Central topics in this wave of research are the hierarchical organization of society and the extent of political entities. Potentially, an island ‘community’ such as Öland, with clear natural boundaries, would seem to offer scope for an illuminating case study of the processes involved, especially as the island concerned is consistently less conspicuously peculiar in its material culture than contemporary Bornholm and Gotland. Much research needs to be done, however, to achieve that goal, and the authors and editors of Olands järnåldergravfält rightly eschew premature and superficial conclusions. It can be pointed out, for instance, that the burial evidence seems to cluster markedly in two phases, the Roman period and Viking periods. There is little visible reuse of earlier well-furnished burial sites in the Viking period and virtually no detectable continuity of burial on a site between either end of the first millennium. The Migration period is sparsely represented in these burials and the Vendel period all but absent. This immediately suggests that it will be difficult to study local long-term processes in detail. However this survey provides a rich source of comparative data for the broader regional study of the Roman period, widely seen now as the horizon in which far-reaching changes leading towards modern state-formation took place in north Germanic society, and for the Viking period, particularly with the new attention that the mid-Swedish centre at Birka is enjoying and the republication of its cemetery finds.

Both volumes end with a general commentary focused on some special topic that seems to be particularly pertinent in the given local context, Volume i on the distribution of settlement, Volume ii on weapon graves. It is perhaps most instructive to read these sections as a reminder of the need for the thorough examination of data, case by case, to assess their real source value in any general synthesis. These volumes are not the place for grand comprehensive propositions, especially as radically new general views of the period and zone do not seem to be called for at present. The detailed refinement of existing perceptions is true scholarship too. These selective analyses are clearly supposed to function as pilot studies. A superficial impression is that such sampling gives a more representative view of settlement history than of burial practice. That in itself is a methodologically significant hypothesis which can be further assessed when this most welcome series is completed.

JOHN HINES

Short Reviews


Over the last decade or so there has been a virtual explosion of published syntheses on medieval archaeology in Europe. Günter Fehring is well known for his many scholarly papers, including several on medieval church archaeology, and on the development of the flourishing port of Lubeck in the Middle Ages. This volume is a translation into English of his valuable Einführung in die Archaologie des Mittelalters (1987). Indeed, the translator’s introduction is important in its own right as it sets the book in its proper geographical and chronological context for the English reader. The translator, Ross Samson, also gives the reader a very useful archaeological glossary explaining the meanings of the more important and complex German terms used throughout the text.

The book covers the medieval archaeology of Germany in a most comprehensive manner, from the end of the Roman Empire up until the 16th century, concentrating on settlement rather than artefactual evidence. Its comprehensiveness is revealed by the inclusion of topics such as a concise survey of the available university courses in medieval archaeology in Germany, which is not covered in other comparable works. The text proceeds
logically from an overview of the subject, then through an examination of the principal sources of information before examining the main categories of archaeological sites. It concludes with a thought-provoking chapter on the contribution of medieval archaeology to medieval research generally. In summary, Fehring is convinced that medieval archaeology is an ‘historical discipline’ which co-operates with other subjects in elucidating the material culture of the Middle Ages.

In a book with less than 250 pages of text it is hardly surprising that there is occasionally too much data compressed, which thereby reduces the general discussion of particular settlement types. It is often very difficult to strike a correct balance on this issue, and that Fehring succeeds in the main is a tribute both to his scholarship and literary skills. All the settlement chapters contain much useful information, but the present reviewer found Chapter 4 on defensive sites especially informative on the origins of the castle within the continental milieu. The last section of Chapter 5, ‘Urban and rural settlement’, examines the limited evidence for the archaeology of transport in the period, a vital aspect of medieval life which is often overlooked.

It is a pity that in this seminal work that there are no photographic plates, either in the German or the English edition, which is probably the result of the publisher’s wish to reduce production costs. However, there are almost one hundred line drawings, most of them of a very fine quality. Only one or two are over-reduced, such as Figure 78. Finally, the lack of footnotes is a drawback in an academic book, although major bibliographic references are given at the head of each section which provides a useful guide to the reader.

These criticisms are very minor in the context of a book which has succeeded so well in its aim to provide an ‘introduction’ to this ‘young discipline’ in Germany (p. ix). This concise well-argued book investigates the research in neighbouring countries which are also relevant to Germany. For all these reasons it is a ‘must’ for any scholar who wishes to be well informed about the level of research in medieval archaeology in Germany, which has contributed so much to advance the status of the subject internationally.

TERRY BARRY


The end of the millennium brings yet another book on the end of Roman Britain, an industry which will probably dry up only when all of the possible permutations for book titles have been copyrighted. Esmonde Cleary’s study draws on much the same data as has been used before and draws broadly the same conclusions. Where this contribution differs is in its provision of the Continental background, at least up to the migration period, after which it is notably absent.

