

REVIEWS

M. C. Bishop and J. N. Dore, *Corbridge, Excavations of the Roman fort and town, 1947-80* (English Heritage, Archaeological Report no. 8), London 1989. 323 pages, 132 figures, 21 tables, 4 microfiche. £36..

This is essentially a report on the remains of the Roman forts of the first to mid-second century under, or immediately adjacent to, Site XI at Corbridge main site (Corstopitum). Excavations elsewhere on the fort consist of investigations of the defences, while work on the town is restricted to three buildings examined before excavation of the underlying military deposits: these latter areas occupy only 14 pages of text, illustrations and tables of this report, suggesting that the title of the volume is misleading.

"This report is primarily an account of the results of the excavations on the site which took place between 1947 and 1973." Yet there is no obvious acknowledgement that an amount of the work which took place between these years has already been published. A list of these publications could have been incorporated into Table 1, which details the locations of each season's excavations. That said, this report sensibly includes relevant information on all the post-War work on the fort. The notion of a fresh, outside look at the Corbridge material is a good one. If hesitations remain on the acceptance of the conclusions offered it is in part due to the high regard in which the views of John Gillam are still held by many of his former colleagues and disciples.

The report follows the traditional pattern. An introduction includes a useful section on "the evidence of air photography". Thereafter the buildings are described individually, the text supported by composite and period plans for each building, sections and tables providing identification of the stratigraphical features and relationships. The areas so considered are the headquarters building, commanding officer's house, some barracks in the *retentura*

and defences, together with miscellaneous trenches and sites of later date. The general discussion encompasses the structural history, dating, and units in residence. There follow the finds reports, summaries in English, French and German, bibliography and fiche.

It is worth stating that there is no discussion of other aspects relating to the fort—what the finds might tell us about socio-economic aspects relating to the soldiers based there, supply, the changing patterns of artefacts from one period to another; in short no attempt to relate the body of finds reports to the site except in so far as dating is concerned: this may be sensible in view of the deficiencies of some parts of the site records. There is also little attempt to place the site in its wider setting. It would be churlish to complain about the lack of reconstruction drawings in view of the many plans.

The authors fairly note that the basic chronology of the forts is sound, but they offer certain amendments. Importantly, they argue that the fort was not abandoned in the later Hadrianic period after the construction of Halton Chesters (the bibliographical reference for this is to a paper by Gillam: it would have been more appropriate to cite the original reference, AA3, 8, 1912, 258). The point is made without qualification in the discussion (p. 140), but the authors of the coin (p. 143), samian (p. 220) and coarse ware (p. 248) reports are more guarded in their comments. Certainly, the continuing occupation of Corbridge in the Hadrianic period would fit in well with the postulated Hadrianic occupation of Vindolanda further west on the Stanegate (P. Bidwell, *The Roman Fort of Vindolanda*, London 1985, 9–10).

A second amendment to the received history of Corbridge lies in the re-interpretation of the southern defences of Fort Ib. The re-interpretation returns to the earlier view that the undulations across the compounds are the remains of the defences of Fort Ib. This was not the considered view of John Gillam follow-

ing excavation and many, like this present reviewer, will remain meantime impressed by the sensible arguments advanced in this report but remembering the other opinion of that genius of the northern frontier, John Gillam.

It cannot be easy to write up someone else's excavations, and it is an especially difficult task at a complex site such as Corbridge, where the records too are not as good as they could have been. Notwithstanding the strictures at the beginning of this review and the points of discussion raised, the authors have done a workmanlike job and they and English Heritage are to be warmly thanked for closing a chapter and at the same time offering a mine of information for future researchers.

DAVID J. BREEZE

P. T. Bidwell and N. Holbrook, *Hadrian's Wall Bridges—Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, Archaeological Report 9, 1989, 162pp., £24.*

Some of the most familiar structures on Hadrian's Wall are the most difficult to explain convincingly. This is certainly true of the two major bridges with massive remains, at Chesters and Willowford respectively. This report represents an analysis by the two authors of the evidence available from earlier accounts, the visible masonry, including reused and scattered remains, and the limited excavation possible. P. T. Bidwell directed the work at Chesters, N. Holbrook at Willowford. The monograph not only gives full analyses of the evidence and proposed interpretation of the sequence of bridges at the two sites, with the appropriate specialist reports, but also includes a review of the evidence for other stone bridges on the Wall and in northern Britain, a chapter on techniques of construction, and a consideration of the function and significance of the bridges. This naturally leads into a discussion of the road system between Tyne and Solway, in an appendix, and another appendix discusses the views of Raymond Selkirk on Roman river transport in north-east-England, as affecting

the interpretation of certain bridges, notably Piercebridge.

