact that both medieval manor houses at Wharram Percy directly overlie Romano-British farms may be significant, but in view of the continuity of boundaries at Wharram, need this imply more than that two suitably sized enclosures were available for the medieval lords to choose from?

There is much in this volume that is of immediate interest to archaeologists of the Anglo-Saxon settlements and a few of the contributions will probably prove of lasting value. A comparison with the Festschrift published in 1956 for E. T. Leeds reveals what an opportunity has been missed, however, to create a volume which surveys our current knowledge of post-Roman Britain, drawing on the historical and philological evidence as well as the archaeology. The book under review is a rather slender offering by that comparison and pays homage to only one aspect of Myres's own contribution. It is to be hoped that his work as an historian of post-Roman Britain will receive its own tribute before too long.

MARTIN WELCH

NOTES


Both these sets of publications are the products of the Archaeological Institute of the University of Lund, Sweden, and illustrate two basic tenets held by the members of that Institute: first, that the study of all archaeological periods can advance only through methodological and interdisciplinary approaches and second, that a policy of publication in English will enable important results to be disseminated to the widest possible public. English readers will welcome these premises, both because the ideas implicit in the Institute's policies are dear to many hearts, and because publication in English is always welcome to a nation chronically unwilling to master any language but its own.

Gårdlösa is the first of three volumes which have grown out of a research programme which lasted from 1963 to 1976 and concentrated on the settlement of a sandy ridge just N. of the modern village of Gårdlösa in SE. Scania. The whole of the area, almost 2 km long and averaging 500 m in width, was archaeologically investigated both by area excavation and by 'probing with spits, excavation of test pits, studies of the surface level in varying weather conditions, studies of growing crops and other vegetation at various stages of growth and, finally, aerial photography'. Most of the material recovered through excavation, including ground-level buildings, sunken featured buildings (here translated as pit-houses) and graves, dated from the 1st millennium A.D., mostly from the period which in English terminology would be called early Middle Ages (migration period, Vendel period and Viking age).

The aim of the investigation was 'to analyse a settlement as a social entity', with an interdisciplinary approach being considered the best way of doing this. Scholars of the different disciplines have contributed to this volume; the second and third will be devoted to the archaeological information, and a synthesis in which 'the results of the material studies will be placed in a wider theoretical context illuminating an Iron Age community's means of functioning and of adapting to its milieu'. The concept of the research project is an exciting one which should serve as a model to those now thinking in terms of landscape archaeology and environmental studies.

The present volume comprises a chapter on the background to the Gårdlösa research project by its director and initiator, Professor Berta Stjernquist; two chapters devoted to historical-geographical research and documentary sources (Staffan Helmfrid and Sten Skansjö); a geological survey (Jan Mikaelsson and Per Sandgren); an environmental survey of the Iron Age and early medieval vegetation (Thomas S. Bartolin, Björn E. Berglund and Nils Malmer); studies of grain impressions in pottery and clay (Hakon Hjelmqvist), skeletal remains (Nils-Gustaf Geijvall) and pottery fabrics (Hans-Ake Nordström); and radiocarbon dates (Ingrid U. Olsson). Finally, there is a summary of the discussions from a conference on the project held in Lund in 1979. The contributions show how important it is to look further afield than the site itself when attempting to evaluate any archaeologically investigated settlement. The interdisciplinary approach has obviously borne fruit here, and the remaining two volumes will show us how this type of information can be combined with excavation results to produce a picture of life in an early settlement much fuller than one that relies on archaeology alone. Professor Stjernquist must be congratulated on this splendid work which should be an inspiration to anyone interested in the wider aspects of early settlement and society.

The same methodological approach permeates the New Series of Meddeleanden från Lunds universitets historiska museum. The articles cover all archaeological periods, but over half of them concentrate on the early medieval period and are more concerned with the interpretation of material than with the mere presentation of it. One outstanding example of this is Axel Christophersen's work, 'Raw material, resources and production capacity in early medieval
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comb manufacture in Lund' (vol. 3, 1979–80, 150–65) where the author attempts ‘to revise the mechanical interpretation that antler and bone waste concentrations always indicate the existence of “workshops”). Much of this article is highly theoretical and disputable, but it is thought-provoking and therefore essential reading for anyone dealing with excavated raw materials and half-finished products of any kind. Two other articles of great interest to English readers are those by Berta Stjernquist, ‘The Sutton Hoo ship burial — a methodological reorganization’ (vol. 2, 1977–78, 151–56) and ‘The Sutton Hoo ship burial — a frame of reference for archaeological analysis’ (vol. 3, 1979–80, 61–67); but each volume of this new series contains so much that is new in archaeological research and thinking that Meddelanden should be required reading for all archaeologists who are open to new ideas and exciting methods of approach.

HELEN CLARKE


The biggest single problem of this report, one freely admitted by its principal author, stems from the ‘absence of any means of establishing an internal chronological sequence’. The stress laid in the bone report on the ‘serious lack of stratification and . . . an absence of any clear phasing’ is apparent also in the summary, where one is told only that Hodges’ seriation of coarseware ‘may help to overcome this difficulty in the future’. Delays in producing the report however, which on internal evidence appears to have been completed in 1977–78, means that Hodges has already appeared in print (Antig., LVIII (1978), 299–309) with convincing claims not only that the pits ‘can be seriated . . . and that a plausible phase interpretation is justified’ but also that the decline and abandonment of Hamwih should be dated to the early and mid 9th century rather than to the late 9th and 10th centuries as Holdsworth and others before him have done. This ‘short’ chronology is hinted at in the Adelaide Street bone report (which talks of 150 years’ occupation) but while a firm late 7th-century date can be suggested for the earliest activity (enabling a convincing explanation of burials with grave-goods as those of pagan foreigners) that for the latest hangs uneasily between the late 8th-or early 9th-century date proposed for Class 5 pottery and the 9th- or early 10th-century date suggested for the latest glass funnel beakers.

The assumption that most of the material was undatable other than as middle Saxon seems to have led to a rather cavalier treatment of the finds. The concordance of finds in Table 4.1 is not generally helpful, so that the associations between glass and pottery, for instance, can only be appreciated by linking the catalogue of the former to a sherd-by-context tabulation of the latter; while the omission from this of illustrated material (e.g. from Fig. 10.2) does not inspire confidence. Equally worrying is the comment in the bone report (un-noted in the excavation text of Site IV) that halves of a bone sealed in pits predating the metalling of a road and post-dating a building associated with the road could be ‘fitted together as convincingly as though they had just been cut’.

What, then, of the matter of the report? It contains little new on the settlement’s internal layout, which, as in 1968 (Proc. Hampshire Fld. Club, xxv, 61–93) seems still ‘quite imperfectly understood’. That there were ‘subdivisions . . . within the areas divided up by streets’ was known in 1968; but what is still unknown is the function of these boundaries and the character of the buildings that they separate. There has been a retreat from the qualified certainty of the plans presented by Holdsworth in Medieval Archaeol., xx (1976) to an uneasy ambiguity. In part this is because the plans now presented show (?) all the evidence rather than a selection of it and, as a consequence, there is more to be explained. Building 3 of Site IV, for example, has not only gained a possible N. wall but also ‘two large individual
post-holes unrelated to anything else in the building and yet, lacking precedent, 'so substantial that an aisled hall would not be precluded'. One wonders, when so many pit sections have been presented in detail (despite animal bone evidence of their having been filled rapidly), why such scant attention should have been paid to the details of supposed buildings, for the plans are less clear than in 1976 and not a single long-wall section or profile is offered.