The writer sets the scene by describing the structure of the late Roman Empire and then considers the history of the western part of it during the later 3rd and 4th centuries. This is a useful survey in that it emphasizes the similarities and differences between Britain and the Continent as they sank into terminal collapse, although the general reader may wish for some training in classics to fully understand parts of this. Against this backcloth Britain is then put under the microscope with special attention being focused on the critical 50 years 380–430. Finally the writer examines the evidence for the British during the 5th century largely in southern England and south Wales before describing the Germanic response to what they encountered in the south-east during the 5th and early 6th centuries.

Until 375 Britain was still very much a part of the Empire and the sudden collapse of Roman Britain was part of the general decline of the west and not the result of the Germanic migrants, of whom there were tens of thousands. The withdrawal of central authority and taxation on an already weak economy caused the complete collapse of a Romanized way of life soon after 411. The twilight zone between that and the migrations is largely filled with
archaeological evidence drawn from those regions outside the area of Germanic settlement and the void in the south-east of England is filled using Gildas and the early entries of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; the writer underestimates the extent of the archaeological evidence for the indigenous population, who are claimed to number in their millions. Indeed, this seems the weakest part of the book; the reader is given many questions and is left wondering about the nature of the migrations and their effect on the population.

The illustrative material supports the text well, although some of the figures, such as Figure 48, have been over-reduced, others are incomprehensible for want of a key, for example Figures 35 and 37, and the reader has to work hard to see the relationship between the Poundbury cemetery and the later settlements in Figures 33 and 40. The maps are excellent, the plates are varied and generally of good quality.

CHRISTOPHER J. ARNOLD


This book is timely, coming as it does after 30 years of an explosion of Viking-Age and Urban archaeology. It is also made more useful and authoritative because the co-authors have been at the heart of developments in Scandinavia and Britain through these decades of excavation and discussion and this deep knowledge lies at the heart of this book. They both have a distinguished record of international co-operation and publishing. Helen Clarke is currently editing *Excavations at Helgo* whilst Björn Ambrosiani is currently directing the excavations at Birka. But this is so much more than a tale of trenches, the archaeology of the towns is placed in a very wide frame both chronologically and spatially. Obviously this is a book mainly about the Baltic and Scandinavia before A.D. 1000 but those towns are placed in a considered context which includes an area from Russia to the western coast of Ireland. This is a most important work especially for English readers, whose travels and lack of languages often give them a particular insular view, and it is fortunate that the centre of interest for both authors is centred around Sweden, thus correcting the rather strange recent concentration of British readers on the archaeology of Denmark. After a short introduction Chapter 2 investigates the north-west European towns up to the end of the 7th century and is full of the modern work that has taken place from Switzerland to the Loire, from Marseilles to York.

The chapter is succinct and clear with particular emphasis on England.

Chapter 3, ‘North-west European towns in the 8th and 9th centuries’, is particularly strong on England and Holland, where so much of the important work has been done and shows us in Western Europe how far we have come in our studies whilst the results of the excavations of Dorestad, London, York, Ipswich and Southampton are integrated with the documentary and numismatic sources into a coherent chapter.

The core of the book lies in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Chapter 4, ‘Towns in the Viking lands’, is absolutely essential reading, as much modern work is reviewed. Chapter 5, ‘The Vikings in Britain’, integrates the relatively easily accessible British material into the wider European context and takes a balanced, even conservative, view of the role of the Danes in British urban development. Chapter 6 covers ground which must be new, and often exciting, for British readers. This is ‘Towns in the Slavonic-Baltic area’, the area of influence and expansion mainly of the Swedish Vikings. The archaeological developments in what was East Germany, in Poland and in Russia are charted, and the towns mapped. The frustrations of work in Russia sometimes comes through but are deftly handled.

Chapter 7, ‘Towns in north, east and west; their physical structure and economy’, is a useful, thematic review of topography; hinterland and communications; town foundation and administration; plots; building types; institutions; defences; graveyards and population; and the economy. The final chapter discusses the agenda for the next stage of research into the field of Viking-Age towns, and in doing so stresses the interim nature of the work. The many illustrations and the extensive bibliography make this slim book a most useful tool.

DAVID HILL

Birka, at the heart of Lake Mälaren to the west of modern Stockholm, is an absolutely key site in the Viking period. As Björn Ambrosiani, leader of the current archaeological project there, says ‘Nowhere in the whole of Scandinavia, let alone on a tiny island in the north Baltic, is there anything comparable to this density of archaeological features. This site has always aroused curiosity’. The core of this small, well-produced and finely illustrated volume is a summary account of ‘Early discoveries in the Black Earth’ by Eva Hyenstrand, in which, at last, it is possible to get some understanding of what Hjalmar Stolpe undertook by way of excavation there in the 1870s and 1880s. This account is based upon newly acquired papers, here translated (in Swedish) in Appendix I by Monica Johansen.

