Reviews


There can be little doubt that this book will be given a hostile reception by the majority of scholars of Anglo-Saxon archaeology, whom it castigates for their conservatism. Inevitably the empiricist reaction will be to quibble over points of fact, rather than to take issue with the substantial points of interpretation which are raised.

Arnold’s theme is that ‘the Sutton Hoo harp [sic] has been played whilst the archaeological world burned’ (p. 9) and that Anglo-Saxonists have become obsessed with typologically based artefact studies to the point that they have ignored all theoretical developments in prehistoric studies within the last 25 years. He sets out to illustrate how the approaches of the ‘New Archaeology’ may help answer the fundamental questions about the development of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, questions which he suggests the conservative approach is not well suited to answering.

I should admit that I find much to agree with in this position, and would argue that at this stage it matters not so much whether particular interpretations are right or wrong, but that the crucial point is that Arnold has put them on the agenda for discussion. Indeed, many are inevitably based upon insufficient evidence and Arnold himself readily acknowledges that ‘few of the hypotheses examined in this book will stand the test of time’ (p. 16).

Nevertheless it is unfortunate that in grouping together all recent theoretical approaches and opposing them to what he calls the ‘Beowulf and brooches approach’ Arnold’s characterization of the new approaches is one-sided and minimizes the differences between opposed theoretical schools. In fact Arnold’s ‘New Archaeology’ is ruled by functionalism (at times ecological) and systems theory. Thus we are given site catchment analysis (p. 18) and soil analysis (p. 46), wealth scores (p. 160) and Thiessen polygons (p. 186). Despite being interesting exercises and certainly testable ones, many of these studies provide a simplistic explanation of human behaviour. Can one really assume, for instance, that princely burials were sited as central places within a homogeneous landscape?

We can also observe the influence of the systems approach in the organization of the chapters. After a very useful historical introduction we have chapters on economy (the longest), technology, religion, and the social system. The links between sub-systems are drawn out, sometimes to the point of repetition, but the inevitable result is that the treatment of the data is split according to ‘function’. Thus, for example, pottery is treated in terms of exchange in chapter two, as part of production in chapter three, as part of funerary ritual in chapter four, and as a marker of social identity in chapter five. These categories are a product of the analysis and are not inherent in the data.

In so far as Arnold succeeds in weaving together the social and economic evidence then his synthesis is fairly convincing. Thus he presents a model for state formation whereby differential access to prestige goods ultimately leads to a change from achieved to ascribed status and the development of the kingdoms. As Arnold acknowledges, however, we still do not know whether the rural surplus which would be required to make this possible was a contributory cause, or a result of it.

Arnold is less persuasive where he assumes a simple relationship between material culture and human behaviour, which sometimes takes little account either of the nature of deposition, or of human action. Thus we are told that it is a paradox that royal burials should
be so rich, whilst palace sites such as Yeavering have so little material, and that only items with little use-value would be deposited as grave-goods. Arnold accepts that wealth is just one aspect of social identity which might be reflected in burials but he still maintains his earlier position that there must be some direct relationship between wealth of burial and status, and that the number of weapon graves can be used as a measure of aggression.

Many of the analyses have been already published elsewhere but it is useful to have them brought together, along with several new ones. The diagrams are particularly useful as a stimulus for discussion. Histograms and tables such as those which show building type against sub-soil, distance of settlements from water, or settlements against soil types, are particularly interesting, although they really need some form of control data to allow comparisons with other periods if they are to be properly interpreted. Arnold also usefully synthesizes much recent evidence from excavation and research for the first time.

This is certainly a book which I would encourage students to read and discuss. It is full of ideas and should be welcomed as opening new and hopefully more fruitful debates in Anglo-Saxon archaeology.

JULIAN RICHARDS


This report is doubly welcome as the first published record of a modern rescue excavation of an almost complete early Anglo-Saxon cemetery of the late 5th to the 8th century in east Kent and as a real attempt to produce a report to the standards of the heavily-subsidized classic Merovingian cemetery reports of the post-war Federal Republic of Germany. This is only appropriate in the light of Kent's close relations with the Merovingian Frankish realms and the fact that Kent has a number of cemeteries which were used continuously between c. 500 and 700 or later: time spans comparable to their continental row-grave counterparts. The excavation itself took place under extremely difficult conditions in 1951-53 and these and the reasons for the long delays in conservation and drawing of the finds are explained in the introductory chapter. Its final appearance in print is but the first fruit of Professor Evison's retirement from university teaching. The publication of her cemetery excavations at Alton arrived while this review was being prepared and those at Great Chesterford and Beckford should be produced in rapid succession.

Particularly interesting grave groups from Dover and these other cemeteries have featured in her many artefact studies over the years, notably those on sword beads and rings, brooches, glass vessels and wheelthrown pottery. But even readers who feel familiar with those publications and who carefully examined the display of the Buckland, Dover cemetery finds in the British Museum between 1974 and 1980 will find much new thought and information in this final report. The text is extremely detailed and densely written, making few concessions to those unfamiliar with the technicalities of the period's cemetery archaeology, but there is a wealth of fascinating insights and controversial views here, which require careful reading and consideration.

It is not surprising to find that the discussion of the artefacts fills a large section of the text, but it is normal to discuss the physical anthropology together with the evidence for grave structures and the organization of the cemetery before proceeding to look at the other contents of the graves. While chapter one provides a description of the excavation and discussion of the orientation, form and fill of the graves, the layout of the skeletons, the positions of grave furniture, grouping of grave clusters on the cemetery plan and the limits of the cemetery, it is not until chapter three that the skeletal data are fully considered. This includes the evidence for family groupings and relative social status, as well as the chronology of the cemetery in both relative and absolute terms. A series of phasing diagrams (text figs. 25-27) of artefact types found in particular periods of cemetery use, which is clearly modelled
on the *Stufe* diagrams found in German cemetery reports, thus appears in chapter three and not in chapter two's discussion of the grave goods. The division of the cemetery into discrete plots labelled A–N (fig. 98), which will provide support for her relative sequence of phases through horizontal stratigraphy (Table XXVIII on p. 136 and figs. 101–07), is initially described at the end of chapter one, but again full discussion awaits chapter three. This may seem perfectly logical, for how can we assign an absolute chronology until we have considered all the grave finds? But unfortunately without any warning or cross-referencing, Evison from time to time brings forward information from her chronological phases of chapter three into chapter two in order to assign or justify the date ranges of particular artefact types. The reader is presumably expected to jump from the first mention of phases in chapter two to text figs. 25–27 and the discussion on pp. 134–42 in chapter three, without any help from the author. One solution to this problem might have been to preface the finds discussion with a consideration of the limited coin-dating evidence (just three post-Roman coins from two graves and one which was unstratified), together with a description of the methodology adopted for establishing the phasing. Finally, to complete the description of its organization, the specialist reports make up the fourth chapter and the grave catalogue the fifth.

Turning to the finds discussed in chapter two, this reviewer remains unhappy with the early dating once again attributed by Evison for the manufacture of the cast saucer brooch and the button brooch associated with a dolphin-headed buckle in Grave 48. While some composite cast five-spiral saucer brooches were being buried in north-west Germany within the first half of the 5th century (i.e. Liebenau cremation II/230 and Westerwanna cremation 1824 associated with tutulus brooches), that in Nesse Grave 3 was associated with the latest form of chipcarved equal-arm brooch. No fully cast five-spiral saucer brooch need antedate the pair from Spong Hill cremation 2376, also found with a Nesse Type equal-arm brooch of the middle or more probably the second half of the 5th century. Nevertheless, despite the extreme case put for the components of Grave 48, 475–525 is an acceptable date range for the first phase of the cemetery. Phase 2 attributed to 525–75 contains the earliest Kentish cast jewelled disc brooches and it is interesting to see that Professor Evison has quite independently reached similar conclusions to those of Leigh, i.e. that the earliest of Avent’s class 2 brooches must precede those of his classes 3 and 1. Silver scutiform disc pendants are a feature of phases 3 (575–625) and 5 (650–75), but strangely Evison emphasizes what she takes to be Christian symbolism on them and only then goes on to discuss their protective amuletic role as miniature representations of small round shields (pp. 55–56). Her case for regarding the simple cruciform designs which can appear on them as Christian must be tempered by the recognition that cross designs also occur on 6th-century Anglian examples, e.g. Spong Hill Grave 11 and Morningthorpe Grave 322, which were presumably buried with pagans. What seems to be no more than a possibility of Christian significance to this reviewer is a probability or even certainty to Evison and forms an important element in chapter three’s interpretation of the development of the cemetery.