It is with relief, then, that one turns to the finds reports which take up rather more than two-thirds of the volume; for here there is much new and exciting material. That much of this has been or shortly will be made available in detailed monographs (on the pottery and the animal bone) is inevitable given the delays in production, but one hopes that what is published here will whet the non-specialist reader's appetite and inspire new enthusiasms. The glass report is not apparently to be published elsewhere, and with its demonstration of the near ubiquity of high-quality but not necessarily imported tablewares, provides a striking contrast to the 'lack of precious metal which remains one of the surprising aspects of the archaeology of Saxon Southampton'. Little evidence for its manufacture was forthcoming but the significant absence of glass of eastern origin or inspiration (the one definite import was Lombardic) suggests that this may yet materialise. Whatever its origin, however, the inhabitants of the town, like those of contemporary Ipswich (Wade, forthcoming) were well-acclimatised to drinking from glass vessels. It is, however, related to one of a series of provocative questions that Jennifer Bourdillon and Jennie Coy raise, and attempt convincingly to answer, in their stimulating account of the animal bones. What they attempt to produce, having demonstrated among other things the probable rate of bone loss (in excess of 85% of what was deposited) and reminded us of the non-meat products from the once-living animals, is a measure of the economic significance of the animals alive in or around middle Saxon Southampton. From this, despite the problems of the material (all of which are squarely faced up to) they proceed almost effortlessly but using, for example, the degree of roughening on castrate sheep horn horns (a measure of malnutrition) to recreate an exciting picture of the environment and its exploitation.

It is all the more disappointing, then, that the seed report should be little more than an advertisement of possibilities; while that on the marine mollusca analyses material which as Bailey has recently pointed out (P. Mellars (ed.), *The Early Post-glacial settlement of Northern Europe* (1978), 39) can easily be over-rated as a source of food. If '52,267 oysters would be required to supply the calorific equivalent of a single red deer carcass' then the material considered here can hardly be significant.

The environmental evidence as a whole, however, will be what this report comes to be remembered for. We are promised much more for future reports, and it is these, one hopes, that will answer the questions that for so long have remained unanswered about Saxon Southampton.

**ALAN CARTER**


This volume is the most important contribution to middle Saxon pottery studies for a generation and completely changes the accepted interpretation of the nature of the pottery trade in the pre-Viking period. The earlier model created by Gerald Dunning and myself in the 1950s suggested that the major pottery trade in the 8th and 9th centuries was carried out by Frisian traders bringing pottery from the Rhineland in connection with the wine trade. The evidence for this interpretation was distorted as it was based on the intensive work carried out by the Landesmuseum in Bonn over a period of more than 50 years and the fact
that most work up to that time on the middle Saxon period in England had been in eastern England. As similar Rhenish pottery imports had been found in southern England it was assumed that this was the main trade pattern of the period. The pioneer excavations at Hamwih by Maitland-Muller and Dudley Waterman had already taken place and it was recognized that most of the imports found there were not from the Rhineland but must have come from the Low Countries or Northern France. But at that time there was not the comparative material in France to isolate possible sources, which were still thought of as extensions to a major Rhenish industry, rather than as a separate Frankish organization.

During the last 20 years the situation has changed radically in three ways. Firstly, further excavations at Hamwih by Peter Addyman, and, following the formation of the Southampton Archaeological Research Committee, by Laurence Keen and Philip Holdsworth, have greatly increased the data base upon which a study of Wessex pottery may be founded. Secondly, there have been tremendous advances in France not only by the recent excavation of several important kiln and settlement sites but more particularly by the pioneer work of Jean Chapelot and others in examining previously unrecognized pottery groups, including important kiln material, which were buried in French museums. Thirdly, all this work has been brought together by Richard Hodges, whose use of petrology has facilitated the classification of the wide range of fabrics which had daunted previous workers, and so linked the whole network together. The computer analysis by John Cherry has then made it possible to suggest a chronological order for the groups.

The result has been to identify nearly 30 groups of pottery imported into Hamwih, mainly from France rather than the Rhineland. Middle Saxon imports into other parts of Britain are then listed and demonstrate a clear dichotomy between the better known sites in eastern England, where Rhenish imported pottery predominates, and southern England where Frankish pottery is most common. There is a clear area of overlap in East Anglia and Kent but the two spheres of trading interest are plain. There was competition, as is shown by the scattered finds of Frankish wares all up the E. coast. The nature of the imported pottery suggests close links with the wine trade and a continuum of good quality wheel-thrown pottery industries over the whole area between the Rhine and the Loire. This fits in much better with the historical evidence, and historians have likewise recently suggested that the domination of Middle Saxon trade by the Frisians has been overemphasized. We therefore have here a good example of historians and archaeologists reassessing their evidence and coming to similar conclusions, helping to support each other's reinterpretations.

In this report Richard Hodges first defines five local hand-made wares tempered with grass, chalk, sand, quartz and flint, and shell, and places them in the context of southern English potting traditions in the early and late Saxon periods. The imported wares are then divided into 28 classes but thin-sectioning demonstrates that the main divisions into Black (class 14) and Grey (class 15) wares should be subdivided into several groups which come from different sources. A great deal more work needs to be done both on more recent finds from Britain and on the French material which is now at last being published, so this is an interim classification. The characteristics and possible origins of each class are discussed next, showing a truly remarkable range of sources including the lower Seine valley, the Loire valley, the Low Countries, the Paris basin and other kilns as far away as Trier, Alsace and possibly the Rhone valley. The catalogue of 8th- and 9th-century imported wares from other sites in Britain shows a considerable increase in sites since a previous list in 1968. There follows a section by John Cherry, who attempts a seriation of selected lot groups which is important in view of the lack of vertical stratigraphy and horizontal relationships.

The second part of the report summarizes the evidence for middle Saxon pottery both in Britain and on the Continent, bringing out the significance and importance of the Hamwih finds against the general NW. European background. The differences are brought out between the local domestic hand-made Wessex wares and the East Anglian centrally-organized Ipswich ware industry with pottery made on a turntable. For the Continent the origins of red-painted and glazed wares are discussed: the lack of both at Hamwih confirms the improbability of continuity, though the mechanisms of their reintroduction to NW.
Europe are little clearer than they were at the time of the 1969 symposium. The discussion of Tating ware is one of the most important sections in the volume as it clearly demonstrates by thin-sectioning that it was a technique of tin-foil decoration made at several centres, and not a single ware. The distribution of Tating ware is very sensibly seen as prestige trade of a valuable object rather than the religious linkage suggested by earlier scholars.

In the final section on pottery, trade and economics in the 8th and 9th centuries Richard Hodges demonstrates a number of important facts. There is a marked difference between Hamwih, with its 28 classes of imports, and other sites in England which mainly have class 14 Black wares, probably linked with the wine trade. As most of the variety of Hamwih imports are table wares Hodges argues that these good quality wheel-thrown wares were brought in by alien traders from many parts of NW. Europe for their own use as they found the native hand-made pottery to be culturally unacceptable. If this is so then Hamwih could be interpreted as a trading enclave reflecting the diverse origins of the traders coming there. Recent work at Ipswich suggests the same interpretation, in marked contrast to trading centres like Dorestad, which seems to have been served directly from centralized pottery industries in the Rhineland. The implications of this, and the evidence it may present for a pre-Viking pre-market exchange mechanism in contrast to the market economy of later periods, is a complex matter which requires more work. This will doubtless be pursued in Richard Hodges's forthcoming book, *Dark Age Economics*. The fact that such a book can now be written shows how far the study of middle Saxon pottery has developed in the last generation.

The pioneers of 25 years ago were at the necessary data collecting stage. The amounts of imported pottery found at most sites were too small to enable quantitative assessments to be made. Recent large scale excavations, or those over a long period of time as at Hamwih, have now provided the data for the nature of the trade and the economics behind the pottery sherds to be assessed. Recent work at Ipswich, which in middle Saxon times seems to have had a similar relationship to the East Anglian kingdom as Hamwih did to Wessex, is producing almost as wide a range of early imports as Hamwih and seems to have started earlier in the 7th century, perhaps as early as the time of Redwald. This volume is an important landmark in our understanding of middle Saxon pottery, providing as it does the best summary yet of the position in NW. Europe. It points the way forward to the next stage — interpretation of the economic factors and trade patterns — which should be possible in the next generation.

JOHN G. HURST


This is the fourth volume in the Birka series; the translation by Eva and Simon Wilson makes it more accessible to English readers than the other three. It is a new appraisal of the 1100 graves dug by Hjalmar Stolpe in 1873–95, using his original records. Both these and the excavation were of high quality for their time, and although Dr Gräslund finds many lacunae in the records (such as details of external grave structures) they do allow a remarkably full analysis of mortuary practice at Birka: Stolpe was for instance the first Swede to draw scale plans on graph paper, and to excavate in most cases the whole mound; he anticipated modern practice in having a check-list of data to be recorded.