Clearly what can be gained now from these excavations in terms of stratigraphical understanding and structural information is limited, even though Stolpe — by the standards of the day — worked on a large scale: 7,000 sq. ft. in 1872, 16,433 in 1878 and, for instance, the recording of 2,037 graves in 1873. We are told that Stolpe was ‘a man before his time’ and ‘the founder of modern field archaeology in Sweden’. We may wish to reserve judgement somewhat on this — even if he did use the expensive graph paper to record the site, and had some stratigraphical understanding — but it was certainly far in advance of the 1883 ‘plundering expedition’ of Nils Reisson in 1883. A summary is given of other excavations since with, for instance, a marvellous picture of Holger Arman and Greta Arwidsson excavating in the early 1930s. Even so, this paper seems over-compressed and we await with impatience publication of Erik Sörülings’ catalogue of the artefacts.

Papers by Torun Zachrisson and Staffan Nyström set out clearly the hoard evidence (often misunderstood in the past) and the runic inscriptions. In the latter case, despite criticism of Nordén’s magical and mystical interpretations, the opportunity to offer new interpretations is, regrettably, not taken.

Much previous work on Birka has been published in German and Swedish, and we must, therefore, be grateful that Ambrosiani offers us an English summary (again rather too short) of the 1970–71 excavations, previously published only in Swedish. It is, however, puzzling as to why he doesn’t offer the 1969 results — even if techniques of recovery of material evolved from 1969 to 1970. He certainly emphasizes the richness of the deposits here — a theme taken up in his further contributions on the ‘Setting up of the 1990–94 project’ and the ‘Choice of excavation site’. Some of the latter — and especially Appendix 2 on the ‘Reference group’ — are not particularly appropriate to a permanent printed record (e.g. the choice of candidates for scholarships!).

The opening paper is headed ‘What is Birka?’, and offers us as an answer ‘a multifaceted archaeological complex containing many diverse types of finds and constructions’. We wish the current excavations well, and hope that a rather clearer definition will emerge from this work! Certainly modern attention to Birka is overdue, and it is good now to have the focus on the Black Earth area, rather than the cemeteries.

CHRISTOPHER D. MORRIS


This volume is one of a series of studies arising from excavations carried out in the town of Schleswig to the south-east of the Jutland peninsula, a little to the north of Haithabu. The volume is devoted to a study of the wild animal remains from the ‘Schild’ excavations, which were dated to the 11th to 14th centuries.
The majority of the animal remains recovered from the site as a whole were those of domestic animals, and the 1,350 wild animal remains are only 1.2 per cent of the total number of mammalian bones. Twenty-one wild mammal and two amphibian species were represented, although the majority of the bones were those of only five species: roe deer, red deer, brown hare, fox and wild boar (in descending order of importance). After a short introductory section, which includes an analysis of the spatial distribution of the bones of the best-represented species, the major part of the volume is devoted to a species-by-species account of the bone material. The analysis is very thorough, and includes the distribution of skeletal elements, age data, detailed metrical analyses (with further bone measurement data given in the appendix), accounts of butchery techniques and a discussion of the ecological and cultural implications of the bone finds. There are also comparisons of some species proportions and bone sizes with data from other sites of the Middle Ages and of the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (although not of any intermediate periods) in northwestern Europe. The final section includes a more general discussion.

The approach to the study is very much that of a zoologist of the German school of archaeozoology, and much of the detail would be of little interest to the general reader. However, there is some information of value to the non-specialist, particularly in the account of the changes that took place in wild animal exploitation between the early and late phases of occupation of the site, and in the evidence for long-distance trade in wild species. It is, though, to be regretted that the approach taken to the study of the finds from this excavation was to divide the material into categories, which were then analysed and published separately by different specialists — the dog and cat remains and the cattle, sheep, goat and pig remains from the site were discussed in two earlier volumes. An approach that integrated all types of evidence, including the other archaeological evidence, would do greater justice to the work carried out at this important site.

ANNIE GRANT


This volume is one of a series of reports on excavations by the Antikvariske Samling of Viking-Age Ribe, perhaps the most important trading centre of southern Scandinavia during the 8th century: Volume 1 presents the written sources and coins; Volume 2 discusses the evidence for metal-casting; this volume presents the palaeoenvironmental evidence, finds relating to textile production, leather and amber working, and the hone stones; and Volume 4 contains the stratigraphic and dendrochronological evidence.

The material presented derives from excavations on the east bank of the river, Ribe Å, opposite the medieval town centre. The excavated area was relatively small, and no buildings, apart from two sunken huts, were identified. The finds, however, were abundant and exceptionally well-dated through numismatic and dendrochronological methods. The 8th- and 9th-century phases proved of particular interest as the finds from these layers appear to relate to trade and craft activities. This has led the excavators to suggest that this was the site of open-air workshops and a possible market relating to a permanent, proto-urban settlement, as yet to be identified. The dendrochronological results date the earliest phase of this occupation to a period some 150 years before the first mention of Ribe in documentary sources, c. A.D. 860.