There is a tendency to over-elaborate what seems to be a relatively straightforward, though not uniform, expansion of the cemetery. Plot A represents the primary zone and was certainly a restricted burial area, for graves were cut close to one another and the secondary set of graves of Phase 2 intercut those of Phase 1. The reason for this reluctance to bury outside a confined area is not clear and Evison’s explanation of an isolated Anglo-Saxon community under the control of the local British community (p. 143) seems rather improbable and surely would not have been effective as late as the middle decades of the 6th century. Thereafter the cemetery expands rapidly in almost every direction except north, but principally eastwards and south-eastwards. The community increases in size from the 9 graves of phase 1 and the 14 of 2 to 29 in 3 (all 50-year phases), 19 in 4, 20 in 5 and 38 in 6 (all 25-year phases) ending with the 28 of phase 7 in the first half of the 8th century. So we change from a tiny community with one burial every 4 years, implying perhaps 8 to 10 individuals per generation to one 3 times as large with an average of 2 deaths every 3 years. Three graves in phase 3 (575–625) accompanied by scutiform pendants are interpreted as the burials of
Christians (Graves 35 and 32 in plot B and 38 in plot F). By contrast to these Christian sectors, the phase 3 to 5 grouping of graves around and over the ring-ditch of a prehistoric barrow is seen as the burial area of conservative pagans. The fact that a woman wearing three scutiform pendants is buried in a prone position there in phase 5 (Grave 67), however, hardly proves this. Even if she was a Christian, as would be probable for the whole community by phase 5 (650-75), prone burial need not imply burial alive and the reasons for this special treatment need not have anything to do with her religious affiliations. The barrow was obviously a visible monument which probably formed the focus for a family burial plot over three to four generations on one edge of the cemetery. But this need not be incompatible with being Christian.

There are several other points of detail where the reviewer would beg to differ, for example how seriously are we expected to take the suggestion that the double warrior burial of Grave 96 reflects a homosexual relationship respected by those who buried them? Why not see this as the possible joint burial of father and son? Again, while accepting that isolated post-holes might represent markers governing the layout of the cemetery (fig. 110), their interpretation here following Hope-Taylor's Yeavering model is not all that convincing. But it would be churlish to emphasize such differences of opinion and ignore the rich detail revealed in this fascinating and important volume. This reviewer awaits her future excavation reports with anticipation.

MARTIN WELCH


It is the first time that any attempt has been made to catalogue this material thoroughly, and the writer has done a valuable service for anyone wishing to explore the late Roman and early Anglo-Saxon interface. The format of the catalogue follows a consistent pattern with the material divided into types, each type being examined in terms of its background, a list including continental examples, and a discussion of its date, derivation and use. The material is divided into two broad types: objects associated with dress, and those unworn objects considered to be 'accessories'. We are given a comprehensive study of penannular brooches from Anglo-Saxon graves and other Roman brooches including a new consideration of Roman disc brooches. Roman military metalwork is given a new system of classification, followed by Roman coins and miscellaneous objects such as finger rings, bracelets, tweezers, beads, intaglios, vessels, terrets, harness fittings, spoons and keys. A major theme underlying the discussion of the significance of the material in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries is the survival of Romano-British burial customs and comparisons are made with the use of Roman objects in Germanic graves on the continent. There is a separate catalogue of all the relevant graves and wherever possible the objects are illustrated. The majority of the effort has gone into the production of a catalogue and in contrast the extent of the analysis of the patterns of deposition is limited.

The penannular brooches are divided into Germanic and Roman forms and 'Celtic' brooches of post-Roman type. They are seen as 'a persistent trait of female Germanic dress style' and reveal close technological and artistic links between late Roman metalwork and early Anglo-Saxon products. The author believes that Roman disc brooches may with more certainty be linked with Anglo-Saxon examples. The interpretation of Quoit Brooch Style brooches and buckles as badges of office of the first half of the 5th century is followed, viewing them as essentially Germanic in manufacture but with a heavy debt to Roman types. Roman brooches were more frequently intended for use in the post-Roman period than has been thought. The earliest examples of late Roman belt equipment are seen as evidence of Germanic soldiers serving in the Roman army, the late 5th- and early 6th-century examples
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being more difficult to interpret: it is suggested they may in some way be heirlooms belonging to the descendants of the above.

The significance of coins is examined by comparing the pattern of deposition in graves with that from Romano-British sites. A close similarity is detected, suggesting the coins were selected randomly for graves. A higher proportion of the coins in graves are unidentifiable which leads the author to suggest their function was decorative or amuletic. At the settlement of West Stow, however, the coins appear to have been chosen for their size and condition. The majority of the coins in graves are found near the neck of adult females (many are pierced for suspension) and not in the mouth which would indicate a continuation of a Romano-British burial custom.

Some Roman ceramic vessels are used for cremation vessels, especially large-mouthed jars, and it would be interesting to know if the same selection processes that Richards has identified with cremation urns were operating here also. When accompanying inhumation burials they often form the only grave-good and show signs of long use as though they were treasured items. Metal vessels were used in a similar manner.

Many other items, such as dress accessories, occur in very small quantities and were not always used as had been intended. The author rejects the view that miscellaneous metal items were collected as scrap, for instance suggesting that spoons and keys may have had a quasi-religious function and that others were selected for their beauty and the prestige conveyed by their rarity. It is asserted that the selection of this type of material is non-random although this is not demonstrated by comparison with a wide range of Romano-British site-types. The limited comparisons that are made tend to imply that there was a typical pattern of loss and deposition at all sites during the Roman period, which is unlikely. The survival of dress and burial customs is favoured as a means of detecting the survival of a Romano-British population although their absence only demonstrates the disappearance of those traits. The author believes that most of the material was quarried from Roman sites while some obvious groups may be the result of the accidental discovery of hoards.

The book is dominated by its catalogue where traditional art-historical methods have been applied to justify the inclusion of the more problematical material. It is unfortunate that the initial research goals may not have been clearly set out; had they been, greater emphasis might have been placed on the analysis of the data to answer particular questions. This will only be achieved if a detailed comparison is made between the catalogued material and the nature of the deposition of artefacts in a wide variety of contexts from later Roman Britain. The catalogue does make this task much easier and the results of the limited analysis point future workers in appropriate directions.

C. J. ARNOLD


Commercial and other relations between the Roman provinces and the Germanic regions of northern Europe have attracted attention for well over a century, since Conrad Engelhart’s famous discoveries in the peat-bogs of Thorsbjerg, Nydam and Vimose. Sture Bolin and Hans-Jürgen Eggers gave the subject a scholarly framework in the first half of this century, and in the past two decades major enlargements of the data base have been achieved, in Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and southern Scandinavia. More recently still, there has been much debate on the nature of exchange between the Roman world and its barbarian neighbours, greater prominence being given to gift-exchange, reciprocation and redistribution than to commerce in its narrow sense. The interactions between trade, diplomacy and social development have been much to the fore, particularly in the work of
scholars trained in prehistoric and anthropological disciplines. To a subject which embraces not only social and political themes but political and artistic as well, Lund Hansen contributes a substantial monograph, the largest work on the field since the publication of Eggers’s Der römische Import im freien Germanien in 1951. It is also the most significant single study since Eggers’s book. It is a corpus, dealing primarily with the imports found in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, including all the Baltic islands, accompanied by detailed discussion of chronology, distribution, trade-routes and mechanisms, political circumstances and repercussions. The text is clearly ordered and easy to use despite its size and complexity. Seventy-eight good maps illustrate the distribution patterns of various kinds of goods and a further nineteen figures record the main types of bronzes and glassware, following the typology of Eggers.

Not the least valuable of the services provided by this book is the illustration of shifts in the pattern of contact, sometimes within quite limited areas. This should be a corrective to some of the arguments advanced in recent years about zones of contact, as though there had existed within Barbaricum boundaries which obeyed laws of primitive economics. The western Baltic islands are most prominent as centres receiving the richest goods over a long period. That there were centres of redistribution here seems probable, as Hansen argues, but there is still no convincing explanation of how this particular region attracted such attention. There are sensible sections on the conduct and organization of trade between Romans and barbarians, on the phenomenon of Roman coinage beyond the frontiers, and the relations between Germanic groups and the frontier-provinces. This last-named is a steadily expanding field of study and it is providing insights into local political realities which literary sources do not reveal.

Hansen’s monograph is a work of sober scholarship, free from rigid deterministic theories of how commerce was conducted and what it led to. Studies on similar lines for other regions of the continent are called for and if they achieve the high standards of this volume, the subject will indeed have moved into a new age. The gainers will include not only students of the Germanic Iron Age and the Roman Empire, but also those who seek to understand the beginnings of medieval Europe.

MALCOLM TODD


A single archaeological paper by Manfred Menke on Alemannic chronology from the late 5th to the 7th century fills more than half this volume, whose contributions derive from a conference held in 1982. The archaeologist present then was Rainer Christlein, whose untimely death the following March led to the commissioning of Menke’s article, based on a seminar presentation of 1984. Those dates and a further three-years gap before it appeared in print help to explain Menke’s reliance on the Saint Denis tomb 49 as a fixed point. It has been attributed to Aregond, mother of Chilperic, on the basis of a thumb ring with the inscribed name Arnegundis and assigned the date range of 565–70. But Helmut Roth is only the most recent scholar to recognize the improbability of this dating (in Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 7 (1986), 267–76). This reviewer has pointed out elsewhere (Studien zur Sachsenforschung, 6 (1987), 256–57) some of the arguments for redating Saint Denis 49 to the second quarter or middle of the 7th century, as indeed should be Zofingen (Switzerland) tomb 86. This female burial, with similar earrings and cloisonné disc brooch to those buried with ‘Arnegunde’, has a key role in Menke’s discussion, but has clearly been misdated to c. 600. Yet the grave itself of 86 was constructed after that of tomb 81, which contained a mid
7th-century warrior with a silver inlaid multiple piece belt set. Rather than adopt the dubious practice of claiming an earlier male occupant for tomb 81 to explain the discrepancy, on the basis of two small strap fittings which could be as early as c. 600 and despite the lack of any skeletal evidence to justify arguing for reuse, it seems easier to redate the female in tomb 86 to c. 650. Zofingen church’s burials would then suggest that Saint Denis 11’s probable relationship to 49 should be taken seriously. The plaster sarcophagus 11 overlaid the edge of the stone sarcophagus 49, implying deposition only a little later. It contained a three-piece belt set, which still provides us with the best parallel for the great gold buckle of the Sutton Hoo ship burial coin-dated to the 620s or 30s.