There are seven cemetery areas on the island, which contain at least 2300 (visible) graves; of these just under half have been examined. These include cremations and inhumations among which are numerous coffins and chamber-graves. The external structures comprise mounds, stone settings, and depressions marking collapsed chambers. One of
the cemetery areas is of pre-Birka (i.e., Vendel) date, the others are associated with the *floruit* of Birka in the 9th and 10th centuries.

Dr Graslund has brought to this material a meticulous and thorough analysis which, while not (perhaps to the relief of some readers) of the most up-to-date mode, nevertheless provides the English student with most of the information needed, and a wide-ranging discussion of comparative material. It is indeed doubtful whether further analysis would be worthwhile on the present data without new excavation.

A general discussion of the cemeteries is followed by a chapter on inhumations: chamber-graves, graves with and without coffins, with convincing statistics concerning dimensions, grave-goods and (unjustifiably) ‘Christian’ elements are discussed. There is interesting detail here on featherbeds, fur, skins, shrouds, biers, and especially on coffin construction. The wide comparative discussion is useful to English archaeologists who have recently begun studies of wooden coffins at sites such as Barton-on-Humber and Bordesley Abbey. Wooden coffin typology is a neglected subject, and a graphic type-series of Birka would have been useful here as a model.

Grave orientations receive brief treatment. While most are W.-E., there are many that are not, for which various explanations are suggested. Body positions do not seem significant, though there is a full discussion of (and support for) the interpretation of certain skeletal positions in chamber-graves as ‘seated burials’, utilising saga and other evidence. The details of 111 chamber-graves and the wide-ranging European discussion provide definite comparative material for those now being found in England (e.g., at Spong Hill or Repton), and also for Anglo-Saxon and later building techniques. Dr Graslund emphasizes that they are for both males and females, and may be dated both ‘early’ and ‘late’, though most are 10th century. The evidence for live burials in chamber-graves is dismissed on stratigraphic grounds. The discussion on horse burial is especially vivid, the horse being seen as the agent of transport of the body to the grave, as well as the mount for the ride to Valhalla; the association of horses with burials is traced down to the present day.

Cremations number 566, just over half of the total burials. Stolpe did not record these as thoroughly as we would wish (there are for instance no plans); but there are enough data to discuss the distribution of finds of grave-goods and food remains, and the presence or absence of pyres, urns, and pits; human sacrifice is not ruled out here.

External grave structures include mounds, principally over cremations but also over some chamber graves, kerbs, and stone settings of circular, triangular and ‘boat’ form.

Special problems include those of family or occupational grouping (e.g., foreign merchants); possible evidence of live burial in double and secondary burials; winter burial or ‘storage’ when the ground was frozen (the presence of crampons is relevant here); and weapons embedded in grave walls or cremations.

The final two chapters will be of the greatest interest to English readers, dealing with the more general topics of the population represented; the evidence for trade, and that for religion; and the cultural origins of Birka mortuary practice. Wealth is indicated either by rich grave goods or by the special grave-structure of chamber graves; the latter, it is suggested, include a proportion of merchants and their wives, and of warrior chiefs. In contrast simple inhumations or cremations without grave-goods are ascribed to the poor or Christian. Such conventional interpretations rather belie the author’s plea for a more rigorous approach to such matters, as in her rejection of a 1978 computerised appraisal of the ‘scoring’ of grave-goods at Birka.

The evidence from the graves is related to the market economy and increased urbanization reflected in the growth of Birka. Chamber-graves are a feature of the international character of the town and its merchants, and its function as a ‘Port of Trade’. The cemeteries are mixed, the sexes equally represented, though children are few — perhaps the merchants did not bring their children. The author estimates the population at c. 500–600 people, increasing perhaps to c. 1000 in the winter ‘ice-markets’.

Not surprisingly, the search for Christianity at Birka is stimulated by Ansgar’s mention of both Christians and churches in the 9th century. The author is prepared to see
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archaeological evidence for these in cross-designs on brooches and on Tating ware, and especially in the graves with cruciform pendants; she does admit, however, that one grave with a crucifix also had an Eastern crescent, and she is probably correct in her final view that religion at Birka was a syncretism of pagan and Christian influences.

Finally, the cultural origins are discussed. Cremations are seen as indigenous to Central Sweden, the inhumations representing principally foreigners from Western Europe. Coffin-burials and chamber-graves are seen especially as having western origins in Friesland, Lower Saxony, and Westphalia (from which area Ansgar came), and as having important contacts with Dorestad. The cemetery developed gradually from family or merchant nuclei in a town whose mercantile basis depended on royal administration and supplies. The volume concludes with a classified grave list and a massive bibliography.

Much has been written by almost every student of Birka on its cemeteries, but Dr Gräslund's scholarly survey must be for our generation the definitive account of the mortuary practice, ultimately to be integrated with the details of Finds in Birka I-III. We may hope that one day there will be extensive modern excavations of the 'Black Earth' which so defeated earlier investigators, so that the cemetery data may be fully integrated with those of settlement.

PHILIP RAHTZ


The name North Elmham Park will be familiar to most readers from the lengthy interim reports which appeared in Norfolk Archaeology, and its frequent citation in recent literature as an Anglo-Saxon bishop's residence. It is this aspect, therefore, which is bound to attract most attention although the site produced features spanning the years from the middle Saxon period to the 12th century. As the author points out in his introduction, the report was written before the appearance of the Frere recommendations on archaeological publication so that it contains considerably more detail than we are now used to reading. Some of the detail is contained in microfiche distributed with Volume I, an experimental use of the medium on which data such as the complete excavation plan (Excavation Atlas), gazetteers of excavated features and pottery and larger tables of human bone measurements are recorded.

The first volume consists of a discussion of the vexed question of the Anglo-Saxon dioceses in East Anglia, from which the author concludes that the sec was at North Elmham from its beginning in the 7th century; a chapter on the location and topography of the site; and detailed descriptions and discussions of the excavation. The second includes osteological reports by the late Calvin Wells and by Helen Cayton (human bones), Barbara Noddle (animal bones) and Don Bramwell (bird bones); a pottery report by Keith Wade and Richard Hodges; a section on metal and other finds by various authorities; documentary evidence by David Yaxley; and general conclusions by the author. All these sections are lavishly illustrated with figures, plates and tables, the bone reports alone occupying 165 pages with 54 tables — might these not also have been candidates for microfiche? The same might be said of Chapter 13, Detailed Description of the Burials, which alone takes up almost 60 pages. There is no doubt that much interesting information is presented here, but it would not have been lost by another means of reproduction.

The site itself produced a complex palimpsest of features which have been divided into six periods mainly on the basis of horizontal stratigraphy, pottery dating and ten radiocarbon dates. Disentangling the features was obviously a complicated business and Peter Wade-Martins must be congratulated on achieving a logical sequence out of a mass of data. The standard of excavation and recording was obviously extremely high, and this presenta-
tion of the method used is clear and convincing; one cannot doubt the evidence on which the author’s conclusions are based. What one may doubt are some of the conclusions drawn from the evidence. This comment is not offered as adverse criticism; all archaeological work is open to a variety of interpretation and it is a measure of the significance of the excavations at North Elmham Park that they have resulted in such a thought-provoking publication.

My main doubt springs from the initial emphasis placed on the documentary evidence and the assumption that North Elmham was the original East Anglian see. In all fairness, however, the author does say that ‘if substantial evidence for middle Saxon activity does ever come to light at South Elmham [Suffolk], then the conclusions presented in this report will have to be reconsidered’ (p. 6), but other parts of his conclusions are less tentative and based more firmly on the probability that this site was the nucleus of a bishop’s residence.