The volume is essentially a series of straightforward specialist reports and catalogues, with varying amounts of commentary by individual specialists. Regrettably, no attempt at overall historical synthesis or interpretation is made here, and the result is somewhat bland. For this, the reader will need to consult the periodical literature on Ribe, for example L. Frandsen and S. Jensen (‘Pre-Viking and early Viking Age Ribe’, J. Danish Archaeol. 6 (for 1987), 175–89).
The volume opens with an introduction to the history of the excavations, followed by a report on seeds and macrofossils from 8th-century samples (H. A. Jensen). This is followed by a discussion of parasite eggs from the layers of manure (P. Nansen) and of the faunal remains (T. Hatting), with particular reference to the extensive evidence for horn and antler working. Lise Bender Jørgensen's authoritative commentary on the textiles and textile implements (including 88 loomweights and over 500 loomweight fragments) sets Ribe within a broad north European context. Evidence for leather working consists of some 425 cut pieces of hide, probably tanned. The most complete leather objects are five shoes and numerous fragments of shoes, dating probably to the 8th century, on the basis of which the stages of shoe manufacture are discussed in detail (J. Nielsen). Some 1,900 pieces of amber weighing over two kilos were recovered. The majority of this material was unworked, but the presence of beads, pendants and gaming pieces, including unfinished pieces, suggests workshop activity. The production of amber beads and their distribution by phase are given separate consideration (K. Botfeldt and H. Brinch Madsen).

The concluding chapters discuss the 117 hone stones from Ribe and their petrography (S. Myrvoll and N. Hald). Of the main typological groups, the hones of Eidsborg stone, purple slate and schist appear to represent importation of stone in bulk and four sandstone hones may have come from England. The Eidsborg stone, it is suggested, was brought from Norway in long pieces, then broken up at Ribe to be made into smaller hones. The authors conclude from a comparative study of hones elsewhere in Denmark and northern Europe generally that, although the trade in Eidsborg hones began already in the 9th century, they constituted only a relatively small proportion of hones until c. 1100, when they became the chief imported type. A hypothetical reconstruction of the trade route of Eidsborg hones suggests that Ribe acted as a redistribution centre for these in the 9th century.

HELENA HAMEROW


Like most of the volumes emanating from the Römisch-Germanische Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, this is impeccably produced, to the highest standards of scholarship. The author intended, when she began her dissertation under M. Müller-Wille at Kiel, to treat all aspect of horse-harness and horse equipment; it ended up as merely a contribution to this subject, on the most important element, the snaffle. Much of the work is a catalogue, detailing and illustrating the 456 individual finds of horse-snaffles from early medieval sites in what was formerly West Germany, and also adding, for comparative purposes, another 32 examples from East Germany, and 161 from other parts of Continental Europe (excluding Scandinavia and Britain). The author distinguishes three main types: 'Ring-, Knebel- and Zangentrensen' — the ring-snaffle, the crossbar-snaffle and the 'forceps'-snaffle. The crossbar-snaffles are the commonest, and show the most variation; they can also be more easily divided up into chronological groups. There is some geographical variation over time, a variation in burial-custom, that is, rather than usage. The burial custom is quite widely found in the later 5th and through the 6th century, and is especially marked in Saxony and Westphalia, but not that common in Alamannia. In the 7th century, finds become more common in south-west Germany, but in a highly differentiated fashion. In the western part of Alamannia they remain sporadic, but in the eastern part, in the area between the Black Forest and the Lech, there is a denser distribution than anywhere else in the Germanic world. Further east, in Bavaria, finds of snaffles, and horse-harness in general, are again much less common. Such a geographical distribution cuts across supposed ethnic lines; it also calls into question Rainer Christlein's idea that the burial of horse-harness
denoted a particular widespread high-status group in the Rhine and Danube areas of Germany.

EDWARD JAMES


This publication is concerned with the Frankish antiquities in northern Rheinhessen, centred around Mainz west of the Rhine. It is presented in two volumes, one with the text, and the second with a catalogue and illustrations.

Volume 1 gives an overview of the artefact types found in Merovingian graves of the area — with detailed discussions of vessels, male graves and weapons, horse equipment, female graves and jewellery, such as beads and brooches, buckles and strap ends, various utilitarian items and coins. This is followed by a discussion of the mortuary evidence — the chronological reasoning, a discussion of postulated social structure based on grave goods and the arrival of Christianity in a pagan society. The overall evidence for Franks in this area is reviewed, combining a discussion of _Reihengräberfeldern_ and settlement with the historical and place-name evidence with the effects of the Church.

Volume 2 then gives a detailed catalogue of all known Frankish sites. Not only mortuary finds, but also stray finds, combined with notes on topography and historical evidence are listed, with extensive drawings and photographs of the artefacts and grave assemblages. In addition, there are maps illustrating Merovingian period grave finds, Roman settlement sites, stray finds and place-names.

The layout is very similar to that of the classic work by Böhner, _Die Fränkischen Altertümern des Trierer Landes_, written over 35 years ago. (Indeed, it is in the same series.) Zeller uses the same approach — that of an area study taking into account all known artefacts, based on thorough research, looking at extensive find combinations to produce phases based on an analysis of all the finds, and then selecting those that distinguish a phase.

