

REVIEWS

Saint Wilfrid at Hexham, edited by D. P. Kirby, xi + 196 pages, 29 plates, 5 figures and 13 plans (unlisted). Oriel Press Ltd, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1975. (imprint 1974). £5.50.

THIS COLLECTION of essays commemorating the 1,300th anniversary of the founding of Wilfrid's church at Hexham opens, appropriately, with a typically meticulous contribution by Dr. Kirby on "Northumbria in the Time of Wilfrid". This sets the scene for the rest of the book's contents with a most detailed exposition of seventh- and eighth-century Northern history. In "St. Wilfrid" Mr. Farmer gives an equally comprehensive picture of the man himself. So detailed are these opening chapters, indeed, that there is little new for Mr. Roper to say ("Wilfrid's Landholdings in Northumbria" and Appendix I), especially since the information on the landholdings—in particular the donation of Hexham—is so limited. In itself Mr. Roper's contribution is most interesting and highly informative on the financial arrangements of monasteries of the Wilfridian period in general.

It is a pity that in "St. Wilfrid's Church at Hexham" Dr. Gilbert's frequent valuable insights and his knowledge of the Merovingian background to our architectural history—almost unrivalled in this country—should be obscured by his subjective interpretations of the evidence, which amount in some cases to no more than wishful thinking. Since this book appeared further work by Richard Bailey has overtaken Dr. Gilbert's paper in several respects.

Unfortunately a good part of the artefactual evidence cannot be convincingly associated with St. Wilfrid himself, though Professor Rosemary Cramp ("Early Northumbrian Sculpture" with a hand-list in Appendix II) makes out a good case for an early date so far as the architectural sculpture is concerned. It seems, however, that the monumental sculpture of the Hexham School is probably post-Wilfridian, though it remains true that "Collingwood is the only writer who had attempted to assign a date to the Hexham vinescroll series", and Professor Cramp is not explicit about her own views on the *absolute* chronology. Dr. Bailey ("Anglo-Saxon Metalwork") has positively removed the Hexham chalice from the seventh/eighth-century period and suggested a possible Corbridge provenance for the ring. His painstaking examination of the bucket and silver plaque include an object lesson in unravelling nineteenth-century antiquarian records. The hoard of ninth-century coins which originally filled the bucket is analysed in Appendix IV by H. E. Pagan.

DAVID PARSONS

Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones in Carlisle Museum, Tullie House (3rd ed.), by R. P. Wright and E. J. Phillips, 1975 (Carlisle Museum, Tullie House. £1).

This new edition of the catalogue includes 171 inscribed stones and 76 unscribed sculptured stones, a selection being illustrated in 22 figures and twelve plates. The Museum has been fortunate to secure the services of our Past President Mr. R. P. Wright to deal with the inscriptions and of Mr. E. J. Phillips, currently studying the sculptures from the Hadrianic frontier zone for the Corpus of Sculptured Stones of the Roman Empire, to describe the sculptured stones. The inscription entries are slightly abbreviated versions of those in the *Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, vol. I (co-edited by Mr. Wright and the late R. G. Collingwood), including an expanded and restored text and translation and bibliography. Mr. Wright has been able to include inscriptions in the museum found after the dead-line for *RIB* of 1954, notably the inscription from Hardknott of Hadrianic date and centurial stones from the Birdoswald and Willowford sectors, and also to take account of discussion since the appearance of *RIB* in his readings and translations. Unscribed sculpture has not always received its fair share of attention, and Mr. Phillips' contribution is most valuable. The catalogue as a whole forms a most useful cover of the museum's collection, that can be carried in the pocket.

One general point should however be made. The catalogue does not help the ordinary visitor to understand the significance of the texts. Surely space might have been found to place the stones in the context of the Roman north-west and point out what the value is of the information given. A short general introduction and a paragraph preceding each category of stones would suffice. Some room could be saved for this by omitting bibliographical references given in *RIB*, to which the serious student will go first in any case. On points of detail 9 and 10 and 36 and 37 are cross-referenced, but by *RIB* numbers, not catalogue numbers, and the note to 3 citing *RIB* 1129 is obscure; in each case the *RIB* entry has been repeated with insufficient modification to make it suitable for this catalogue. A reference to E. & J. R. Harris, *The Oriental Cults in Roman Britain* (Leiden 1965) 69f. should be added to nos. 31 and 32, to show that some have doubts regarding the restoration of Dolichenus.

B. DOBSON

From Border to Middle Shire: Northumberland 1586–1625, by S. J. Watts, Leicester University Press, 1975, 288pp. £8.00.

The title derives from the stated policy of James VI and I to transform the former border counties of the two kingdoms into the "middle shires" of a truly united kingdom. His failure was attributable partly to human weakness and stupidity but even more to cupidity and ambition. The complex patterns of family interests and antagonisms among the Northumbrian gentry in the period 1586–1625 are traced with exemplary patience by Mr. Watts, and full account is taken of the repercussions on the county of the policies of central government and the Court.

In part this book extends rather than supersedes Tough's *The Last Years of a Frontier* and complements Rae's *The Administration of the Scottish Frontier 1513-1603*. It concentrates upon Northumberland and examines its history in greater depth and over a longer period than did Tough. It is based on thorough research to which has been brought understanding and a detached judgement. In it Mr. Watts gives a truer and more complete account of society in Northumberland at the time of the Union than has hitherto appeared.

The book has been written by a professional historian for professional historians. Mr. Watts will think us unfeeling if we seem to be chiding him for conforming to the accepted standards of his profession. But there is much in this book of interest to the common reader, much that corrects current misconceptions of the history of Northumberland during a critical period. Are we wrong to regret that it has not been written with an eye to a wider public? This is not to ask for the restoration of any false romantic elements in Border history, but to suggest that the writer might profitably have made the fractional shift in outlook which would result from having an eye cocked on the informed reader rather than on fellow-academics.

J. PHILIPSON

The History of Lead Mining in the North East of England, by L. Turnbull, Harold Hill & Son, Newcastle 1975, 80pp. £2.00.

There are already two authoritative works on lead mining in the North of England, but the present work justifies the publication of another. Its price, accessibility and presentation make it an ideal introduction for the novice of local history or industrial archaeology. The author, Mr. L. Turnbull, has had much experience in extending fieldwork and archaeology mainly in Gateshead schools, where an enlightened authority now employs him as a specialist in that branch of teaching. This experience shows in the presentation of the material in this history.

There is hard fact of history and of technological exposition in the text; this is related to specific places and where possible to remains. Mr. Turnbull, it is clear, knows the ground. There is an abundance of maps and the photographs are a joy. Anyone who is interested in the dales or in industrial archaeology, even if they have already read Raistrick and Hunt, will enjoy and profit from this book.

J. PHILIPSON