In Period I, Phases 2 and 3 (8th to early 9th century) the site was split up into roughly equal portions by a series of ditches which are thought to delimit streets and properties, with Building S within one such property and a well and a bakehouse further south. Building S was a post-in-trench structure, originally (Phase 2) 13 m long, subsequently (Phase 3) extended to 20 m, and with a constant internal roof span of just over 6 m; it showed ‘middle Saxon house carpentry at its most advanced form’. The simultaneous existence of Building S, the bakehouse and well in Period I, Phase 2, prompts Wade-Martins to comment ‘it is difficult to visualize how such an engineering enterprise would have been attempted in a village far removed from the prosperity of trading centres such as Ipswich unless it was carried out under strong central control such as a cathedral or royal establishment could provide’ (p. 629). Furthermore, he suggests that ‘the settlement pattern at Elmham might possibly have been an attempt by the early community to duplicate a pattern of streets resembling other cathedral towns [i.e. those of Roman origin] in lowland England’. This is an interesting point, but would it ever have occurred to the excavator of a site without North Elmham’s documentary record?

In the late 10th century (Period II, Phase 3) a large L-shaped building (Building P) was erected in the north of the site. If the dating is correct, this could coincide with the consecration in 954-55 of Athulf as the bishop of all East Anglia, and it is the coincidence of the dating which leads to the comment,

It may have been Athulf who erected the large L-shaped hall, Building P, which stood at the junction between the old main street and the route which led from this street up to the west entrance into the cathedral. The excavated area (bordered on the west by the main street, on the north by the route up to the cathedral and on the east by the road now followed by the present village street) was apparently set aside for the bishop’s use, and no other Period II houses were erected in this area (p. 632).

Is this not a case of putting the cart before the horse? All Wade-Martins’s observations may be true, but how many of them would he have made had he been excavating a totally undocumented site? The excavator shows that he realizes the limitations of his evidence by pointing out the paucity of exotic pottery or high-quality metalwork found in the buildings; there is very little in the way of small finds to back up the theory of this being an episcopal site. But obviously the documentary evidence dominates his thoughts and directs his interpretation.

I offer these comments not as a criticism of the excavation or the report of North Elmham Park, but rather as a plea that archaeological evidence should be allowed to stand on its own and be interpreted on its own merits. We are, of course, dealing with an historic period where documentary evidence must be taken into account, but would it not be a more satisfactory archaeological exercise if the excavated evidence were to be presented and interpreted in vacuo and the documentary evidence then brought to bear on it? If the documents are presented first, there is a danger that the archaeological finds will be bent to fit them.

Excavations at North Elmham Park is probably the most exciting report of a middle and late Saxon settlement site so far published, and we must be grateful to Peter Wade-Martins for presenting us with the evidence for and interpretation of a site which will provide meat for discussion and speculation for many years to come.

HELEN CLARKE

The big Viking exhibitions in England, America, Denmark and Sweden in 1980–82 caused a flood of Viking books of which many will be forgotten just as quickly as they were written. But with Viking Artefacts James Graham-Campbell has presented us with a classic. The author writes about the book: ‘... this Catalogue does not set out to provide a history of the Vikings and their movements, but is intended to serve as a reference book by making available as wide a range as possible of Viking Age artefacts ... ’, and through 540 catalogue numbers (of which some contain more than one object) a very broad range of important and characteristic aspects of Viking Age material culture is described, discussed and illustrated. The objects chosen are almost exclusively those of the Viking Exhibition in London 1980. But a few important objects or type of objects, which for one reason or another could not be shown there, have been added, such as a chest from Oseberg (No. 30) and the great Jelling runestone (No. 494).

The artefacts, covering the whole range between common daily life utensils and the most sophisticated art objects, are grouped in the following sections: Introduction (with four objects), Daily Life, Dress and Adornment, Weapons, Transport, Loot and Trade (the coin part written by Nicholas Lowick), Coins and Currency (written by Marion Archibald), Crafts, Viking Art, Religion. Each section starts with a short survey of the relevant types of objects and has references to general works on them. Each artefact is detailed and systematically described (almost without exception, from the original) and is discussed in a separate part (which often contains good cross-references). There is also information about the find circumstances and museum registration number, and a bibliography. The plates have illustrations of almost every object, as far as possible at a scale of 1:1 and almost without exception with a photo of excellent quality. There are also a few drawings.

A Concordance leads the way from the Exhibition's and the Exhibition Catalogue's numbers to the Catalogue numbers of the book, and through an Index of Artefacts you can find the catalogue numbers of the various types of artefact (toys, key, harness-bow etc.). Several (e.g. bowl, silver) will be found in more than one section: the Lille Valla bowl (No. 64) is in the section Daily Life — not in Viking Art, as you would immediately expect — while the imported bowl from Alvkarleby (No. 353) is in Loot and Trade. The reader who is interested in silver vessels, must, however, remember that such vessels can be found also through the index word: cup, silver. This refers to the Lejre cup (No. 63) in Daily Life and the Fejø cup (No. 325) in Loot and Trade. There are no cross references from bowl to cup or vice versa, which would have been useful to those readers who do not have English as their native tongue.

In a book of this kind it is important to have an exhaustive Index of Artefacts. But it is unfortunate that there is no Site Index at all. Many Viking artefacts are named after their find-site, and, as exemplified above, it is not immediately obvious in which section an object can be found. And it is cumbersome that the Lindisfarne stone, which is to be found in the Introduction (No. 1) must be traced through the index word ‘grave-marker, Anglo-Saxon, stone’ or ‘monument, stone’. It would undoubtedly also be of interest to many readers to be able to see quickly which objects, and how many, there were in the catalogue from a certain site, e.g. Kaupang. A Site Index would save much leafing through and much wear on the book.

Graham-Campbell has cautiously and prudently furnished the book with the subtitle ‘A Select Catalogue’, for though it is very comprehensive it does not contain every type of object. Here is e.g. no spade (but a shovel), no wash basin (unless the bronze bowl No. 320 did in fact function as such), no Pingisdorf pottery (but Tating ware), no bed and no table (but chair, stool, chest and casket). There are, furthermore, only four examples of pottery produced in Scandinavia — such pottery is the most common material from the settlement sites of Denmark and parts of Sweden, and what is probably the most common of all the native types, the hemispherical vessels of Jutland, is not among the four catalogued pots.
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There are a few errors and a few outdated or inadequate comments. Some examples: Feje (the Feje cup No. 325) is not situated in Jutland; it is a small island south of Zealand. The discussion of the Slav pot No. 339 from Trelleborg is based on Poul Nørlund’s publication of 1948 and outdated; Slav pottery has been studied since then. The pot is clearly of the Menkendorf type, and it is also quite uncertain if it is from the period of the Trelleborg fortress or from the older civilian settlement on the site. Soapstone was quarried in Scandinavia not only in Norway (p. 124); large amounts of soapstone vessels come from SW. Sweden. The illustration of No. 5 is upside down. The illustrations of Nos. 163:2 and 163:3 have been inadvertently exchanged.

For a Dane at least it is also a matter of some surprise to see the slightly messy and apparently inconsistent lay-out of the plates. The designer has, of course, not had an easy job, but it could have, of course, not had an easy job, but it could have been solved better. One also wonders why the publishers chose such a dreary pale blue jacket over such a serious dark blue cover. No law forbids a serious book to have an attractive appearance.

These critical remarks are, however, (apart from the missing Site Index) only of minor importance. Graham-Campbell’s Viking Artefacts (which is just one of the three books to which he gave his name in 1980) is, with its great, varied and well chosen artefacts, its excellent picture quality, its clear terminology, its competent treatment of the material and its thorough bibliographies, a real treasure for all those who translate Viking archaeology from or into English. And not least, it has already become a most important reference work for archaeologists working on the Viking Age and related periods. It also gives a fascinating general insight into Viking Age material culture and technology, and will be a useful book for anyone who is seriously interested in the Vikings.

ELSE ROESDAHL


A two-thirds replica of the Gokstad ship was built near Oslo in late 1978/early 1979 to mark the celebration of the Manx Millennium. Named Odin’s Raven, she was sailed and rowed across the North Sea via Orkney and Skye and arrived in the Isle of Man in early July 1979. As a strict archaeological experiment this project was a non-starter; nevertheless Viking Voyagers, the book this millennium voyage generated, has proved to be essential reading for medieval archaeologists and historians.

