

REVIEWS

R. M. Butler (ed.), *Soldier and civilian in Roman Yorkshire*. Pp. 208, 8 plates, 28 line illustrations, map as end-paper. Leicester University Press, 1971. £4.00.

This volume of twelve essays makes an instructive and durable commemoration of the nineteenth centenary of the foundation of York. Professor Frere has graced it with an introduction to pick out many of the important points and to emphasise the gaps which need to be filled in by future work.

The contributions, placed in chronological order, provide a proper setting for Roman York by dealing with wider aspects from the rest of Yorkshire. In a brief review one is compelled to be selective.

Dr. I. M. Stead in "Yorkshire before the Romans" gives a study of Arras Culture cemeteries and shows how the settlements cannot yet be linked to them chronologically. Mr. L. P. Wenham marshals the evidence for Romans at York before Cerialis but admits the lack of structural remains, whereas Frere observes that under Cerialis the garrison may have been merely auxiliary or only part of a legion. Mr. B. R. Hartley gives a masterly survey of the northern military zone until Caracalla and debates the dating of the periods when Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall were occupied; he concludes that there was no overlap in their occupation under Marcus Aurelius.

In "the fate of the Ninth Legion" Professor E. Birley amplifies his earlier treatment with recent evidence, such as the tile-stamp and mortarium-rim of this legion found at Nijmegen, and aids his readers by quoting the relevant inscriptions in full. Dr. A. R. Birley has given the history

of "VI Victrix in Britain" with a wealth of prosopographical detail until Caracalla and for the rest of the period refers us to his work on the governors of Lower Britain. In assessing "the defences of the fourth-century fortress at York" Dr. R. M. Butler shows the rarity of polygonal towers in late Roman military architecture; they are assignable probably to Constantius I, and served to make an impressive frontage rather than stronger defences.

Dr. G. A. Webster describes and illustrates a hoard of military equipment. Mr. B. M. Dickinson and Mrs. K. F. Hartley trace York's trading connections from stamps on samian and mortaria. Professor A. F. Norman analyses religious cults and the beliefs revealed by modes of burial or cremation at York. Miss D. Charlesworth shows that the defences of Aldborough were civilian and Mr. J. S. Wachter in "Yorkshire towns in the fourth century" gives a welcome summary of his report on Catterick in 1959. Mr. H. G. Ramm examines the factors in the transition from Roman to Danish York and elucidates the practice of gypsum burials in Britain.

The Yorkshire Philosophical Society and the editor deserve our thanks for producing a scholarly and readable volume which records results already achieved and challenges future research. The contributors have provided a skilful and complex epitome of present knowledge. Notes are ample and easy to trace by following the page-number set in brackets on the page of text. The Leicester University Press deserves credit for a fine production seldom marred by misprints.

R. P. WRIGHT

Charles Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*. University of Glasgow (O.U.P.) pp. xvi & 253. £3.00.

The scope of this very useful work, substantially the

Hunter Marshall Lectures delivered at Glasgow in 1968, is somewhat different from what its title implies. It ranges far beyond North Britain (however that be defined), in particular drawing on Irish material, and yet has hardly anything to say on the Anglo-Saxon North. It is further primarily a *field* archaeology, concerned mostly with structures and their appendages, neglecting metalwork, manuscripts and much of the sculpture. The main chapters (three to seven) deal with cemeteries and the connected development of chapels and churches; with the commemoration of the dead, and here there is a most convenient collection of the more important post-Roman memorial stones, a reminder of how much we lack a "post-Roman RIB"; with the cult of relics and the development of altars; and with finally a chapter on the literary sources, treating them mainly as a quarry for information on structures.

The most interesting chapter is the second, which deals with the historical background. The author claims that the church in Britain (and Ireland) developed on the diocesan basis normal in the late empire, that monasticism only reached these islands in the later fifth century, and that only in the course of the sixth century did the monastery replace the territorial diocese as the basic element in church organization. The argument is persuasive on the evidence here presented, although it must be admitted that the material for diocesan organization beyond the frontier is very conjectural, and involves denying any *monastic* site at Whithorn related to St. Ninian. But if the thesis is correct, the question why the monastery rose to such dominance must be asked. While the author duly notes the distribution of late Roman wares as evidence for continuing trade contacts with the continent, he makes no mention of the contrary evidence for the loss of ecclesiastical contact with the church based on Rome, in particular of the fact that the church authorities in the British Isles maintained the system of calculating Easter introduced in 455, but did not adopt any later system brought in by Rome. This must reflect the

cessation of any effective control by Rome of the church in Britain—precisely perhaps what would have been most needed to ensure the continued dominance of the formal episcopal diocese. When firm central control was withdrawn, was the way opened for the ascendancy of what was, in effect, a “popular” institution?

J. C. MANN

Elizabeth Okasha, *Hand-list of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions*. Published by Cambridge University Press, 1971, pp. 159. Price £11.

This book which records a corpus of 158 non-runic Anglo-Saxon inscriptions fills a great gap in Anglo-Saxon studies. The list is preceded by a general introduction dealing shortly with localisation and distribution and is followed by a very full bibliography.

In the hand-list each object is recorded alphabetically according to its find spot and its present location noted. It is then described and dated and each piece is illustrated by a photograph. The entry is rounded off by a full bibliography. The text is admirable, and clearly set out, and this provides an unfortunate contrast with the photographic illustrations. It seems a pity that in a book of this quality, which is matched by the price, that the publishers have not achieved a better standard of illustration. Some large objects such as the crosses from Hornby and Hauxwell, Ruthwell or St. Andrew Auckland (called Bishop Auckland) are so reduced in scale that even the position of the inscription is difficult to see. In others the inscription itself is cut off, as Dewsbury II, and important pieces such as the Lindisfarne name-stones, or Lincoln, York I, or Crowland are very poor indeed. It is difficult to get consistency in photographs but the illustrations of the inscription on stone are very much poorer than those on metal-work and this need not have been so.

Mrs. Okasha discusses very interestingly, pp. 5-6, the significance of the Northern distribution of inscribed stones—80 per cent are found in the North of England—and this whets one's appetite for further discussion under such headings as "principles of dating". It seems a great pity that the interesting work she has done on epigraphic dating should not have been included in some form in this book and that there is no palaeographical apparatus for the general reader.

No doubt the author will follow up the hand-list by more detailed commentary on the letter forms and formulae. Meanwhile the reader must be grateful to have had this important body of material made available in so elegant and concise a form.

There are inevitably minor omissions in the corpus: minor inscriptions at Jarrow and at Corbridge and Castor are missed, the Acca cross and the Hexham cross, Durham Catalogue IV, are confused, and the reasons for omission or inclusion in the Bibliography are not clear. There are mis-references to page numbers, and a few such minor errors, but it would be churlish to stress these at the expense of the general utility of the work.

ROSEMARY CRAMP