Serious though it is, this misdating of the Saint Denis and Zofingen evidence is not the only aspect of Menke’s chronological scheme which is open to criticism. The entire scheme is far too closely tied to historical events for comfort, despite the fact that often the archaeological evidence cannot be dated that accurately. The deposition of the last western emperor in 476 marks the beginning of his first Alemannic phase and the beginning of Justinian’s Italian campaigns in 536 its end. Theodoric’s conquest of Italy in 493 and Clovis’s campaigns of 496–97 against the Alemanni are also emphasized. But, as Edward James has recently pointed out, Theodoric’s letter to Clovis of 506 probably implies that Clovis mounted several campaigns against the Alemanni. His second phase ends with the Lombard migration from Pannonia to Italy in 568. Thereafter historical dates at least cease to mark the limits of his phases, though it leaves him with an excessive overlap between his third phase of 568–600 and his fourth of 580–650. Those interested in niceties of continental chronologies may find the odd point of interest in Menke’s discussion, but basically it will not do and the task of redefining chronologies on both sides of the Alps must be tackled afresh.

As this is an archaeological journal, I shall do no more than note here that Menke’s paper is flanked by contributions by seven historians, if we discount the introductory and conclusory sections, ranging from Frankish policy in the Alpine region to the Lex Alamannorum and monastic foundations in the eastern Alpine region between the 8th and 10th centuries.

MARTIN WELCH


In general we know remarkably little about Cumbria in the early Middle Ages. To begin with it was part of the British kingdom of Rheged but during the 7th century we can trace Anglo-Saxon penetration as a result of the expansion of the kingdom of Northumbria. At the beginning of the 10th century Vikings settled in the region, both western Scandinavians, who arrived via Gaelic Scotland and perhaps Ireland, and Danes moving westwards from Yorkshire. Later the expansion of Strathclyde again brought at least part of the area under British control. So much can be gleaned from the documentary sources and place-names. The archaeological evidence is equally meagre. We know almost nothing about the settlement archaeology and our understanding of the ecclesiastical sites, compared with east of the Pennines, for example, remains sparse. In this light the Anglian and Viking sculpture takes on a special significance.

This reliable and well-produced volume brings the sculpture of the area together for the first time. It opens with a General Introduction to the forms of sculpture and ornament identical with that found at the beginning of Volume I. There follows a general discussion of the Anglian and Viking sculpture which includes the historical background, geology, topography and distribution, types of monument, their ornament, comparisons and chronology. This provides a lead-in to the main part of the book, the catalogue of individual pieces of sculpture, followed by the illustrations.
In the Anglian period it is not really possible to group the monuments; instead they must be seen as individual pieces with considerable regional and chronological variations. We are all familiar with the Bewcastle Cross and other well-known pieces include the elegant Lowther cross-shafts and the sophisticated fragment from Dacre. However there are some less well-known but equally accomplished pieces, such as the Heversham and Penrith cross-shafts, as well as some interesting 9th-century monuments including Beckermet St Bridget, Irton and the highly idiosyncratic cross-shaft from Urswick. The Viking-period monuments are much more numerous (116 carvings from 38 sites compared with 29 Anglian pieces from 20 sites). They are therefore easier to group, though not necessarily to date, and there is surprisingly little use of the characteristic Viking art styles. Certain groupings can be recognized: the well-known work of the Gosforth Master, the Spiral-scroll School and the Beckermet Group; also characteristically Viking Age sculptural forms such as hog-back grave-covers and crosses with hammer or circle heads. The debt of the Viking sculpture to its Anglian past is obvious but at the same time there are continuing contacts eastwards and across the Solway as well as along the western seaboard. The recently discovered Crucifixion plaque, Penrith 11, also suggests Irish influence.

Although the corpus is primarily a reference work, the elegantly written general discussion will provide a very good introduction for the non-specialist who may not wish to consult the catalogue at length. For the more knowledgeable it will serve to set the catalogue in context and explain why particular sculptures have been grouped together, their dating and chronology. I found the discussions of the ornament, Anglian plant scrolls, for example, particularly helpful as a link between the General Introduction and the more technical descriptions in the catalogue. It is a pity that none of the distribution maps included the river names since the latter are frequently referred to in the text.

The catalogue is clear, concise and easy to compare with the illustrations. It is arranged alphabetically site by site and individual pieces of sculpture are first described and then discussed. A full bibliography of each monument is also included. The non-specialist may be daunted by some of the necessary technical language. I did not always find the ornamental catalogue in the General Introduction sufficient to identify the details of particular patterns. In some cases, for example Irton, where not all the ornament is clear due to weathering, understanding could have been facilitated by the addition of explanatory line-drawings. I would also have welcomed some brief concluding remarks for sites with several pieces of sculpture, particularly where both Anglian and Viking-Age monuments are represented, in order to draw them together and make their significance as a group clearer. At the end of the catalogue is a complex form and motif table which should help those who are using the volume for comparative purposes to identify where specific features or types of ornament occur on the Cumbrian sculpture.

The copious photographs, almost all by Tom Middlemass, are of a high standard and enable the carvings on many of these monuments to be seen clearly for the first time. They also indicate that the sculpture housed in churches or elsewhere is much better preserved than that still outside where weathering and pollution continue to take their toll. Most of the photographs show the monuments at an eighth, or sometimes a quarter, of their actual size. This is useful for comparative purposes though occasionally I felt the photographs were too small to show up the ornament properly.

NANCY EDWARDS


The General Preface to this book states that ‘England cannot be divided satisfactorily into recognizable regions based on former kingdoms or principalities ... English regional identities are impressive and no firm boundaries can be drawn ... The Pennines present a
formidable barrier between the eastern and western counties on the Northern Borders; contrasts as much as similarities must be emphasised here'. The region covered by this volume is that of the modern (post-1974) counties of Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and Durham, together with that part of Cleveland North of the Tees. Despite the Pennine barrier, Nick Higham effectively brings together the evidence from both sides, in this wide-ranging book which covers Man’s involvement in the region from the Devensian to A.D. 1000 (an arbitrary date apparently chosen by the General Editors and publishers).

Readers of this journal will be most interested in chapters six and seven ‘The Return of Tribalism (A.D. 350–685)’, and ‘The English and Anglo-Scandinavian Period (A.D. 685–1000)’, but it would be a mistake not to read the preceding chapters. In sections such as ‘Later Prehistory 800 B.C.—A.D. 100: the Re-emergence of a Settled Landscape’ and ‘The Tribal Response’ are to be found the essential background to these chapters. Dr Higham’s command of the broad sweep of material and willingness to tackle the subject from a multidisciplinary viewpoint is refreshing in an age of excessive specialization. A good example of this is his willingness to bring into the discussion, at various points, the palaeobotanical material from across the region. He is both judicious in its description (as for instance in emphasizing caution over the assumption of synchronicity on p. 244), and speculative in its interpretation (as for instance on p. 272, where it is used as backing for the statement that ‘the evidence from Durham and Cleveland implies a catastrophic population decline in Lower Weardale, that is on the border of Bernician territory’).

Indeed, Dr Higham is not afraid to voice unconventional opinion, for instance ‘only slavery provided the northern British Kings with an entrée to international markets’, and ‘If plague-infected population decline was the major factor in late medieval village desertion, there seems a reasonable chance that the same applied in the 7th century’. This willingness to court controversy enlivens what could, so easily, have been a dusty recital of regional reflexes of wider movements and cultural developments. For the more cautious, there are generally careful summaries and references to the individual sites that go to make up the regional record. The Bibliography is formidable, and has prompted the provision of a much shorter selection of ‘Further Reading’. Few stones have been left unturned in the attempt at comprehensiveness.

As befits a writer on prehistory, Higham is content to use radiocarbon dating within his overall approach to chronology. However, despite his cautionary note in the Introduction about the absence of agreed correction factors (that is, at the time of writing), and use of the phrase ‘margins proper to carbon-14 dating’, we are nevertheless offered ‘a carbon-14 date of c. A.D. 280’ for Huckhoe and ‘clearance activity... dated by carbon 14 at Fellend Moss (Northumbs.) to c. A.D. 1000’. Other modern approaches and concepts make their appearances: ‘subsistence strategies’ and ‘carrying capacity’ becoming regular — if not repetitive — phrases. But this is to be welcomed, and it is a pleasure to record that the book ends with an emphasis on the landscape from which the various cultural, ethnic and religious groups derived the basis of subsistence — and, in part, their power.

Those of us who live and work in this region have much to ponder on throughout this book, while for the ‘offsiders’ it will provide an essential point of reference when venturing hither.

