

REVIEWS

Elizabeth J. E. Pirie, *Catalogue of the Early Northumbrian Coins in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne*, Department of Archaeology, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1982. 30 pp., 5 pls, 2 figs. (£4.20 plus 30p. postage).

This welcome work of scholarship is a notable contribution to our knowledge of the C9th Anglo-Saxon coinage of Northumbria. It is a catalogue of 476 coins belonging to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, but which are in the custody of the Museum of Antiquities, Department of Archaeology, by agreement with the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The introduction comprises a carefully researched account of the somewhat haphazard manner in which the Society had acquired the material originally, and a valuable commentary on the Kirkoswald (1808), Hexham (1832), and Heworth (1812) hoards, the last named being subjected to an overdue and robust (if slightly qualified) exposure! There is also useful information about the doubtful provenance of part of Sir Horace St. Paul's donation, though Miss Pirie has been able to ascribe some previously uncertain pieces to the Hexham hoard, a nice achievement. A fitting tribute is paid to the sometimes unjustly maligned C19th numismatists such as John Adamson, without whose care and foresight there would be little evidence remaining upon which to base current studies.

The meticulous catalogue details are generously illustrated by (very largely) clear photographs of the obverse and reverse of 189 coins (i.e. one sceat and 188 stycas); and there is a figure for which the compiler has drawn the 34 motifs to which reference is made for almost every entry.

This slim volume has a white card cover; it is always difficult to assess the economics of publication, but this deserves, and could probably have tolerated, the cost of a hard back.

G. D. Robson

R. J. Cramp and R. Miket, *Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon and Viking Antiquities in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne*, viii + 25 pp., 22 pls., 13 figs. Newcastle upon Tyne: Museum of Antiquities, 1982. (Price £5.00 + 50p. postage and packing.)

Pride of place in our Society's archaeological collections, now on permanent loan in the Museum of Antiquities, is justly accorded to material from the Roman period. We do, however, possess some notable objects of Anglo-Saxon and Viking-age date.

The interest of our holdings in this later period is not generally recognized, though Dr. Cowen's work on some of the metalwork and pottery had, long ago, alerted scholars to the importance of the Newcastle collection. The lack of any modern catalogue undoubtedly lay at the root of this unawareness and we must therefore welcome the initiative which has brought us no less than two Anglo-Saxon catalogues within the same year. Miss Elizabeth Pirie, has provided an authoritative *Catalogue of the Early Northumbrian Coins in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne* and now we have a second work covering the non-numismatic small finds (by Roger Miket) and the sculpture (by Rosemary Cramp).

Mr. Miket gives a meticulously detailed description, with bibliography, of the impoverished pagan grave-goods from Bernicia, a collection which has been notably strengthened in recent years by the addition of the Hepple finds, now on permanent loan from the British Museum. His section is not, however, restricted to this local material for we also have objects from Cumbria, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Wales and Viking Norway which betray the interests and influence of earlier generations in our society; particularly important here is the Londesborough jewellery. Professor Cramp's contribution includes carvings which can rarely be exhibited, such as the sculpture from Bothal and Carham, and contains a fascinating treatment of the Rothbury cross as well as the first publication of the grave-slabs discovered by Miss Harbottle in her excavation at the Keep.

The illustrations are generous. Miss Hurrell's drawings are reproduced at a size which allows full study of the objects whilst the sculpture has also been thoughtfully photographed and printed at a large scale. When so much is given it may seem churlish to complain that the Falstone inscriptions should have been photographed separately, but this difficult example of early epigraphy surely deserves a better record than it is given here.

Though published in 1982 most of the text and references seem to date to c. 1978. Dr. Myres' *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery* (1977) is probably the main casualty of this postponement but, given the problems of financing and publishing this type of work, we cannot justifiably complain at the delay. On the contrary, all concerned are to be congratulated on nurturing this catalogue to fruition.

Richard N. BAILEY