The primary dates for finds in this area are covered by Böhner's Stufe III (c. A.D. 525-600) and IV (c. A.D. 600 to A.D. 670/680), but using the dating modifications of Ament (B.R.G.K. 57, (1976)). Only a few types can be dated earlier to Phase II (c. A.D. 450–525). Iron finds proved difficult to date.

These two volumes appear to be an excellent source of information for this part of Germany in this period although most are from old excavations or stray finds, apart from a handful of sites. Unfortunately, there were no illustrated grave plans, which are seen as being a requirement of recent cemetery volumes, and an illustration of the types per phase would have been useful.

DIDO CLARK


For the last seven or eight years the energies of this publishing group have been directed towards specialized productions, but they have now reverted to their original objective. Most of the essays were in fact written in time for a 1986 volume, and there must be a feeling of disappointment at the delay. A closer look, however, gives compensation, notably because of the acute awareness shown consistently of the Continental dimension to so many of the
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problems. Audrey Meaney, for example, rightly looks to Continental parallels and sources in
her valuable survey of early penitential literature; she leaves us with the strong impression
that while Theodore’s work does in large measure reflect English conditions we have to
handle Egbert more cautiously. Eric John, too, has good comments to make on the
Carolingian and Ottonian worlds when he leads to careful consideration of the proposition
that only kings could be Woden-descended. It is helpful to see in his work serious allusion to
the thought that Beowulf could indeed be of Mercian origin. In the opening essay, a
translation of Joachim Werner’s review of Bruce-Mitford’s Sutton Hoo volumes, Continental
parallels are vigorously adduced, including some striking examples from the very much
earlier grave deposits at Hochdorf. Werner is anxious that we should never forget in our
wonderment at the splendour of the detail from Sutton Hoo the major evidential value of the
site for the transition from pagan to Christian. This is a point much in mind in Hilda
Davidson’s paper on royal graves as religious symbols when she points to the objects directly
related to royal power that are to be found at Sutton Hoo. Other essays include a convincing
defence of Dunwich as the location of Dommoc by Jeremy Haslam, a good discussion of early
units of government on the Welsh border by Della Hooke, a valuable topographical study by
Michael Costan of the place-names incorporating Huish and Worth and Worthy in Somerset, and a consideration by R. H. White of the possibility that the Badley bowl may be
dated to the early 7th century. Finally attention should be drawn to Richard Gameson’s
perceptive essay on Ælfric’s neglected but important attitude to script and pictures,
exploring a theme central to so much discussion of medieval art, warning us not to simplify
nor to take out of context Gregory the Great’s often quoted comments on pictures as the bible
of the illiterate. Overall the impression left by the volume is of continuity of interest in a true
inter-disciplinary approach, literary texts illumined by archaeology, as in Audrey Meaney’s
eyessay, and linguists, art historians and archaeologists all contributing their quota to a better
understanding of the Anglo-Saxon past.

H. R. LOYN

Excavations at 333–35 Eastgate, Beverley, 1983–6 (Sheffield Excavation Reports 3). By D. H.
Evans and D. G. Tomlinson. 21 × 30 cm. 320 pp., 160 illus., 62 tables in microfiche.
Sheffield: University of Sheffield for Humberside County Council Archaeology Unit, 1992.

This excavation report describes the development of tenements in an industrial suburb
north-east of the minster in Beverley from the late 11th to the end of the 14th century. It
represents, as the authors claim, the most detailed and comprehensive examination of a
medieval excavated dye-works to be published from medieval Britain.

Two phases cover urban beginnings up to the late 11th century; here the find of a cache
of grass snake eggs indicate lack of human traffic. From about 1100 there were three
tenements on the east side of Eastgate, with evidence (though not structural) of iron
smithing, flax and hemp preparation and shoemaking. From the middle of the 12th century
the properties seem to have reformed into two larger ones, both of which were evidently in the
dyeing business: vats, drains, outbuildings and enclosures. Analytical and environmental
evidence attests to fulling and dyeing processes (weld, bog myrtle and teasel; residues lining
the interior of a vat). Over the 300-year span covered by the majority of the strata there were
nine phases, or rebuilding of at least one property every 30 years (sadly, everything after
about 1400 was machined off). The artefactual evidence for industrial and everyday life is
analysed in detail, the groups of shoes and wooden objects being especially notable. The
pottery is presented as twelve key groups, one from each of the nine upper phases, and a type
series which extends the range of stratified material for Beverley already begun in the
companion Lurk Lane study, as well as refining that chronology and filling in some gaps. It is
also a different kind of occupation site. The volume concludes with a good discussion of the
industrial processes encountered, particularly dyeing. My only criticism of this report, as of the Lurk Lane volume, would be that it is not easy to reconstitute pit groups or other assemblages of artefacts. Perhaps this is true of many excavation reports, and we should consider how important it is for the reader to be able easily to see what artefacts were found together in particular strata.

This is a splendid study and all the contributors are to be congratulated. The two Beverley volumes now produced show us how the site archaeology of a small town should be published. The economics of publishing such material in hard covers will never be easy, and for this reason John Collis’s enterprising publishing concern should be praised.