Alan Binns has divided his life between lecturing in Old English and Old Norse at Hull University, and sailing the North Sea and the Baltic. In a series of papers published during the past 20 years he has brought a much needed realism to bear on speculations about Viking Age seamanship and navigation. His introduction to Holger Arbman’s Vikings (1962) (although the book itself may now be obsolescent) remains an important contribution to these topics; other papers include studies on the Parker Chronicle entry for 897, sun navigation in the Viking Age, the Sutton Hoo ship publication, and the operational performance of the Viking Age ship.

Binns has seized the opportunity provided by his participation in the design, trials and voyage of Odin’s Raven to present in the book under review his considered thought on maritime matters in the North Sea and the northern Atlantic from the Migration period to the late 11th century. In Part 1 (94 pages) he uses a wide variety of sources and his own knowledge of seamanship to comment on most of the chronicled maritime events. In addition, he analyses Old English poems, such as Beowulf and The Seafarer, and Alfred’s account of Ohthere’s and Wulfstan’s travels for the light they shed on northern voyages and voyagers. The possible routes taken across the North Sea by the Anglo-Saxon migrants as well as the Viking raiders and explorers, and the types of ship appropriate to their several different types of voyage are also evaluated. The final chapter in Part 1 is on Navigation; in
this Binns critically examines the various devices and techniques which other authors have suggested the Vikings may have used, from Floki’s ravens to the sunstone, generally finding them either unsubstantiated by the evidence or useless. Binns’ preferred solution to this problem (and one also advocated by this reviewer) is that pilotage methods were used when leaving, passing near or approaching land masses, and a simple form of dead-reckoning elsewhere. This is how small ships, lacking most modern aids except the compass, navigated the northern Atlantic in the 19th century.

Part 2 (135 pages) is principally an account of the Odin’s Raven project; nevertheless, interpolated in the narrative are valuable discussions on, for example, the choice of timber for the replica and the design of sail and rigging. These provide a useful commentary on the evidence that has survived from the Viking Age, and, like Part 1, should prove thought-provoking and stimulating to medievalists of all denominations.

Anyone meeting Alan Binns for the first time soon realizes that it is wise to have Admiral Smyth’s Sailors’ Wood-Book (1867) readily to hand. Viking Voyagers is not so well spiced with exotic nautical terms; nevertheless the reader puzzled by priare or rakke will be relieved to discover that the Index is also something of a glossary. Specific references are not given in the text, but there is a short list of general references at the end of the book.

SEÁN MCGRAIL


This attractive book presents a slightly unusual and personal view of the parish churches of medieval England that will appeal especially to readers of this journal. It is not particularly concerned with abstract matters of institutional growth. Comments on the development of the parish system, the legal and administrative dimensions of the parish, are safe and conventional enough to give background to the book’s focal point which is the role of the parish church in society, and the reflection it provides of the state of society.

Dr Platt divides his book into six chapters, a brief account of origin, a useful description of Buildings and Church Furnishings before 1350, three chapters that are truly central to the aim of the book on ‘the clergy’, ‘the Crisis of Faith’, and ‘the Community and the Parish’. There is a final interesting short account of the effects of the Reformation. The greatest weight of learning is thus placed on the 13th and 14th centuries, understandably so in the light of so much of the available evidence, literary, record and visual. There is pleasant emphasis throughout on work in progress. Platt reminds us how new archaeological evidence is helping to show the dynamic quality of the late Anglo-Saxon church, replacement of wood by stone and extension of size being by no means a Norman prerogative. The plans of Raunds, St Mary (Tanner Street), Winchester and the full page development plan of Ashleham, Essex (pp. 18-21) are particularly valuable. Most of us would agree completely with Dr Platt when he writes (p. 19) ‘that our view of the wealth and resources of the Anglo-Saxon rural church is likely to change dramatically as the study by excavation of the English village church gathers momentum’. The book is full of good things that come from personal savouring, and it is a pleasure to see where one’s own favourites (Kilpeck and Kemiple, for example) coincide. General questions that people ask and need to have answered are coped with pleasantly and fitted in to a convincing scheme for the general flow of the economy. Stained glass windows are rare before the late 12th century (p. 30); their most glorious period lies in the early 14th century (p. 31). The new elaboration of the chancel (Rector’s province) with piscina, aumbry, and sedilia begins to show in the 13th century. Developments in monumental sculpture and in brasses again take us to the late 13th century and early 14th century. The flourishing of the parish church and its monuments fits fairly into the economists’ view of a peak in western European development c.1280 to 1314. There is a lively chapter on the clergy, using good archaeological evidence particularly from Ashleworth in Gloucestershire
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with its rectorial complex, and Muchelney in Somersetshire. The job description of clerk and suffragans of St Nicholas, Bristol (1481) is effectively introduced (pp. 62–63). Sober and firm comments are made on the effects of the Black Death in promoting superstition, and the consequences of increased social complexity are delicately brought to our attention in an unfamiliar medium: chancel to the priests and nave to the laity remains an engaging motif (see especially p. 97).

Dr Platt's concluding chapter on the Reformation has phrases which suggest happily insights beyond his parochial brief. On the parishes themselves he is secure, showing how the Reformation had consequences that were often arbitrary and unexpected. The Elizabethan Settlement is seen as indicative of a moderate and hopeful temper because of its middle of the road conservatism and surely deliberate ambiguities (p. 156). There are moments when Dr Platt must feel that he foresaw the present plight and state of British universities when he reflected on the expedient resorted to, as tenure grew more difficult, 'of employing itinerant preachers in such rural churches as might otherwise have been starved of the word' (p. 165). Filmset at Over Wallop though printed by Wing King Tong at Hong Kong (what a world we live in), the book is pleasantly and copiously illustrated without benefit of colour, but with a successful attempt to make the illustrations truly illustrate the text.

H. R. LOYN


In 'sixteen diverse contributions... some authors have peered into deep pits... others at the inscrutable post-Roman tilth... others at jettied timbers in back streets, and others again at manuscripts and maps; it often seems as if the practitioners of different disciplines have windows facing onto different parts of the town.' This may not least be because while the historian (Ch. 16) warns that 'contemporary descriptions, however detailed, are often misleading' we are instructed by the archaeologist (Ch. 1) that 'it is important to believe' (my italics) that 'modern sampling and previous observations... can be used together as a reservoir of unequivocal information.' Proof, rather than belief, is what we should be looking for and this is not always forthcoming. Mr Carver has written elsewhere of how disconcerting it is that 'few historians can make adequate use of the independent source offered them by an excavations report' but here the author/editor's hymn-like prose ('nor need the burh defence, if known') carries the reader dangerously from one half-proved hypothesis or 'fact' to another. The volume contains much of value, not least in its discussion of the churches, but it has to be read with considerable care.

This will not be made easier by the idiosyncratic system of referencing (explained in a note on p. iv) which has all work largely relating to Worcester gathered in a Source Bibliography at the end of the volume, and references specific to a chapter quoted at its end. The division is often unsatisfactory (why, for instance, should Gardner's Hair and head-dress 1050–1600 appear in the Source Bibliography?) and its use is frequently confused (e.g. the citation of Brooke and Keir's London 900–1216 in Ch. 2 but its omission from both bibliographies). The principle of the Source Bibliography is, however, sound and with a 'catalogue of archaeological data relating to Worcester City', a list of 'mapped and documented buildings of 16th century and earlier', and notes on street-names and maps provides an invaluable index.

The volume is organized in five sections: origins, defences, the Church, livelihood (= excavations of non-ecclesiastical sites) and 'Worcester at the end of the Middle Ages'. The latter consists largely of an attempt to reconstruct the topography of the city c. 1575 (a useful
supplement to Dyer's *City of Worcester in the sixteenth century*) and is included because the editor, justifiably, feels that the changes that are reported bring the medieval city into sharper focus.