CHRISTOPHER D. MORRIS


This study, based upon Paul Reilly’s Ph.D. thesis, is relevant to a wider field than its title immediately suggests. The computer programs it devises and describes are applicable to the examination of many types of archaeological data, but in this case are particularly aimed at correlating the incidence of field monuments to administrative boundaries.
In the Isle of Man, both the study of field monuments and the boundaries themselves is fraught with difficulties, for few of the former have been securely dated by recent excavation and it is not clear how representative present-day distributions are. To compare the location of various types of funerary monuments and burial grounds with administrative boundaries for which the date of origin is equally uncertain may sound an impossible task but the techniques enable significant advances to be made, even if some of the conclusions are of a negative nature.

Explanation of the techniques is set against an admirable discussion of the particular problems confronting an understanding of Manx history. How significant was Celtic survival and just how devastating were the Viking incursions? A clear exposition of the Manx system of land division will be of particular interest to those interested in early territorial organization and Reilly notes the similarities between this and systems found elsewhere in the British Isles (although some of the more general statements gloss over questionable details). As in the case of many early administrative systems, a greater understanding of the nature of land division is obtained by relating it to the natural environment and the resources offered, with apparent attempts to obtain an equitable division of like-quality land within both minor and major units, perhaps displaying the influence of 'a powerful organizing hand'. Obviously, detailed local studies like this from many different regions are particularly valuable in facilitating comparison of land units and possible influences upon boundary demarcation.

The problem of comparing burials and boundaries with a view to dating the latter will be of particular interest to the readers of this journal. In showing the weakness of some earlier statistical analyses Reilly shows that 'the debate is still wide open, and much more research is required in this field'.

Finally, Reilly turns to the problem of understanding the distribution and dating of keills and rhuillicks (early chapels and burial grounds), and their relationship with the boundaries. He again exemplifies the use of computer techniques for such a study but also examines the use of computer analysis to look at the detailed structure and form of what are often poorly preserved monuments. Such a treatment could undoubtedly be effectively applied to other monuments in other areas. While many of the questions posed have to go unanswered, it is not without value that Reilly is forced to conclude that 'the apparent correlation between the keills, rhuillicks and treens is not significantly different from what we might expect from a random process'. At least we are shown a way of subjecting hypotheses to an unbiased test, leaving the way open for further thought.

DELLA HOOKE


There is much in this volume which is informative and stimulating, though largely falling outside the immediate scope of this journal. Successor to a line of commentators stretching back to the 19th century, Professor Abels concentrates on the issues of lordship, landholding and military service. Historians will find both his material and his arguments worthy of close attention, and his narrative is certainly more readable than some of the literature in this field. We are offered a strong case for the roles of the aristocracy and of lordship in military organization and the two-page conclusion provides a clear summary of the argument. In its formulation, some old favourites are given a battering — not only the free peasant nation in arms, for example, but also the ‘great’ and ‘select’ fyrd distinction, and the five-hide unit which some have supposed underpinned the landed side of military service (though the reviewer is unable to judge the supporting statistical analysis of Domesday data, which is given in a series of tables).

Despite its qualities, the book will unfortunately be found lacking by archaeological readers. The Introduction pays token service to ‘the archaeological evidence . . . numismatics
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and settlement studies' (p. 8), but these play no significant role. There is certainly an archaeological ingredient: Yeavering, Mercian and West Saxon burhs, Offa's Dyke, excavations at Goltih, Canterbury, York, and Hamwih — all find mention. But this material is not allowed to speak for itself (cf. p. 8, 'one need only read the report of the findings of a dig to see how dependent archaeologists are on historians' interpretations of Anglo-Saxon society'). A few good points are made on the interface of history and archaeology, such as the useful reminder that bridgework was included in the burdens upon land held by book-right because bridges were often major fortified works associated with royal fortresses. A useful comparison is drawn between the building of burhs and William the Conqueror's later establishment of castles. This functional parallel deserves greater attention, and has already been drawn out in some published regional studies. In contrast, despite some attention to arms and armour via documentary sources and the Bayeux Tapestry, the contribution which grave-goods both humble and rich can make to this side of the story is neglected almost completely (one fleeting reference on p. 15). Admittedly, the book is not about warfare as a whole. Nevertheless, one of its main themes is the question of who fought, and burial evidence deserves fuller attention.

Perhaps most obvious, in view of the book's central theme of lordship, is the absence of discussion of private defended residences — castles as we call them later — always regarded as central to the development of military lordship on the continent. Now, if the author believes, as many have, that late Saxon England was different from contemporary France, that strong kings prevented the spread of private fortifications, then the case needs stating clearly. But, to judge from the brief treatment of Goltih (p. 92), this is not necessarily the author's view. It is therefore a shame that certain points which are introduced are not fully explored. The early 11th-century compilations on status are discussed, but not the implications of the thegn's possession of a burh-gate. On the other hand, the defended character of the royal tun is stated without comment (p. 21) and with little or no reference to the actual character of such excavated sites as Yeavering (p. 36) or Cheddar (which does not figure at all). Also omitted are Sulgrave and Portchester (a brief mention only, p. 71) which, with their halls and associated towers, also deserve discussion. And, allowing for the book's historical basis, where did the documented castles built by Edward the Confessor's 'favourites' fit into the military scene? Charles the Bald's fortifications against the Vikings are introduced in the text, but reference to the spread of castles in France is merely tucked away in a footnote. The absence of discussion of private defence cannot be explained simply because the book is largely not about the practice of warfare. Castles were as much symbols of power and lordship as of anything else. The late Saxon attitude to the subject is wholly relevant. Lordship also had links with agricultural society, as is acknowledged (p. 9). Although this is not central to the book's theme, some acknowledgement of issues related to settlement studies (e.g. the development of nucleation) would have been in order.

This is a volume to be read with profit by institutional historians (the end-notes alone contain a mass of information) but with far less to offer those interested in a broader view of Anglo-Saxon society. With only two maps and a handful of photographs (mainly of the Bayeux Tapestry) it conveys little feel for the geographical context and physical culture of its subject.

R. A. HIGHAM


This report is primarily concerned with the archaeological evidence for the birth and early growth of a medieval new town. It shows how three burgage tenements lying close together in the commercial heart of the port of Hull were developed from the time of the town's foundation in the late 13th century, on a site unencumbered by Roman town walls or
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Saxon property divisions. The development of the tenements is plotted through a series of substantially complete building plans (including a remarkable aisled hall, town seat of the abbot of Meaux), associated with large assemblages of pottery and other artefacts.

Consideration is given to the slight evidence for pre-urban development. Then the first buildings are assessed, some of which are identified with those referred to in a valuation of the town undertaken in 1293. In the 14th century these buildings underwent substantial alterations, designed to extend their lives. The timber-framed buildings which had served the first and second generation of the townspeople were replaced by buildings of greater substance ‘... by successful men reaping the profits of merchant business... one might envisage a second foundation of the town...’. Rising population pressure is cited as a reason for the subsequent partitioning of these buildings.

This volume is the product of major excavations directed by the two authors in 1973-74 and 1976-77, and clearly represents a considerable body of work both in the field and during post-excavation research. The 130-page assessment of pottery (by J. G. Watkins) includes a type series with 72 entries, a 392-item catalogue, and a detailed discussion of the dating for each phase of the three sites. The other finds (including wooden objects, leather and textiles from the waterlogged levels), bone and environmental evidence are considered in an 80-page section.

Elements in the format could be criticized adversely, since they make comprehension of parts of the report slightly harder work than it need be. For example, the buildings are not individually numbered: one is uncertain exactly how many have been recorded; greater use of calendar dates in the sub-headings, captions and tables (especially Table 35) would have eased comparison of contemporary features (‘Phase 3c’ is early 14th century on one site, early 16th on another). However, these are carping points of detail, and should not detract from the real contribution which this report makes to British urban archaeology.

The reader should begin by absorbing the concluding discussion (pp. 263-67), which places the plans and tables in perspective and reveals the project’s true measure of success: it has shown just how much archaeological research can complement and expand the precise but bare work of the documentary historian, offering a remarkably detailed townscape on a newly-founded port.

GUSTAV MILNE


The second monograph in the Museum of London series on medieval finds takes as its theme shoes and pattens from 1100 to 1450, a subject for which no standard reference work exists. It seeks to establish a broad, closely dated typology for medieval shoes, to relate changes in style to technical developments, and to assess the accuracy of the picture thus gained of medieval footwear.

The material considered here comes mainly from a group of eight excavations along the N. bank of the Thames, much of it from large dumps of domestic refuse. Those dumps were deposited behind a series of timber revetments as part of a continual process of land reclamation; they are dated by associated pottery and coins and generally can be linked directly with individual revetments — themselves frequently dated by dendrochronology. As well as the footwear from these and two other recent sites (for which brief summaries of the significant contexts are given in an appendix) the report also draws upon material in the collections of the London and Guildhall Museums.

A chapter discussing the changing styles in medieval footwear arbitrarily divides the 350 years covered into seven 50-year spans. Within each are discussed the types of shoes present, the general styles and variations, methods of fastening, and the ‘cut’. Simple line drawings
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and photographs illustrate the best examples to good effect. Dating evidence for particular styles and their relative frequency, largely drawn from unillustrated examples, is tabulated in a readily comprehensible and attractively presented manner.

A chapter on shoemaking and cobbler briefly discusses the types of hides used, and outlines the stages in production. Diagrammatic illustrations of the types of stitches and seams used to assemble the various shoe components will be particularly useful to those unfamiliar with the subject. ‘Cutting patterns’ of more than two dozen shoes and boots are drawn at one-third scale, showing each component with its stitching and seams, together with a line drawing of the complete article (all but one repeated from the previous chapter). The layout is generous (usually one per page); the patterns are thus readily comprehensible, although it leads to some wastage of space.