JOHN SCHOFIELD


The Yorkshire Museum in York has one of the finest collections of medieval pottery in England, acquired primarily during the 19th century, and consisting of a high proportion of complete, decorated jugs. The provenance of many of these vessels is now lost but the collection has been supplemented by better documented pottery from excavations since the 1950s. Sarah Jennings’s book is a much needed illustrated catalogue of this collection. It is, however, more than just a catalogue. It not only provides a survey of the entire collection, but provides a broader background to the pottery and sets it in its medieval context. It falls into three separate sections, moving from the general to the specific.

The first part is a general introduction to pottery of the medieval period. There are short sections on what archaeologists can learn from pottery; the use of pottery in the medieval household; the variety in its forms; how it was made and distributed. Some rather sweeping claims are made. The assertion on page 6 that there is no documentary evidence for potters having apprentices may only be in reference to the north of England. Jean le Patourel, in her article ‘Documentary evidence and the medieval pottery industry’ (*Medieval Archaeol.* 12 (1968) ) has interpreted the documents to suggest that apprentices were employed, at least in southern England.

The second part is a description of the wares represented in the museum collection. It is laid out chronologically, showing the development of each type and its relationship to the others. There are difficulties in distinguishing some types. As Jennings says (p. 24), York Glazed wares and Brandsby type wares were probably made in the same area and can be difficult to tell apart. The great variety of fabrics found at Brandsby itself demands full analysis and publication of the pottery from this kiln.

The final section is the catalogue of the collection. Almost every vessel in the catalogue is illustrated. The line drawings are simple and clear; those of Trevor Pearson admirably matching those produced by Dudley Waterman 40 years ago, and published here for the first time.

The quality of production of this book strikes one immediately. The dramatically photographed vessels on the wrap-around cover immediately encourage one to pick up the book. Not one page goes by without an illustration or photograph, many in good-quality crisp colour.

For such an attractively produced book, and particularly at such an affordable price, it might seem churlish to quibble over the apparent lack of editing. The text is spoilt by inappropriate punctuation, the use of colloquialisms, and omissions such as the figure number on page 13. Printing errors abound. Some phrasing might have been better chosen: the explosion in the medieval pottery industry mentioned on page 17 could be very easily misunderstood.

These are, however, minor matters in an otherwise excellent publication, which not only gives a useful picture of medieval pottery in Yorkshire to the specialist, but will, one hopes, encourage visitors to the museum to look at medieval pottery with a more informed eye.
Sarah Jennings has provided an invaluable resource to teachers whose pupils are studying Medieval Realms, Key Stage 3 of the National Curriculum, and should stand as an example to other museums of how to bring alive the usual dry catalogues of their collections.

ANNA SLOWIKOWSKII


In this small book John Cherry combines splendid illustrations of some 90 pieces of medieval craftsmanship with a thorough and perceptive discussion of their decoration and its significance. They are selected to illustrate four themes: 'Nature and rural life', 'Heraldry', 'Feasting' and 'Romance and courtly love'. Most, as might be expected, are in the British Museum. They include the familiar — the Savernake horn, the 'Ashanti' ewer, the Chertsey tiles — and unfamiliar views of familiar objects: close-ups, for example, of the decoration on a 14th-century gittern, in which a peasant knocks down acorns to feed his pigs. Designed for a 'popular' audience, the book lacks the footnotes that readers of this journal might look for; but it provides a useful bibliography and, somewhat unexpectedly, the museum accession number of every item shown.

The title belies the content, which is in truth medieval secular art, 'often ignored' as the author comments in his brief introduction. His subject is the use of secular motifs — mostly human or animal figures — to ornament what were basically utilitarian objects. The decision to omit religious subjects, which often had a decorative function, somewhat masks the corollary that apparently straightforward 'secular' decoration may have had a significance not obvious to the modern eye.

The author of course recognizes this fact, particularly in relation to his themes 'Heraldry' and 'Romance and courtly love'. But the boundaries are blurred. Quite properly, though his first chapter on 'Nature and rural life' demonstrates the use of animals as decorative motifs, he postpones discussion of the squirrel, with its often bawdy connotations, until the chapter on 'Romance'.

In a chapter on 'Feasting' he deals with decorated table and kitchen wares, and the discussion of pottery is particularly welcome. It is often omitted from any general treatment of art, though it may be the closest we shall ever get to the art of the medieval peasant. If the significance of the designs on the more precious objects illustrated is sometimes obscure, what are we to make of the little jug in the form of a man grasping his beard in both hands, or the pottery figure of a woman holding a fish? And the Saintonge-ware puzzle jug from Exeter obviously entails more than one puzzle!

The book covers a lot of ground. It does not, however, attempt to place the art in its social setting — who were these items made for, who made them and what did they cost? For that one must turn to the British Museum's parallel series of books on Medieval Craftsmen. Other themes could have been considered, and other types of object (though not well represented in the British Museum's collections) that portray a host of secular objects — misericords, for example, or cheap metal badges, or the whole world of marginal illustrations recently explored by Michael Camille. Yet as an introduction to the gallery of art that runs riot over the surfaces of everyday medieval objects this book is most welcome.