The volume opens with the editor's chapter on site and settlements. The reader is disarmingly invited to evaluate this evaluation by reference to the 'Catalogue of archaeological data' but is then presented with a series of irrefutable statements rather poorly keyed to the maps. We are told in passing of a Roman cemetery mentioned nowhere else, and certainly not in the index; we are asked to suppose a Roman bridge and harbour (dating for the latter relying on pottery identifications made in 1852); we are informed that 'it would not be unreasonable to extrapolate the existence of this [12th-century] marsh backwards ... into the Saxon period and beyond'; then, most misleadingly of all, we are informed that Roman Worcester, as if it were a York or a Gloucester, survived to become 'that special class of Anglo-Saxon occupied site, the useful ruin'. One is tempted to advise Mr Carver to re-read the later Winchester interim reports for a model of how, and exactly how far, one can argue from scraps of evidence. Nigel Baker's contribution on 'Churches, parishes and early topography' also flies kites, but does so more cautiously. His contention is that the churches of St Helen and St Alban with, perhaps, St Margarets form the nucleus of a 7th-century or earlier settlement pre-dating the foundation of the Cathedral. The first section ends with Della Hooke's discussion of the charter evidence, which confirms Worcester's role in the Hwiccan kingdom, and produces much topographical evidence about its hinterland.

The defences section opens with Beardsmore's workmanlike account of the documentary evidence for castle and city walls (gates 1190s, murage from 1224). His fruitless search for a 'strong fort' near the castle in 1139 might perhaps derive from a mis-translation of *castrum*, which would refer appropriately to the earth-walled town (*Ducange Glossarium* s.v.). The archaeological contributions that follow, by Bennet, Hirst and Wills, are less satisfactory and one wonders to what end much of it was published. Some illustrations, e.g. Fig. 21, seem almost aggressively otiose, while section 5.5 is a table of contractor's work on the wall in 1976-79.

Part 3, the Church, opens with Nigel Baker's useful discussion of the city's eleven parish churches (seven pre-1164; all by 1256) and twelve chapels (two pre-1200; two not until after 1535). We are reminded that the proliferation of parish churches, the rights of which are hardly discussed, represents an abandonment or breach of the decision of the 1092 synod of Worcester that 'there was no parish in the whole city ... but that of the mother church.' Three short contributions follow on a fragment of a Romanesque statue and on two small excavations at the Cathedral.

Part 4, livelihood, consists largely of a report on the excavation of three medieval and post-medieval craftsmen's tenements, and the presentation of an excellent type-series of material from them. The excavation report is intelligible only after reading Mr Carver's 1979 article and then only with difficulty. The crux of the problem is that the site was poorly stratified, which no amount of juggling with seriation diagrams is going to alter. The outcome is a series of statements which one would like to believe but can't. It is difficult, for instance, to square interpretative statements such as 'timber houses were ... laid out [soon after the 10th century] in tenements at right-angles to the street' with the factual record of 'an empty zone in Tenement C could be proposed as a house site'. Similarly, in a later period, we are told of 'jettied timber-framed buildings on stone cellars' which consists of a single frame standing in an indeterminable relationship to the cellar walls. There is, however, here as in the rest of the volume much of value and Mr Carver and his colleagues are to be congratulated on their rapid and cost-effective publication of both their evidence and their hypotheses.

ALAN CARTER

NOTE

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Garden history is very much in fashion for scholars of all periods at the present time. This book is only part of a flood of works on gardens which have appeared in the last few years and is the second on medieval gardens in three months.

Though one of our foremost architectural historians, Dr Harvey has always been involved in horticultural matters, and has a deep love for gardens and plans. Here he combines his considerable expertise as an historian with his great understanding of gardens to produce a clear and concise exposition of the origins and development of medieval gardens. The main emphasis is on English gardens but the influences, particularly of Italy and Spain, are analysed at length.

The book includes a discussion of all the plants found in the medieval gardens, including their origins, date of introduction and use. The arrangements of gardens are also discussed. All this is supported by contemporary accounts and descriptions as well as almost a hundred illustrations, many of which are new, at least to this reviewer. Yet it is far from being merely a descriptive book. The various strands of evidence are skilfully woven together to produce more than a work on gardens. It is a marvellous insight into the aesthetic and recreational desires and aims of the medieval upper classes. It is thus as much social history as horticultural history. Scholars of many different disciplines will find information and interest in the book.

But what of the archaeologist? In the new interest in the history of gardens, archaeologists have been notable by their absence. Few have recognized that the archaeology of gardens is an important and worthwhile study which can aid and complement the work of historians. The effort of Professor Cunliffe at Fishbourne is the only large scale attempt by an excavator to use archaeological techniques to reveal garden designs and that, of course, is in a Roman context. Such other minor work that has been carried out has also been confined to sites of Roman date. The Royal Commissions on Historical Monuments, both for England and Scotland, have produced considerable evidence of abandoned post-medieval gardens in places as widely separated as Dorset and Stirlingshire and especially in Northamptonshire where over 40 sites have been recognized. A handful of other fieldworkers also have been actively searching for post-medieval garden remains, with notable successes in West Yorkshire, Somerset, Oxfordshire and South Humberside.

Medieval gardens have, however, remained archaeologically elusive apart from a few ill-recorded fragments found during excavations on monastic sites, yet in the last year the English Commission at last has discovered and recorded a handful of late medieval gardens, now preserved as complex earthwork remains, mainly in an ecclesiastical context. There must be many more surviving examples awaiting discovery and very large numbers are likely to be concealed in and around the almost ubiquitous moated sites.

When, and if, archaeologists tackle the problems of medieval gardens they will find a wealth of comparative material in Dr Harvey’s book. The double-moated ‘herbarium’ formed in 1302 at Peterborough Abbey, together with its fishponds and surrounding ditches can be matched closely on many moated sites. Similarly the 12th-century description of the garden at Clairvaux, which was ‘divided into a number of beds of little canals which, though of still water, flow slowly’, should be recognizable in an excavation if indeed the design was repeated in England.

Dr Harvey has done all scholars of the medieval period a considerable service with his book. It is easy to read, a pleasure to dip into and should be a valuable source of information for a long time to come. If archaeologists take note of what it contains, and act, its value will be enhanced even more.

C. C. TAYLOR

In the 1950s the Archaeological Survey of Northern Ireland (then part of the Ministry of Finance) published a series of monographs dealing with major monuments in the province. This series is now resumed with the present volume, under the imprint of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.

The subject chosen is one familiar to anyone who has approached Northern Ireland by sea, down the marine highway of Belfast Lough. Carrickfergus Castle is a stark pile standing on a rocky promontory which defined the main harbour in the Middle Ages when Belfast had not yet been developed. Used as an army depot until 1928, it carries the mark of every major military crisis in Ulster's history since 1177.

Dr McNeill's study of the castle combines a review of the documentary evidence, an analysis of the fabric and an account of two excavations carried out in 1955 and 1962. Although issued by D.o.E. (N.I.) at a price which must surely be subsidised, this is a very personal effort by Dr McNeill. This perhaps explains one or two shortcomings in the presentation of the work. In particular, Dr McNeill is forced to go to great lengths to convey in words details which could (and should) have been much more clearly expressed in drawings or photographs. That said, Dr McNeill is to be congratulated on presenting a first class study of a complex and much altered monument. Even the two brief excavation reports consigned to an appendix represent something of a triumph, the material having been 'rescued' from a very parlous state.

Carrickfergus Castle was established by John de Courcy in A.D. 1177 as a base for forays into Antrim. As a frontier work the polygonal curtain wall was the first requisite, the square keep being added later; a keep seems to have been envisaged from the first, however. When King John seized the castle in A.D. 1210 he found a small, simple keep with a minuscule bailey devoid of flanking towers or gatehouse. The lack of flanking was partly remedied when the narrow Middle Ward — virtually an extended barbican — was added c. 1220. Yet still there would seem to have been no gatehouse worthy of the name. It was not until a third phase of building added the Outer Ward during the 1230s that this defect was made good: and even then the twin-towered gate was a very odd structure indeed! In the 14th century the gate passage was rebuilt and a barbican added, but as English power waned the castle became increasingly isolated — understaffed and poorly maintained.