Associated buckles and strap-ends are briefly discussed; there are relatively few decorated shoes, but the techniques employed (which include embroidery, openwork, incised and engraved ornament) are simply illustrated by both line drawings and close-up photographs. Analysis of the moss toe-stuffings from three dozen late 14th-century ‘poulaines’ suggests a nearby source, perhaps confirming the theory of shoe production for local (rather than long-distance) markets. Evidence of repaired and reused footwear shows a markedly low proportion of repaired shoes among the late 14th-century material from ‘Baynards Castle’, possibly reflecting the relative affluence of the owners.

The material includes two basic forms of wooden patten: ‘platform’ soles raised from the ground on wedges, and flat soles, the latter frequently hinged. Multi-layered, composite leather pattens should, it is suggested (p. 101), be regarded as sandals rather than as protective overshoes.

Tabulation of the relative sizes shows a range from the smallest child’s to the largest adult’s shoes. It is suggested that two distinct peaks within the three largest groups may correspond to the most common adult sizes for each sex, but the sample is deemed too small for the attribution of definite styles to either sex, apart from buckled and side-latchet shoes which are considered (pp. 32–33) to be men’s wear. The discussion of evidence for peculiarities in gait and foot deformities is one of the aspects of this report which lift it beyond the dry analysis of the material, lending appeal to the more general reader.

Good use is made of both literary and pictorial evidence to assess how representative the collection is of medieval footwear. It should be noted, however, that the earlier shoes must surely be too few in number for any firm conclusions to be drawn; it is only with the two latest groups, of the late 14th and early to mid 15th centuries, that a more realistic sample is provided. Each group (both approaching 500 ‘registered’ shoes) forms almost two-fifths of the material considered, although even these are from just two or, at best, three sites and thus may well be biased. The precise source (or sources) of the dumps which produced most of the shoes is unknown. The range and nature of associated pottery and small finds, which might aid any assessment of the quality of the footwear discussed, is not mentioned although the refuse is described (p. 1) as ‘common domestic rubbish’.

The earliest shoes presented in this report, a small group of early/mid 12th-century date, are described (pp. 9–10) as being ‘of considerable importance’ in that they apparently show ‘a sudden, yet decisive transition’ from Saxo-Norman to later 12th- and 13th-century styles and techniques. It therefore seems strange, if not illogical, that the Saxo-Norman shoes are omitted from this volume (as is the 16th-century material from ‘Baynards Castle’).

There are occasional errors in cross-referencing, and several captions are omitted (e.g. Table 12). On the whole, however, the reasonably priced report is well laid out and presented in a manner which is likely to attract both specialist and general reader. The accuracy of the conclusions drawn, and the question of whether any similarities or differences between this material and the literary and pictorial evidence are real or illusory, may not be clarified until further well-stratified groups from a variety of occupation sites (both in London and the provinces) become available. This volume, however, will provide an invaluable reference work for the future.

J. E. Mann
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This is the first book to appear in the 20th century that attempts to tackle every aspect of medieval pottery. The husband and wife team that produced it gave themselves the tight time-schedule of two years for both research and writing, and are to be congratulated on very nearly achieving it. The results, however, suggest that in this case more time for reflection and interpretation might have produced a better book. Even so there is so much that is good that it will be essential reading for all those engaged professionally with early pottery.

The book is divided into two quite separate parts — two volumes in effect — which might well have benefited from independent publication. The first part is concerned with the production, distribution and use of pottery within the period. Raw materials, potting techniques, kiln structure and firing methods are comprehensively considered and fully illustrated. Whether such far-flung ethnographical material as the kilns of ancient Egypt or modern Crete are relevant may perhaps be questioned, but the contribution of physical sciences to early ceramic technology has been impressive and is fully discussed.

The wealth of material from a variety of disciplines at the disposal of medieval archaeologists must be a source of constant envy to prehistorians with their more restricted sources. Such variety does impose certain conditions however and this is nowhere more true than in the field of art history. Here the authors have been unfortunate in their choice of illustrative matter for the use of pottery on more than one count. The pot on the portable hearth in the birth scene from the Romance of Alexander, for instance, is almost certainly of metal, and those shown in the royal feast scene from Queen Mary’s Psalter are of precious metal, and in any case this stylized feast-scene with its tableware occurs in several manuscripts of different dates, while the pot shown in the Utrecht Psalter is derived, like most of the illustration in that document, from models current in late antiquity. The artists who illuminated medieval manuscripts rarely based their work on observation, preferring to copy from other manuscripts or from model books. Innovations do of course occur from time to time, but it needs considerable expertise to separate them from derived material. It is an important matter, for frequent use is made of such illustration and indeed, rightly used, such material is of considerable value.

The authors are on firmer ground when dealing with documentary sources, though they have not always seen the implications of such material as is already in print, which has something to add even for the early period. The facts of rescue archaeology and the organization of archaeological units have led to the discovery of a number of urban industries in the late Saxon period as well as one or two rural ones, but the evidence of Domesday Book and of place-names show that they must have been present in some numbers in the countryside, and indicate the special importance of such industries in the forests. The coincidence of one widespread type of wheel-thrown pottery in pre-Conquest Oxfordshire, the Thames valley, and even London with the high rent paid by Domesday potters in Bladon is very suggestive, as indeed is the degree of organization implied by Domesday potters who paid communal rather than individual dues. In a different context prehistorians can postulate a hierarchy of exchange mechanisms ranging through purchase of an individual pot at the kiln, through buying from pedlars, to purchase in the market, and eventually to distribution by middlemen; but the medieval archaeologist armed with the additional evidence offered by contemporary documents can point to all these mechanisms in simultaneous use in the same part of 14th-century England.

The second part of the book, and by far the longer, is an annotated gazetteer of pottery from all over mainland Britain. The country is divided into nine regions, each consisting of a number of adjacent historic counties. The division is one of convenience rather than of common ceramic tradition within the areas, an approach which though theoretically more logical could have led to confusion as production patterns changed over the centuries. It would have been helpful to publish a general map to show the boundaries of the chosen regions. The grouping of counties within each region is however clearly shown at the
beginning of every section, and all sites from which illustrated material has been drawn are marked with distinctive symbols for production sites as opposed to other types of site from which material has been used.

Chronologically there is a threefold division: an early period from 900 to 1150, a middle period covering the following two centuries, and a late period beginning c. 1350 and terminating c. 1600. The early period omits Scotland and barely touches Wales, owing to lack of suitable material. The book does not deal with imported pottery nor with tin-glazed earthenware of the later 16th century, deemed to belong to a post-medieval tradition. Cistercian ware, on the other hand, is included, for though it too belongs outside the medieval tradition, it was already in production by the end of the 15th century.

Within each region the major types of pot are shown in good clear illustrations at 1/8 scale, enabling well over 2,000 pots to be represented, so prodigious an achievement that it would be churlish to complain that Wales is somewhat under-represented. The choice of material will not suit everyone, however, and indeed it is difficult sometimes to understand its basis: why, for example, late Humber ware should be illustrated by finds from a moat when a more reliable sample was available from an excavated Humber-ware kiln with a series of archaeomagnetic dates and good documentary evidence. Specialists within the regions will probably point to some omissions — the Lancashire Cistercian ware, for example, is not mentioned, but in general the cover is good. A serious distortion however is the very high ratio of decorated to undecorated pot among the illustrations. It is tempting to draw attractive vessels, but decorated sherds form such a tiny proportion of material recovered from excavation that the amateur archaeologist and the newcomer may well be misled.

There are helpful summaries of major sources of material produced from the known kiln sites in each region but in general this part of the book tends to fall between two stools, being both too full for the general reader and insufficiently detailed for the professional.

H. E. JEAN LE PATOUREL


This volume is the culmination of 25 years’ work by two masters of their respective arts: the drawings are by David Neal and the text by John Hurst. The volume provides a tour through the main pottery types produced in and traded into north-western Europe during the period 1350–1650. Remarkably, most of the pieces come from one private collection, that accumulated by H. E. J. Van Beuningen over many years, initially in a purpose-built garden ‘shed’ but now housed in the Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. Fittingly this important catalogue is published as volume 6 of Rotterdam Papers, a series which has established itself over the years as one of the major European journals for publishing all aspects of medieval life.

This is much more than a catalogue of pottery. Following a preface which sets out the history of the collection and its cataloguing, and an introduction which sets out the archaeological background to the material, the remainder of the volume is a systematic survey of each of the main types found. The tour starts with China, then moves westwards through the Mediterranean, and then northwards up the Atlantic coast to Germany. A systematic approach is adopted for each type of material discussed. After a brief outline history of the type, a description of the fabric, forms and decoration follows, then references to more general discussions of the type, and finishing with detailed descriptions of and further references to the illustrated pieces, which in many cases are some of the most informative parts of the volume.

This volume is a landmark in the study of later medieval pottery in north-western Europe. It is the outcome of John Hurst’s work on north-western European and near-eastern pottery which started in the early 1960s, and if this had been John Hurst’s only contribution to ceramic studies it alone would have assured him a place in the annals of ceramic
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The time that it takes to publish a work like this, coupled with its wide-ranging content in a rapidly developing field, means that recent work has not been included. The very fact that the subject exists and has seen so much development in the past two decades owes much, as do many other branches of post-Roman archaeology, to John Hurst's initiative, guidance and above all his constant encouragement. The volume will form the bible for the main pottery types traded in the north-western European mainland, and it is unlikely that it will ever be superseded in its concept and scope — amended and expanded but not replaced.