JOHN CLARK


This book by a distinguished German historian deserves to be known to readers of this journal because it makes considerable use of archaeological evidence. It surveys European peasants for the whole medieval period, but tends to focus on Germany in the period...
The author is anxious to distance himself from the extremes of his German predecessors, whose tradition of writing history was either strongly legalistic, or excessively ethnocentric in its interpretation, or was based on a delusion that medieval peasants lived in a rural idyll. For British readers the author's approach might seem at times over-concerned with conceptual niceties and definitions based on law and institutions, with a preference for theoretical explanations — but in this he reflects accurately the nature of historical writing in his country.

Archaeologists with an interest in rural settlements will find that Rosener discusses the material culture of the peasantry — villages, houses, clothing and food — alongside the peasant economy, the family, social relations within the peasant community, and relations between the peasants and their lords. Many of his generalizations echo closely the findings of English medieval archaeology. For example, early medieval settlements in Germany are thought to have been small and unstable, just like those in England, until the 9th and 10th centuries. Only at this relatively late date do we find large, organized and permanent villages. But German historians link village nucleation with the breakdown of the great early medieval estates, and the decline of seigniorial power over the peasantry, whereas English thinking on the subject tends to emphasize the growth of control by lords which, directly or indirectly, promoted village formation. These divergent explanations of the same phenomenon appear to strengthen the view that village formation was not concerned in any simple way with lordly power.

Rosener gives brief accounts of village excavations at such sites as Hohenrode and Königshagen, which deserves to be better known in this country. In a clearly written account of houses he shows that in some regions the later medieval German peasant buildings combined functions of crop storage with shelter for people and animals, but they were similar to their English equivalents in changing from earthfast construction to stone foundations and timber framing around the 13th century.

The least convincing chapter is that dealing with agricultural technology. The author rehearses the various technical inventions of the period — mills, animal harness, heavy ploughs, crop rotations and so on, and then attempts to connect their adoption with the phase of agrarian expansion of the 12th and 13th centuries. He himself admits that the earliest occurrence of these innovations is documented before the 12th century, and produces no very good reason for dating their diffusion to the period when they ought to have been contributing to increased productivity. But this is a flaw in an otherwise admirable and generally successful résumé of present knowledge of the diverse and complex history of the medieval European peasantry.

CHRISTOPHER DYER


Readers with a particular interest in southern Sweden, or those with a more general interest in multi-disciplinary approaches to the investigation of archaeological landscapes, will welcome this book. It represents the outcome of a sub-project, 'Settlement, development, production and social organisation in the Middle Ages', that formed part of the larger Ystad Project, a multi-period, multi-disciplinary investigation of two hundreds around the town of that name.

As the title (village, manor, and church) suggests, three aspects of the medieval cultural landscape and their inter-relationships are explored, the volume consisting of a series of individual essays, divided into three main sections. The first (the shortest) deals with the origins of the villages in the study area (generally c. 1000), their development, and the
agricultural economy, based on excavated structural and environmental evidence from a small number of sites scattered between contrasting landscape zones, and on post-medieval cartographic and documentary sources. The second section examines manorial sites, combining below- and above-ground structural evidence, the occurrence of runic inscriptions, and post-medieval sources, to explore their origins (late Viking Age in some cases), form, and a widespread tendency to relocation away from the villages in the late 13th and 14th centuries; parallels and contrasts with fortified sites in Denmark are drawn. The third section (the longest) is devoted to the parish churches. It is introduced by a gazetteer of the surviving sites, illustrated with excellent phased plans to a common scale and comparative reconstructed plans in c. 1300 and c. 1600. Then follows a paper on trends in the churches' structural development and their use of building materials; the improvement of naves and west towers after c. 1300 is seen as a reflection of the increasing role of congregations in the maintenance and extension of churches, eclipsing the purely aristocratic involvement of earlier centuries. A subsequent paper outlines the area's evolving ecclesiastical organization, from a pair of senior churches, with dependencies, on archepiscopal or royal estates, to a stable and egalitarian parochial geography by c. 1200. The last contribution to the section explores the problematic relationship between the size of churches and demographic trends. The volume finishes with a short contribution on the problems of cultural resource management in the area, and a concluding summary by one of the editors.

As the editors themselves point out, while the papers collected here represent a very wide spread of disciplines, the volume as a whole adds up to less than a comprehensive treatment of the study area, though in part this is a question of the survival and accessibility of the evidence. The mid 13th century saw the foundation of the town of Ystad itself (by whom?), but this is not treated; anyone looking for fields and the physical evidence of agriculture outside the farmstead will be disappointed; the changing form of churches is discussed in relation to the socio-economic background and the building industry, but the question of their liturgical use is only fleetingly raised.

Most of the papers, and the captions to all of the figures, are followed by summaries in English. That most, but not all, of the papers — including the most substantial contribution on manorial sites — are thus provided will be a source of frustration (and a mystery) to Anglophone readers, and inhibits a full appreciation of the inter-relationships between the component disciplines of this valuable project.