In the mid 16th century Carrickfergus became a key base for the reassertion of Tudor authority in Ulster. The keep was altered and re-roofed, and the gatehouse and outer curtain were modified to take guns. The castle never received really up-to-date defences, however, and the 17th century saw it relegated to the role of army depot. Militarily, it had been superseded by the new bastioned artillery forts: commercially, its harbour had been replaced by the new port of Belfast. During the Napoleonic Wars barracks were built in the Outer Ward and the keep was altered yet again. The towers of the Gatehouse were cut down to carry cannon, in effect becoming paired Martello towers!

In 1855 the castle became the artillery headquarters for the North of Ireland. New guns were provided and the necessary alterations made to the gun-platforms and embrasures, but the castle ended its days as a military work relegated once more to the role of depot. Sadly, one is forced to conclude that for most (if not all) of its life, the castle was not of the first class: possibly it was not even of the second class.

This is unfortunate, especially as regards the earlier phases, since Dr McNeill is at pains to stress that Carrickfergus was a work of some pretension. Carrickfergus in the 13th century would nonetheless seem to have been small and tactically weak compared with contemporary baronial works in England and Wales. An interesting point is the absence at first of a recognisable gatehouse, elsewhere an accepted symbol of lordly authority. As first built, Carrickfergus resembled a late medieval Tower House and Bawn rather than an Anglo-Norman keep and bailey castle. John de Courcy's works may have been sufficient to keep the Irish at bay: they would not have impressed King John with the status of their owner, however.
Some issues raised by Dr McNeill require further thought. The fourth floor of the keep was removed in the 16th century. But must it not have been a late medieval insertion in the first place? It should have provided the safest and most private accommodation in the castle. Yet it would seem to have been cramped and appallingly badly lit, and it detracted from the much grander chamber(s) below on the third floor. The case seems to rest on the evidence of one door, now blocked. It merits further study.

A related issue is the date of the spine wall in the keep, in its present form apparently a 16th-century feature. Yet the keep 'reads' better on the assumption that each floor was divided (perhaps into hall and chamber) from the start. Certainly, a shared garderobe with duplicated access from the first floor would seem to argue for a subdivision of this floor at least.

Finally, John de Courcy’s castle would seem to have made no provision for the close guarding of horses while grazing. Yet de Courcy was utterly dependent on his horses: witness the ignominious retreat on foot after his defeat in 1178. Surely there must have been an enclosure for horses where the Outer Ward now stands, even if it was only a palisaded corral?

**BRIAN K. DAVISON**

_A The Ship in the Medieval Economy 600–1600._ By Richard W. Unger. 14 × 22 cm. 304 pp., 27 figs.


In the preface to this book Unger states that his aim is to place the development of medieval ship design in the context of European economic history, and to demonstrate 'how changes in ships were critical to certain major changes in the social and political development of Europe.' His main argument is that technical changes in sea transport influenced changes in society, with the corollary that economic forces generated in that society influenced shipbuilders’ decisions on what and how to build.

After a general introduction, the book is divided into six chapters, each describing consecutive periods of about 150 years in length. Economic analysis plays a major part in Unger’s presentation: thus he discusses how changes in the supply of raw materials affected shipbuilding, and how the demand for different types of ship was influenced by their relative cargo capacity, size of crew and method of loading cargo. Unger’s underlying assumption is that medieval man sought to minimize cost and maximize profitability, and that thereby inventions and innovations were stimulated. The result is an economic commentary in a maritime framework, written by an economic historian, rather than by an archaeologist or a historian of technology.

Unger has brought together a wide range of documentary, iconographic and archaeological evidence concerning medieval shipping in the northern and Mediterranean seas, and his use of 13th–15th-century documentary sources is especially to be welcomed. Archaeologists who are unfamiliar with economic concepts such as relative factor costs, risk evaluation, manning ratios and so on, should benefit from the discussion here, and may be encouraged to use similar analytical techniques in their own work. A more open question, however, is whether the account Unger presents of the development of medieval ship design is sufficiently accurate to sustain the economic conclusions he draws.

An indication of Unger’s attitude to work outside his own discipline may be found on p. 29 where he states that 'the history of ship design is on more solid ground than the history of the economy'. The foundations of early European economic history may or may not be as insecure as Unger suggests, but it is undoubtedly true that the study of shipbuilding in the early medieval period is generally at the data collection stage, and that any attempts to generalise must be critically examined in the light of the small sample from which deductions can be made.

Unger attempts to classify early medieval ship-finds into types with names known from medieval documents. Identifications of archaeological sites and finds by their medieval
names is to be welcomed, and indeed it is principally in this way that archaeological,
documentary and iconographic evidence can be integrated, but such identifications must be
demonstrated rigorously. Unger presents his classifications as fact, when they are only
speculative. Thus Utrecht boat I is called a hulc (p. 58); the Bruges boat fragments a cog
(p. 60); and the Graveney boat a keel (p. 77).

A third matter for comment is Unger's uncritical use of quantitative data about boat
finds. To aim at quantification is admirable and boat-finds can be of greater use to the
economic historian if some idea can be obtained of size, cargo capacity, sail area, speed,
stability, seaworthiness, size of crew and so on. Some finds however are so fragmentary or
poorly documented that neither size nor operational performance can be estimated. But all
finds are incomplete to some degree, and it is necessary to evolve conjectural reconstructions
(some being more worthy of confidence than others) so that operational data can be
estimated. In general, any set of remains can be reconstructed hypothetically to give at least
two versions with different capabilities. In addition, waterline shape is an important factor in
determining ships' performance: but the operational waterline is by no means self-evident on
some boat finds. For these reasons there may be no single answer to questions about speed,
stability and so on, but rather a range of values, valid for different assumptions. Unger
appears to be unaware of the necessity for caution when handling such matters and gives, for
example the dimensions of Viking sails (p. 85, 88) with no reference to the widely differing
views on this matter; nor does he make it clear that there is no direct evidence.

Furthermore, Unger sometimes presents inaccurate technical information: thus he
states that the stems of the Graveney boat meet the keel 'at something near right angles'
(p. 77) whereas the angle is c. 30°. Figure 1 and its caption are misleading: the upper diagram
is more typical of 19th-century European clinker-building than of 9th-century; the lower
diagram shows a form of construction which is more Egyptian than Roman. On pages 36, 56,
60 and 70 Unger uses the term end to end to describe planking which has in fact been fastened
dge to edge. Certain remarks about the Sutton Hoo boat are mutually contradictory: Unger
claims that, 'The cargo was relatively light and so the barge' (i.e. Sutton Hoo boat) 'rode
high in the water, an advantage for oarsmen' (p. 63); whereas three lines later he states that,
'Freeboard was low so that the oars could function.'

Scholars from other disciplines who incorporate archaeological evidence into their
studies should be aware that excavated evidence is seldom complete and its interpretation is
usually not straighthforward; in addition it may be unrepresentative and may have no direct
analogue in the documentary record. Scholars who tackle technological and scientific topics
— again to be strongly encouraged — should ensure that they have a sound grasp of the
vocabulary and the technical details: it would be unfortunate if students were to be misled by
the inaccuracies.

SEÁN MCGRAIL

Short Reviews

The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Fonaby, Lincolnshire. (Occasional papers in Lincolnshire History
and Archaeology No. 6). By Alison M. Cook, based on a catalogue of the material by Sonia
C. Hawkes. 21 × 20 cm. 108 pp., 32 figs., 7 pls. Sleaford: Society for Lincolnshire History
and Archaeology, 1981. Price £3.20 to society members, £4.50 to non-members.

This is a report on the rescue excavation/observation of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery in
1956–58. The background of the site is discussed in the context of Anglo-Saxon Lindsey, and
it describes the circumstances of the discovery together with the problems involved in
compiling accurate grave-groups. There is a detailed and fully illustrated catalogue of finds,
by grave where possible, followed by brief discussions of the main artefact types and
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conclusions as to the dating of the site. The textile report describes the more than usually completely surviving remains of cloth from garments and/or shrouds.

Because the site is so very incomplete, no analysis of the cemetery could really be attempted, but it is a useful if minor contribution to the body of Anglo-Saxon material from eastern England; and it is in any case salutary to remember how many well-known Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are not only unpublished but, if they were fully published, would emerge as no better preserved than Fonaby.