The quality of presentation, as one would expect from Rotterdam Papers, is extremely high, but the volume is not without its blemishes. The line drawings were produced over 25 years and some inconsistencies in conventions are evident; the growing attention now being paid to technology and other aspects of manufacture is not evident either in text or drawings. More of an inconvenience are the errors and difficulties introduced during the long period of production. There are a number of type-setting errors in both text and bibliography: Ellis's recent discussion of Bellarmine jugs noted on page 214 is missing from the bibliography. More irritating is that where photographs and drawings of the same vessel are shown, they are often separated by a number of pages. In most cases it would have been possible to show them on facing pages, with much more effect. But minor quibbles of this kind pall into insignificance compared with the overall value of the work.

STEPHEN MOORHOUSE

Middelalderlige stenhuse i danske og skanske kobstaeder (Hikuin 13). 20 X 20 cm. 311 pp., many figs. Moesgard, 1987. Price stated as about 150 Kr.

This volume, a collection of symposium papers dating from 1982, is one in a series of well-produced and printed collections, handsomely mounted between hard covers with clear type and generally clear photographs and figures on good-quality paper. All eleven papers here are in Danish but the volume is supplemented by English summaries and these, together with the many illustrations, render the work accessible to the English reader.

For a volume primarily concerned with stone or brick buildings, the first paper by Haedersdal is initially a surprise, dealing as it does with medieval urban settlement. Haedersdal is, of course, a scene-setter, establishing the context for the later contributors, all of whom discuss urban structures. The scene set, however, is a limited one, being primarily concerned with patterns of medieval property, two types of which are defined: long narrow sites; and more open sites with a main building and fringe commercial buildings or lodgings. The former type, familiar in many English towns, was thought to be a Hanseatic innovation in Scandinavia but excavations have suggested an earlier origin.

Here, this reviewer's lack of Danish precludes too critical a discussion, but it would have been reassuring to see a little of the archaeological evidence. In some 21 figures the only archaeological work that approximates to the argument is drawn from Lübeck and, while Fig. 1 shows classic tenements in Helsingør, there appears to be little attempt to establish an archaeological context or chronology for their development. Parallels are drawn with England but no attempt is made to consult recent work here. Indeed, the only English work cited is Pantin's famous paper in this journal (VI-VII, 1962-63). Reference to the more recent Clarke and Carter monograph on Lynn and Parker's work on the buildings of Lynn might have been instructive. Similarly, Strangers' Hall, Norwich, is cited as an example of the more
open site and, while the latest research does not contradict this, Pantin's interpretation has been questioned rigorously by Smith and Carter (Vernacular Architecture, 14, 1983).

In addition there does not seem to be any attempt to place the settlement pattern into a broader context of urban development. Although the Danish examples quoted are late, it might have been worth highlighting the importance and longevity of property boundaries. The narrow (and long-lived) tenements of the 10th-century Jorvik are surely appropriate in this context. The importance of buildings to urban historians is their relationship to the urban setting, not just to their tenement type. It is here that archaeology and topographical study can amplify the built heritage and this does not seem to be the case with Haedersdal's paper.

Most of the remaining papers are concerned with standing buildings. While architectural detailing of the structures is of importance, the various authors have a commendable approach to the archaeology of the buildings. Plans and elevations are complemented by fabric details, historic surveys (a beautiful drawing of Stengade 66, Helsingor, in 1903 by Holger Hagemann), historic and modern photographs, reconstructions and sections. This is particularly true of Vellev's paper concerning the house of the Guildensterns in Viborg, a magnificent building demolished in 1906–07 but here thoroughly documented and illustrated with a remarkable archive of drawings and photographs, the result of a pre-demolition survey by the architect C. M. Smidt (himself justifiably illustrated). It is a classic paper of historical detection with a clarity of exposition that can be followed in the illustrations alone. The frustration of a non-Danish speaking reviewer at being unable to read reprinted letters, written to Smidt at a time when attempts were made to save the building, is acute!

Also in Viborg, Kristensen discusses five buildings on Sct. Mogens Gade, the main street of the medieval town and one where some structures survive and others have been excavated. In a short paper he provides enough evidence to tantalize the English reader with expectation. The houses had access to cellars from the street, the cellars being interpreted as small commercial 'bothies', and both the illustrations of excavations and those of extant fabric show the potential for a greater understanding of the buildings through such a detailed and integrated approach.

This concentration on detail to obtain clarity of understanding is apparent in all the papers. Kesth demonstrates it with simple but effective drawings of brick bonds; Enggvist with a combination of plan and reconstruction to illustrate tenemental development. The papers as a whole speak of a happy fusion of many disciplines including, one suspects, that concerning documentation. Without a detailed understanding of the text it is difficult to assess the use of documentary sources but enough is presented in the summaries and figures to suggest that this source is not neglected. Indeed, the final paper by Knudson and Reinholdt brings this study of buildings and their settings full circle with a discussion of 'haves i vaere', 'house and land', or the concept of possession in medieval Danish law. This, like so much else in a well-structured collection, promises much and demonstrates, if such demonstration is still necessary, that an interdisciplinary approach to the historic environment is far more productive than single subject study.

BRIAN S. AYERS


These two publications, as their titles imply, have much in common. They both report, though in different degrees of detail, the results of church investigations which have taken
place in the context of major programmes of archaeological research that have already lasted several years and are still in progress, one in an urban and the other in a rural setting. The York fascicule covers excavation, fabric analysis and observation carried out in 1961–63, 1967, 1974–75 and 1980, while the Wharram volume deals with the total excavation of the redundant church between 1962 and 1974, together with architectural and documentary evidence. Each suffers from the time-lag between investigation and publication, from the rather disparate nature of the information available, and the multiple authorship; further, the Wharram dig was itself bedevilled by frequent changes of site supervisor from season to season. It is greatly to the credit of Richard Hall and David Stocker (York) and of Robert Bell and Ann Clark (Wharram) that the two books have a coherence worthy of their respective subjects; inevitably, though, some of the joins tend to show. The Wharram report is a self-contained volume, with a full apparatus of illustrations list, preface and index, which makes it reasonably easy to follow, though the rather elaborate hierarchy of sections and subsections is apt to confuse. The lighter-weight York publication is a mere fascicule of a volume, and begins in medias res (on p. 74) without any of the prefatory information which can so help readers to find their way through the arrangement and conventions of a book.

The emphases of the two publications are entirely different, however. The bulk of the York fascicule is devoted to the study and interpretation of the W. tower of the Bishophill church. Petrological and structural evidence is adduced to demonstrate that the tower is basically a one-period building; comparison with other early medieval towers suggests a date in the third quarter of the 11th century and leads to the hypothesis that St Mary Bishophill Junior was built originally as a church with a turriform nave. There are difficulties in the way of this interpretation. The hood-mould on the nave side of the tower arch is an embarrassment, since other accepted turriform naves have arches with an entirely plain eastern face. Only Skipwith is outlined with stripwork, and this is the one example that is not proven. The structural evidence at Bishophill is also uncomfortable. If the projecting stone south of the tower arch represents the wall of a former ‘chancel’ to the east of the tower, then one has either to accept that the wall would have trapped part of the stripwork of the tower arch at its springing (judging by fig. 44) or to assume an internal offset in the putative S. wall above the projecting stone. As for the apparently reasonable suggestion that the stripwork originally continued down the wall below impost level, there is a long jambstone on either side of the tower arch just above base level which should show evidence of a section of the raised stripwork either surviving or having been trimmed back.

By contrast, the Wharram volume deals with the whole church from its modest beginnings in the 10th century through its period of greatest development in the full medieval period to its decline and decay from the Reformation to the present day. It attempts to relate the church to the settlement which it served in a way that is not appropriate to the Bishophill study, though this leads to some pretty desperate attempts to tie the documentary evidence into the development of the church, for example the descent of the advowson and the influence of the landowning families. The worst example of this is the insistence on relating the expansion of the church to population growth, despite the fact that the earliest evidence for the number of households dates from 1368, by which time the church had already reached its maximum size. Too little attention is paid to an equally (and, in this reviewer’s opinion, more) important factor in church expansion and contraction, namely liturgical change. The almost universal addition of side aisles to churches in the late 12th/early 13th century owes as much to the growth of the cult of St Mary and the need for additional altars as to the supposed increase in the population. By the end of the Middle Ages such side aisles tended to be screened off to form chantry, gild and other private chapels, leaving only the nave for general public use. In fact, a case could be made out for the publicly available space in churches remaining fairly static throughout the Middle Ages, whatever demographic changes took place, while additions to the fabric were largely conditioned by liturgical and private considerations. While depopulation must have been a significant factor in the reduction in size of St Martin’s in the post-medieval period, the important part played by the liturgical changes brought about by the Reformation is not given sufficient prominence in the
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Wharram volume. In particular, the discussion of the decay of the chancel and its ultimate replacement by a 'minimalist' eastern adjunct contains no reference to the changed attitudes to church services and the reduced status of the communion service that were so characteristic of 17th- and 18th-century Anglicanism. Addleshaw & Etchells 1948 is a significant absentee from the bibliography.