The authors are to be warmly congratulated. They have succeeded in establishing some facts beyond doubt and have put forward hypotheses which must now be the starting-point of all future discussions. At Chesters it is now clear which stones had simply been dumped on the abutment in the course of the nineteenth-century investigations and their removal has improved the monument visually and lightened considerably the tasks of study and exposition. The sequence proposed for Chesters is that a stone bridge was constructed, after the broad foundation of the Wall had been laid, to carry the walkway of Hadrian's Wall across the North Tyne on eight closely-spaced piers. Later in the second century the first arch was replaced by a causeway. Then in the early third century a stone road bridge was constructed. Its east abutment incorporated the first pier of the early bridge, and it was approached from the east by the Military Way, rising on a ramp alongside the Wall to pass through the upper storey of a newly-erected tower. This bridge had three piers and was ornamented with columns. The south wing of its abutment was later extended. Later still a water channel was led through the tower and the earth ramp, as in all probability a race for a mill as yet undiscovered south of the bridge.

The sequence at Willowford is rather more complex but broadly similar. Here the bridge is built before the broad foundation is laid, and is again a stone bridge carrying only the wall walk, on two widely-spaced piers. There was a small tower on the east abutment, now represented by a recess. A southern wing-wall was subsequently added, and a major repair of the first pier is suggested also. The bridge was then extensively damaged, perhaps entirely destroyed, and a second bridge built in the second half of the second century, carrying this time a timber superstructure on its stone abutment and piers. The abutment incorporated two sluices, to relieve water pressure rather than for a mill, had north and south wing-walls, and a large tower. Finally in the early third century a large abutment was built against the south

face of the wall, with an earth ramp behind, to carry a road, the Military Way. It blocked one of the sluices. A pier was built close to the abutment, probably to carry a causeway over the flood plain, with perhaps another flood arch before the river channel itself was reached.

The two significant phases at both sites are clearly the original building of footbridges of wall-width and integrated into the wall line, and the conversion of these into road bridges. The first is discussed and the conclusion professed that this is only intelligible if indeed there was a walk along the top of the wall itself. It should be emphasized despite the occasional loose phrase that the authors are not suggesting that the Wall itself was carried on these bridges. The second phase is discussed, and the view expressed that the Military Way as built in the late second century was of limited importance compared to the Stanegate as a road, the Way servicing turrets and milecastles, the Stanegate continuing as the through road. The new bridges however would have made possible a diversion of the Stanegate traffic across them, to bring it under closer military supervision. Their building may be attributed to Severus, under Alfenus Senecio, and even be compared to a similar programme under Alfenus Senecio as governor of Syria Coele. They may also be commemorated on coins and have contributed to the fourth-century view of Severus as the builder of the Roman Wall.

There is much that is readily acceptable here, and much stimulating thought that cannot be given the attention it deserves in a short review. There are still points for discussion. The case for the first bridge at Chesters having a stone superstructure, though not implausible, could do with more evidence than a simple analogy with Willowford. That said, it does seem that the structures proposed for the first phase and their close relation to the Wall in alignment and width certainly make a strong case for them being continuations of a wall walk rather than simply foot-bridges to make crossing of the rivers possible. The splendid re-creation of the stone roadbridge at Chesters compels admiration, but there is one difficulty.

It is suggested that the water channel was inserted under the ramp for the road after the ramp had been constructed, which seems implausible.

On the broader issues raised by the road bridges, the emphasis on the continuing importance of the Stanegate is acceptable, in which case we should be looking for a longer history for Nether Denton. The notion of a road east of Corbridge north of the Tyne before the Military Way is a good one, but perhaps it is even earlier than the Wall; the Stanegate continuation east of Corbridge may well have run north of Tyne rather than south of it. A better reason should be sought for building bridges and diverting traffic than "closer military supervision"—it would be cheaper to send troops to supervise the existing bridges, not to mention the roads between. The new road bridges should come into being because they corresponded more closely to what was needed for the traffic patterns of the day, and their precise date is uncertain. They were certainly impressive; they may not perhaps have occasioned coins, made Severus's later reputation overblown, or proved Senecio to be a specialist in building bridges, but they were spectacular achievements in their setting, and we understand them now much better thanks to Paul Bidwell and Neil Holbrook.

B. DOBSON

Penelope Walton, *Textiles, Cordage and Raw Fibre from 16–22 Coppergate, The Archaeology of York: The Small Finds 17/5*, Council for British Archaeology, London 1989. Pp. 172, figs. 53, pls. 34. Price: £18.00. ISBN 0 906780 79 9.