The most obvious difference between the two series concerns the choice of volume size, Cadw opting for a chunky format and English Heritage for one which is larger but slimmer.
The chunky format sits more happily on the bookshelf or in a large pocket (does anyone actually carry pocket guides in the pocket?), while the flatter format allows selected photographs to be reproduced larger and with more striking effect. The volumes in both series are extremely handsome. Excellent conventional and air photographs appear throughout. The Cadw volumes score with their neatly drawn plans and numerous imaginative reconstruction drawings, while English Heritage includes some colour but fewer plans. Even so, it was a delightful surprise to find that in the Dorset to Gloucester volume a whole page was devoted to the reproduction of a plan of Snig's End in Gloucestershire, where Feargus O'Connor partitioned the locality for the Peoples Land Company, which sought to offer the opportunity of land ownership to the landless poor.

In terms of text, design and illustrations, each series is thoroughly deserving of praise. Criticisms are of a minor nature. Although the Welsh volumes have introductions which are specific to each region, the English ones carry a foreword by Professor Barry Cunliffe which is proclaimed on each cover but which is the same throughout the series. So the enthusiast who purchases the set will be buying the great man's same jottings several times over. My main criticism of the Welsh series is of a more technical nature. Quite sensibly, a 'Summary of Dates' is provided at the end of each volume. Mention is made of radiocarbon dating and of the need to recalibrate such dates. But in the table of dates which follows we find prehistoric dates which are so misleadingly 'young' that they seem to be uncorrected C14 dates — and yet they are accompanied by the 'BC' suffix which should denote 'real' dates ('bc' conventionally being used to denote the uncorrected dates). Thus confusion results from the attempt to inform — and if anything it increases when one reads that the radiocarbon dates printed in the text are 'given corrected in years BC'.

Priced at £11.95, the Cadw volumes are £1 more expensive than those produced by English Heritage, but this is compensated by the greater variety of illustrations displayed in the Welsh guides. Both Cadw and English Heritage deserve to be congratulated upon their successes in producing 'popular' guides. The richness of the portfolios of monuments described serves as a reminder of the Philistinism rampant at a higher level in the heritage ministry: that level where the plans to discard all but the most profit-making parts of the national heritage were hatched.

Richard Muir


To a schoolboy growing up in an east Midlands village 25 years ago, the medieval countryside was just over the back hedge. Ridge and furrow (a considerable hindrance to football and cricket) rolled under virtually all permanent pasture, 'hills and hollows' (today our 'areas of shrunken settlement') abounded, while entry to isolated farms was often thwarted by dank and uninviting moats. The past was playground, not a foreign country.

Since then, and to begin with largely unnoticed, those relict landscapes have disappeared at an alarming rate, principally as agricultural regimes have changed and equipment improved. What, a generation ago, it was commonplace to see has now become worthy of comment, and may, another generation hence, be rare. David Hall (The Open Fields of Northamptonshire: The Case for Preservation of Ridge and Furrow (Northamptonshire County Council, 1993)) has recently assessed the survival of ridge and furrow in Northamptonshire, the county boundary of which Milton Keynes abuts. He calculates that 3 per cent of the surviving ridge and furrow is being lost each year, and that only a few parishes now have as much as 40 per cent of their field systems extant. In as little as ten or fifteen years most or all significant examples are likely to have been obliterated.
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Too much, already, has disappeared unrecorded. Thankfully that was not the case in Milton Keynes, the 9,000 ha. north Buckinghamshire new town designated in 1967. In 1971 the newly formed archaeological unit, headed by Dennis Mynard, had the foresight to include landscape survey among its aims, and it is the essence of that survey which is presented in this volume. There was nothing remarkable about the villages, fields and woods enveloped by Milton Keynes, and there is nothing remarkable about this record of them. Thematic overviews of subjects such as moats, field systems and boundaries are followed by sixteen well-illustrated ‘parish essays’ in which the landscape is described and its development sketched out.

The volume contains little in the way of analysis or explanation, and more, perhaps of field systems, might have been attempted. No matter; essentially this is a volume of record, and must be seen thus. It is an excellent thing to have, and as time goes on its value will increase. But a record, no matter how good, is no substitute for the real thing, and what this study implicitly draws attention to is the urgent necessity for English Heritage to formulate and implement effective policies for the preservation of selected Midland landscapes. That cannot come a moment too soon.

PAUL STAMPER

The following publications have also been received:


The first three volumes in a new series ‘Know the Landscape’. Attractive overviews by recognized authorities.


Attractive popular guide with good illustrations.


Essentially an historical study, looking at the textual evidence for both ‘rational’ medicine and magical medicine.

Leland's *Itinerary* made accessible, with material reorganized into county sections and presented in modern English. Useful scholarly introduction includes reproduction of Leland's 1546 *New Year Gift*, his *apologia pro vita suo*. Like so many topographical historians Leland died insane.