Despite these and other criticisms, the two publications are valuable and important additions to the growing literature of church archaeology. Wharram demonstrates the value of total excavation and presents a useful paradigm of the rise and fall of a small country church, while St Mary Bishophill Junior shows what important conclusions can be reached from a systematic and detailed study of a standing fabric and its meticulous recording.

DAVID PARSONS


This is an important book for medieval archaeologists, so important that the Society's Reviews Editor wrote to the publishers three times to try to extract a review copy from them. Their coyness over it seems further exemplified by the drabness of its dust-wrapper; nor does the paper used do anything for the photographs. The price is off-puttingly high, but by today's standards not too unreasonable, for there are a great many words on each page.

Many of those words are contributed by the editors themselves, in jointly-written introduction and conclusion, as well as in individual contributions. Their main theme is the study of resources: how they were used and for whose benefit. Both physical and documentary evidence come into this, both having their limitations of survival and representativeness, typified by the problems of assessing the contribution of venison to the diet of lords and (poaching?) peasants, and of relating the effort that went into securing places where deer could thrive and be killed to the extent to which this was detrimental to other uses that could have been made of the land.

The proportion of deer bones at some castle sites suggests a much higher venison consumption than indicated by documentary evidence. Is this because those castles are in the north and west, whereas documents tend to be southern and eastern? Or is it because park deer are omitted from records of purchase? Questions like these show the need for further faunal analyses: the former can now be tested against the data published by P. J. Lawrance from Castle Acre, an eastern England castle — where deer bones were indeed only 0.3 per cent of the total. C. Dyer raises another question about venison — its role in gift-giving (a system of exchange which may have been underestimated in the post-Conquest period as a result of the emphasis placed upon it by those studying pre-feudal societies). Work by E. Roberts on the bishops of Winchester and their fish-ponds is relevant here; the recent British Archaeological Report edited by M. Aston (reviewed below) has focused attention on fisheries as an aspect of the countryside's exploitation.

G. Astill on tofts and crofts introduces the details of physical evidence and analysis. He shows how different agricultural emphases may be recognizable in lay-outs and considers regional variation — a discussion which is devastattingly limited at present by lack of excavation sites in the south-east, effectively an unrepresented Region 5 (pp. 41-43), yet one of the richest and also the one in which partible inheritance seems to have been most practised. In the next chapter, Astill moves on to fields, again exploring differences between regions, but also the difficulties of getting unequivocal evidence. J. Langdon, who follows, shows the significance of the distribution of different types of ploughs and haulage systems. His work on horses is well known: his discussion of tools here is no less valuable, stressing their lack of variety, with its implications for the limited choice of specialist activities open to the peasantry, a subject which other contributors might have developed further. In the next chapter, for instance, J. Greig mentions brewing in relation to hops — but not the extent to
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which brewing could be recognized as an activity providing an alternative income. (Hops allow the drink to be kept longer: so brewing could become a more worthwhile investment.) Nevertheless, this is a useful summary of the excavated evidence of plant resources as it currently exists.

P. Stamper gives a careful account of woods and parks, showing that a concept of landscape can be recognized in some of the evidence. Could this have affected the countryside outside the aristocracy’s enclaves, a factor in the creation of village greens, for instance? The aristocrat with his sword and his huntsman dimly visible in illustration 7.2 would not have been pleased to find himself here called a swineherd! Swine are part of the subject of the next chapter, by A. Grant, on animal resources: pigs may be over-represented in the archaeological record if the Bolton Priory accounts are typical in showing that whereas they were 3 per cent of the animals stocked, they would have been 30 per cent of the carcasses sent to the kitchens. But it is worth recalling American 18th-century site experience, where pigs were known to have been consumed, though few bones survived: ham-boiling weakened their structure. Again, this is a useful summary chapter, with some thought-provoking comments on food and status. R. Smith on human resources is also useful, though almost out of place in this volume since he does not look at physical remains: what do human bones tell us about differential food and diet access, longevity, population balance and so on?

Astill and Grant then round off the volume with a chapter on efficiency, progress and change — the middle one a loaded word. They look again at lord: peasant relationships, and at marketing evidence, on which Astill has written previously. The book serves to show some of the ways in which physical evidence can be used as well as documentary to explore such questions. It is an approach which reaffirms the importance of medieval archaeology.

DAVID A. HINTON


In the Middle Ages everyone was supposed to fast for at least a quarter of the year, and most monks fasted all the time. This consideration alone implies that fish and shellfish, as articles of diet, could not have been much less important than meat. Indeed, it was possible to serve a royal feast, should it happen on a fast-day, based entirely on different kinds of fish. Fish are one of the great areas of neglect by medieval historians.

Christopher Taylor has reminded us of the existence of medieval fishponds, often preserved in minute detail as field monuments. But hitherto the studies on them have never been brought together. Fishponds are the subject of misconceptions amounting to a pseudo-history: we believe that they necessarily had to do with monasteries, that fish-farming was based on carp (which in reality appear only about 1480), and that this art perished at the Dissolution.

The tradition of fish-farming, as discussed in this book, began with the Romans and Anglo-Saxons, reached its heyday in the 13th century, was still active in Izaak Walton’s time, and died out almost within living memory. Surveys, here reported, of nine counties show that medieval purpose-built fishponds, or sets of ponds, were at least twice as numerous as deer-parks and may have been more numerous than moats. They ranged from the palatial ponds of the king and the elaborate systems of the nobility, down to the humbler fishponds of the upper middle class. Fish were also kept in moats, millponds and in some of the hundreds of thousands of ordinary ponds in fields and woods.

Fish-farming, though a huge amount of labour, skill and money was invested in it, was the least important of the three branches of fishing as a contributor to the diet. River and sea fishing have left less of an archaeological record and are less well known. Sea fish were a staple article of diet, whereas most freshwater fish were an expensive luxury. The medievals’ tastes seem odd to us. A ‘great eel’ was, quite rightly, a noble gift and a token of respect; but
bream, ‘flabby and tasteless’, was the *pièce de résistance* at royal feasts in fast-time; the miserable tench was a status symbol; and the monks of Winchester lived largely on minnows. (But do not we today rate the dull turbot above the delicious dab?)

Fishing brought out many aspects of the medievals’ technology. Their water-engineering has never been surpassed, as witness the elaborate flow-control of many fishpond systems, or the great diversions needed to combine fish-traps and navigation on the fierce River Severn. As in so many aspects of medieval life, we marvel at the capacity for earth-moving. Ships were constructed for deep-water fishing as far as Iceland, and for bringing back the catch alive: and artificial harbours were somehow built at places like Lyme Regis. Medieval transport took smoked and salted fish, shellfish and even fresh sea fish to every part of England, where fishmongering was one of the more important trades. Some clever metallurgy went into fish-hooks.

This two-volume work is a synthesis of all kinds of information: documents, fieldwork, excavation, iconography, textbooks, finds of fishbones, and on one occasion pollen analysis. It begins with a summary, by B. K. Roberts, of some of the practicalities of fish-farming as it survived into modern times. R. J. Zeepvat deals with the Roman predecessors of medieval fishponds. C. Dyer discusses the quantities and prices of freshwater and sea fish, and how they were cooked. J. M. Steane assembles the fairly copious documentation on the construction and use of royal fishponds, and the transport of the king’s fishes, alive or dead. In a major paper, based on archaeological and documentary evidence, C. J. Bond deals with monastic fishponds and fisheries and with the place of fish in the monkish diet. R. A. Chambers and M. Gray point out what to look for when surveying or excavating fishponds. J. M. Steane and M. Foreman review what is known of the various methods of fishing, and the small finds which give evidence of angling, netting, spearing and trapping. M. Aston discusses the post-medieval development of fish-farming and fishing, as explained in Elizabethan and Stuart textbooks.

The second volume is a series of local surveys of fishponds and river fisheries in Avon (i.e. the post-1974 county), Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Leicestershire and Rutland, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire. M. Shackley, J. Hayne and N. Wainwright present the remains of fish, other animals and plants found in the excavation of the fishponds of Owston Abbey, Leicestershire. A. J. White gives the documentary and archaeological evidence for the river fisheries of the Witham. P. M. Losco-Bradley and C. R. Salisbury report on two fish-weirs, one Anglo-Saxon and one Norman, excavated on the Trent: these are of the greatest interest for the history of hurdlework as well as of fishing. D. J. Pannett describes the great fish-weirs of the River Severn, which continued from at least the Anglo-Saxon age to the age of photography. E. Grant discusses the bones of river and sea fish found in an excavation at Langport, Somerset. C. J. Bond brings to our notice a fine fresco of a fishpond from the Pope’s bedroom at Avignon.

Fishing history is still a young subject, and coverage is uneven; there is relatively little to be said about the sea, despite its importance, or about fishing as a sport. There is, as yet, a shortage of hard evidence on the dating and development of pond systems. We do not know whether there was any connexion between Roman and medieval fishponds. Two final papers by C. C. Taylor and S. Moorhouse point out *desiderata* for future investigation. Nevertheless, much has been achieved. These remarkable volumes do honour to the varied skills of the contributors and the perseverance of the editor. I have found them fascinating reading, although I thought I had only a passing interest in fish.