CATHERINE HILLS


The sub-title of Uaininn O'Meadhra's book is _An illustrated and descriptive catalogue of the so-called artists' 'trial-pieces' from c. 5th-12th cents. A.D. found in Ireland, c. 1830-1973._ It is to be followed by 'a complementary discussion-analysis of this material with information on non-Irish pieces', although these uncommon 'motif-pieces' (as we must now learn to call them) are essentially an Irish phenomenon. These include some of the recent finds of such bones and stones (and occasionally wood and leather) from the Dublin excavations, which will be of vital importance in the elucidation of the Scandinavian impact on Irish art in the 10th to 12th centuries, and of workshop practices — of methods of design and instruction, and possibly of technical processes. This corpus describes in minute detail a total of 160 pieces which are illustrated both photographically and by line-drawings, with many additional details analysing individual motifs. Whilst we await Miss O'Meadhra's discussion of the material that she has described so conscientiously, we must approve her introduction of a well-defined terminology for the purpose.

JAMES GRAHAM-CAMPBELL

_De Arkeologiske Utgravninger i Gamlebyen, Oslo. 2, Feltene Oslogate 3 og 7, Bebyggelsesrester og Funngrupper._ Edited by Erik Schia. 21 x 29.5 cm. 155 pp., 145 figs. Oslo: 1979. Price 75 N.Kr.

This is the second volume of a proposed series of seven on the results of excavations in medieval Oslo. Volume 1 (H. I. Høeg et al., 1977) dealt with the site of Mindets Tomt, an area of 370 m². The present publication concerns two much smaller sites, numbers 3 and 7 Oslogate, and a much more limited range of useful archaeological evidence. The remaining five volumes will comprise two further excavation reports (Søndre Felt and Nordre Felt), a volume on palaeobotanical and palaeozoological investigations, a volume on comparative analysis of artifacts and building materials, and finally a volume of synthesis and conclusions.

HELEN CLARKE

_West Yorkshire: an Archaeological Survey to A.D. 1500_ (West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council). 21 x 30 cm. (text), 41 1/2 x 60 cm. (maps). 1012 pp., 9 figs., 24 plates, 31 maps. Wakefield: County Hall, 1981. Price £39.00 (four-volume set).

This handsome, well-designed, and meticulously edited _Archaeological Survey_ is the product of a fine team effort in the County Archaeology Unit and a tribute to the drive of its originator, Philip Mayes, County Archaeologist for West Yorkshire. It takes the form of three
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volumes of text, the first examining 'Sources, Environment and the County to A.D. 1066', the second analysing at length 'The Administrative and Tenurial Framework', the third discussing 'The Rural Medieval Landscape'. A fourth map-volume plots, in pioneering detail, such matters as prehistoric finds in the county, place-name evidence, ancient woodlands, Domesday landholding, distribution of wealth in 1334 and in c. 1600, medieval settlement at individual townships, and much else. The aim has been 'to reverse the traditional process of field archaeology whereby sites are mainly identified by fieldwork and then their existence checked in the documents'. Instead, the Unit has built up a formidable archive of information on tenurial boundaries and descents, on the history of the making of the landscape, to be used as the basis for intelligent prediction of what might still lie hidden in the ground. Each author assesses the priorities for future research in his or her speciality or period, and inevitably, there is an element in these volumes of private debate and research. It could be that if private research interests had been excluded with greater rigour, there would have been more room in these volumes for the major subjects, held back for the time being, of the parish church and of urbanization.

COLIN PLATT


The author's earlier survey, written jointly with Bernard Randoin, of the archaeological potential of Tours has been noticed already in this Journal. The present volume is the first in a series designed to make available the final results of the actual excavations, post-excavation work and documentary research undertaken by the Laboratoire d'Archéologie Urbaine (LAU) since 1973. Publication, by choice and necessity, will be selective and will be backed up by an extensive archive being formed by the LAU. This volume contains a series of shorter studies on: the development of the precincts of the orders of friars in the city from the 13th to the 18th century; the divisions of the urban and suburban areas in the 9th and 10th centuries, and their designations; 15th- to 17th-century glass drinking vessels; an outline classification of the chronology of ceramics at Tours from the 4th to the 11th century; early medieval terracottas from the Château excavation; and the excavation of a late medieval potter's workshop.

RICHARD GEM


This volume is the first published by the rescue archaeology service (Service SOS Fouilles) of the Administration du patrimoine culturel for the SW. provinces of Belgium. The SOS Fouilles was set up in 1978 with the object of 'making a very swift intervention following the chance discovery or isolation of archaeological remains threatened with destruction or disappearance'. The current reports, all in print within a year of the work undertaken, are well illustrated interims (of a few pages each) and cover sites of all periods. About half the volume is taken up by the section on medieval and post-medieval sites which include: five churches, one cemetery, one monastic building, one castle, one brick kiln. In addition there are short notes on other sites affected by development.

RICHARD GEM

Ur Textilkonstens Historia: Roger Tanner’s translation of the only account of the development of Old World textiles from antiquity to the present day makes a strongly favourable first impression; it is attractively printed with a copious bibliography and magnificent plates, four in colour. Yet closer inspection brings a creeping sense of anticlimax. The approach is primarily art-historical, with forays into the technology and economics of textile manufacture. Hence silks and patterned fabrics in cheaper materials claim a disproportionate amount of attention. In the first thirteen chapters Dr Geijer takes the reader from the raw materials through looms and weaving methods to a masterly review of the surviving textiles in their respective historical and geographical contexts. Chapters XIV–XVI deal with specific topics of personal interest to the author; they should best be regarded as appendices.

The surveys of raw materials and weaving implements (principally looms) are disappointing. The author seems unaware of Dr M. L. Ryder’s most recent, and fundamental, research into the development of European wool and fleece-types, and her classification of looms on the basis of their assumed products rather than their actual structure makes archaeological nonsense. The account of weaves and weaving techniques which follows is highly compressed and decidedly off-putting to a beginner! Chapters IV–VI cover the weaving of various types of patterned and unpatterned fabric. Where it discusses the earliest textiles, the book is unexpectedly weak, except on those topics on which the author herself has made the primary contribution (e.g. on the textiles from Antinoe and Birka). But for later medieval and early modern times the account carries far more conviction, and Chapters VII–XI, supported by the bibliography, will be of great value to a wide spectrum of readers, particularly the sections devoted to the history of Nordic textile manufacture. In some respects, alas, the book was already out of date when it first appeared in 1972, and the revision for the 1979 translation was unduly modest. The critical reader however will find much to appreciate in this volume. The sponsors of the translation have put us deeply in their debt.

John Peter Wild

The following publications have also been received:


Report of a discussion between conservators, archaeologists and curators about their needs concerning the treatment of finds. Short papers by Addyman, Gowing, Cronyn, Keene, D. Brown and Lawson, including appendices on Anglo-Saxon shields and musical instruments.


Rescue Archaeology in the Bristol Area: I. Roman, medieval and later research organised by the City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery (Bristol City Museum Monographs No. 2). 21 × 29 cm. 123 pp., 35 figs., 4 pls. Bristol: City Museum and Art Gallery, 1979. Price not stated.

The second in a series of occasional publications of recent local work. The nine articles include excavations in Bristol (Town Wall, Bridge and St Peter’s churchyard) and studies of medieval pottery and tiles.
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1. An analysis of the solidus material from Öland.
2. The weight system of unminted gold from Öland, its chronology and economic background.


A new interdisciplinary journal of Celtic Studies, covering all the medieval Celtic countries and their relations with the rest of the British Isles and the Continent. Subjects will include archaeology and art history, literary and historical studies and the aims are to speed the publication of research in a form accessible to all medievalists, and to encourage informed interest and debate.

The paperback version of the 1976 edition.


A collection of new and updated summaries of recent work from 146 towns by the Urban Research Committee of the C.B.A. With extensive bibliographies and French and German summary.

A series of short reports of recent excavation results, set in their general historical and topographical background. Including specialist studies by Hawkes, Dickinson, Galloway, Guido, Evison and Rigold.
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The first in the series of reports on Lincoln in the Anglo-Scandinavian period; the excavation of a sequence of thirteen periods of timber buildings from the late 9th to early 13th centuries.