OLIVER RACKHAM


In this book the author examines those castles which date primarily from c. 1400 to 1660, and the alternative forms of residences which the nobility were building during the same
period, notably courtyard houses rather than the more massive, belligerent structures of the 13th century and earlier. Although there is a passing mention of Scotland and Ireland, with their ubiquitous medieval and post-medieval tower-houses, *Decline of the Castle* concentrates on England and Wales, but also makes some comparisons with contemporary structures in France. The book, therefore, has two themes: the end of the castle as a particular form of architecture and the rise of the castellated house or palace.

In ‘Fifteenth-century contrasts’ Thompson highlights the differences in castle-building between Britain and France, and particularly between Britain and the then-independent duchy of Brittany. Although elaborate castles of this date can be found on both sides of the divide, very few British castles can match the martial strength of the works added to buildings such as La Hunaudaye, and undoubtedly the political situation in France/Brittany was a major contribution to these new works, as well as the desire to construct buildings which could mount and withstand artillery. In Britain there was very little need for such defences until the threat to southern England in 1538–39.

If the secular buildings of the English nobility in the later Middle Ages could not match the defensive works in France, upon what were they concentrating their resources? The ‘rival’ to the castle in terms of new buildings, Thompson argues, was the courtyard house, with lodgings, halls and service wings ranged about one or more courts, and typified by 14th-century Dartington Hall and 15th-century South Wingfield Manor, as well as Thornbury which was left unfinished upon the execution of its owner in 1521 (not 1522). These were not castles by any stretch of the imagination, even allowing for Thornbury’s gunloops, but minor palaces. However, as is well known to the student of the castle, this is not the complete story, for castles were still built in the late 14th and 15th centuries, while others had their defences and domestic ranges improved. Bodiam of the 1380s is but one example, with its gunlooped gatehouse. Certainly Sir Edward Dalyngrigge did not build a Harlech at Bodiam, but, as Dennis Turner has argued recently, the castle was not simply an ‘old soldier’s dream house’, and in the chapter ‘A martial face’ the author discusses those well-known castles and semi-fortified buildings of the 15th century such as Kirby Muxloe, Raglan and Caister. He also mentions the 14th-century works at Warwick, and while one can argue that the earls of Warwick produced a flamboyant frontage to the castle, to use the term ‘show-castle’ here denigrates one of the finest examples of late medieval castle-building, works which included a formidable gatehouse.

The remaining chapters consider the decline of the physical condition of castles, buildings in the 16th and 17th centuries in Britain and France where any semblance to being fortified was an illusion, the destruction wrought during the Civil War, and the castle style as adopted for several houses in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is the chapters on decline and destruction which are the most valuable contributions of the book, especially as associated with them are four appendices which, although not intended to be exhaustive, provide examples of castles derelict in the 15th century, the state of castles in the 1530s and 1540s, those which were ordered to be demolished 1642–60, and the 1649 demolition accounts of Montgomery Castle. The late medieval and post-medieval history of the decline and destruction of the castle has been neglected in the past, and Thompson has helped to correct the balance. The reviewer had hoped that this would have been the main theme of the book, and while not totally disappointed that this was not the case cannot help but reflect that a more useful book would have been written if it had concentrated on this area alone.

The main text consists of some 170 pages, and as it is profusely illustrated, and the margins on each page are about 70 mm to allow for captions, the book is not a lengthy piece of work. There are also some irritating slips, for example Wardour for Walmer (p. 1), the attribution of Tretower and Chirk to the wrong counties in the Principality (pp. 69–70, caption on p. 145), and fig. 43 is uncaptioned. Furthermore, Lord Herbert of Cherbury’s house of the 1620s in the middle ward of Montgomery Castle was not ‘Black Hall’; this was a Tudor house of the Herbert family that lay below the castle in or near the town of Montgomery. It is dangerous to state that no mottes were built after 1200 (p. 6), for they certainly were in Scotland, and as for the statement that no mock castles were built after 1914
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(p. 169) one has only to see the splendid Castell Gryn in Clwyd, built in 1977–82, to realize that this is not the case.

The Decline of the Castle is, nevertheless, an important addition to the bibliography of the castle, and one awaits with equal interest Thompson’s forthcoming work on the hall.

JOHN R. KENYON


When the Welsh Commission began their survey of Glamorgan they knew that they would face, for the first time in their history, the problem which the English Commission had known from the beginning, how to present a mass of varied material in a concise and scholarly form. Their answer was to abandon the parish-by-parish approach of earlier Inventories and instead to divide their subject matter into categories. The results have fully justified that decision and the very form of the publication has led to much less uninformative description, and far more analysis of the nature and development of types of monument, than the older Inventories. The present book has all the merits of its predecessors; it lists nearly 1,500 monuments and, as the Chairman’s preface rather modestly claims, it provides, in association with Part I, ‘a satisfactory general view of the domestic architecture of Glamorgan of the early modern period’. It does much more than that. Part I of vol. IV, for all its virtues, had a lamentably short preface on the ‘Geographical and Historical Background’ amounting to less than three pages. Those who complained about that cannot deny that they have been done proud in the present volume, which includes an opening ‘Historical Survey’ running to about 40,000 words, a clear and concise ‘Architectural Survey’, an analysis of the rich parish of Llantwit Major and of the planted town of Cowbridge, and an account of farm buildings.

As in previous volumes most of the space is devoted to consideration of individual categories, most importantly of house-types, but also of fittings and details, and each is accompanied by its own distribution map. There are nearly a hundred of these, many of them with no very clear significance, and one wonders whether they are not becoming something of a cult in the Principality. The illustrations are as plentiful and as illuminating as ever; plans, sections, details and ‘exploded’ drawings judiciously used to amplify the analysis of the buildings and the types. The information is presented in a way which, for all its great amount, is easily located and assimilated. Whatever aspects of vernacular building may interest future scholars they will turn to this volume for examples and comparisons.

What is new is the long ‘Historical Survey’ and it needs some consideration of its own. It opens with a discussion of the demographic and economic development of the geographical areas which make up the county and of their social structure, and goes on to consider their farming styles, their landholding customs and their fortunes in the course of the period. The distinction between upland and lowland conditions is emphasized as well as the differences within each of these areas. A large section is devoted to the documentary evidence for the ‘Great Rebuilding’, and in particular to the variations in house-size revealed by the Hearth Tax returns. Inventories provide the material for a discussion of the number and use of rooms in houses and of the furniture within them. At the end there is a short section considering in some detail the differences between five parishes in the southern Vale and the parish of Llantrisant, straddling the divide between upland and lowland. The overriding theme is of the differences between and within areas, and a lesser one of the difference in standards between wealthier and poorer cultivators, the former being indistinguishable at the top from the minor gentry.

The volume as a whole is yet another stride forward by the Welsh Commission, both in its historical survey of the county and in its accounts of Llantwit Major and Cowbridge. If
criticism is to be made it is that the survey, impressive in its display of learning, is very limited in its range and conclusions; the treatment of tenures is a clear example. The writer is wisely chary of granting the importance that current fashion bestows upon them and in his discussion of the earlier history of Cowbridge appreciates plainly that they reflect as well as reinforce a balance of power between landlords and tenants and are not immutable. His discussion, however, is extremely limited, is divided between several contexts and is inconclusive. His own major conclusion that 'variations in farm size and profitability' account for the variations of vernacular housing is not much more than a truism.

The authors are to be congratulated not merely upon having produced a volume with all the expected merits of its predecessors, but with new ones of its own. It is to be hoped that they will be allowed, despite the present climate, to follow their admirable course.

ERIC MERCER

Short Reviews

The Significance of Form and Decoration of Anglo-Saxon Cremation Urns (B.A.R. British Series 166).

This book could be subtitled 'Is there death after Myres?'. In it Julian Richards, in what is substantially his Ph.D. thesis (submitted in 1985), seeks to advance the study of Anglo-Saxon cremation urns beyond the point reached by Myres in his massive but essentially descriptive Corpus. His approach is through statistical analysis, not only of the shape and decoration of the urns, but also of associated grave-goods and skeletal material.

In a short review I shall concentrate on the aspects least likely to be familiar to readers of this journal — the statistical analyses. Having set up a data base of 2,440 urns from eighteen sites, Richards uses principal components analysis to establish the basic parameters of vessel shape, and (less successfully) to suggest groups of mutually associated grave-goods. The main thrust consists of about 2,000 tests, which seek to identify associations between any two of vessel shape, decoration, grave-goods and (where available) age and sex of the burial. While the use of any one test individually is appropriate, the use of so many at once gives rise to problems, since about half the 'significant' associations could have arisen by chance, even if there were no real structure to the data. The question 'which half?' is not tackled: a more flexible and less mechanical approach to significance testing could have helped, e.g. by looking for more complex patterns within the data than simple associations between pairs of categories. It seems likely that Richards is here a prisoner of his software (the SPSS package) and the understandable need to complete in a reasonable time.

Nevertheless, Richards's achievement is considerable. He has brought together a wide-ranging and valuable body of data, and has demonstrated beyond doubt that there are links between each pair of: vessel shape, decoration, grave-goods and skeletal information. The urns can therefore be seen as displaying symbolic information about the 'social identity' of the deceased, and not simply reflecting regional or chronological variation, or the whims of the individual potter. Even if one disagrees with the interpretation, the patterns in the data are there and demand explanation. The book opens up a fruitful area of study, which will surely be exploited more thoroughly as techniques are developed and refined.

CLIVE ORTON