Visitors to the Jorvik Viking Centre gain a vivid impression of the multifarious domestic crafts practised in York from the ninth to the eleventh century. Penelope Walton's report on the Anglo-Scandinavian and later Medieval textiles from the 1976–81 excavations at 16–22 Coppergate contains the detailed archaeological evidence for one of the most important

components of the early Medieval industrial scene, textile production.

Over 200 items of woven cloth, cord or unworked fibre were recovered from the excavations. Most were woollen rags, jettisoned by their wearers in damp corners of the Coppergate tenement complex where the moist conditions preserved them. But there are some remarkable silk head-dresses and ribbons which could hardly have been thrown away, and even a group of unusual linens, charred perhaps in a house fire. Most pieces come from Viking Age levels, but a few (arguably a typical selection) were found in contexts dating from the eleventh to the fourteenth century.

The textile catalogue itself, supported by tabulated facts and figures in the text, is short, and most of the volume is devoted to discussions of aspects of the analysis of the material and its archaeological and historical significance. Two of the analytical studies are of particular note. The author is able to define the fleece types of the sheep which produced the wools in a representative cross-section of the textiles and to show how the predominantly hairy or hairy-medium wools of Viking York gave way to finer fibres in the post-Conquest period. Her examination of the remanent dye-stuffs in the textiles, based on a methodology developed by G. W. Taylor and herself, is another important advance. It reveals the use of madder, woad, a lichen and kermes in local and imported cloth.

The techniques of the spinners and weavers of Anglo-Scandinavian York are shown to have been rooted in Anglo-Saxon rather than Scandinavian tradition. The handful of identifiable imports are from the near Continent rather than the Viking homelands (excepting of course the eastern silks). Even the Viking-style sock in 'needle-binding' may be a local product. Post-Conquest textiles by contrast reflect the increasing popularity of fine 2/1 twill fabrics woven on the newly introduced horizontal loom.

The report is a fundamental contribution to the history of the British textile industry, and its author displays complete mastery of the documentary and historical sources relevant to

her theme as well as the analytical techniques. A reader unfamiliar with textile matters should not be put off; for terms and techniques are clearly and concisely explained wherever necessary. The drawings are outstanding; the reviewer liked especially the way in which missing parts of textile repeats have been restored on the weaving drafts. Sadly, the published photographs are less satisfactory.

Our knowledge of Medieval textiles is coming largely from urban excavations in northern Europe. One thinks of the tenth and eleventh century finds from Durham, the large group of fifteenth to seventeenth century textiles from Newcastle and contemporary material from Scottish towns (Perth, Aberdeen) and Medieval centres in southern England (London, Winchester, Southampton)—not to mention towns in Scandinavia, North Germany and Poland. While we can chart the progress of our own local textile industries adequately—and York is now in the forefront—we need evidence from South and Central Europe to correct our perspective. Penelope Walton has given a lead for others to follow.

JOHN PETER WILD

St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to A.D. 1200. Edited by Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancilffe. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. 1989. xxiii+484pp.; 60 pl., 34 figs. £49.50.

As readers of the journal are well aware, a regular flow of studies appears on the subject of this volume. Nevertheless, these proceedings of the 1300th anniversary conference held at Durham in 1987 can fairly claim to encapsulate the major advances made since the publication in 1956 of *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert* edited by C. F. Battiscombe. This book matches the earlier one in length, if not in format, and it too has been produced to a high scholarly standard which allows scope for informative footnotes and an index. Like its predecessor, however, the quality and number of its illustrations is only adequate.

The editors have divided the 31 papers into

four subject areas each of which merits a specialist review. At around £1.50 a paper the book is good value and as this largely descriptive review will reveal, can be read from cover to cover by the non-specialist with interest and enjoyment.

Part one deals with the *Lives* of St. Cuthbert and the early cult. It is a markedly successful section with some outstanding papers. James Campbell sets the scene: the power and wealth of Northumbria in Cuthbert's lifetime; the high social status of Holy Men; and the role of monasteries as noblemen's clubs. He suggests that Cuthbert could hold his own in this world. He was a north countryman, apparently congenial, in contrast to Aidan who was a foreigner and "difficult". The paper, in specific terms, makes the point that the relationship between the aristocracy and monasticism was crucial to the nature of Cuthbert's work and cult, and indeed this is a recurring theme in the papers that follow.

Campbell's paper should be read in conjunction with the equally stylish study of Cuthbert's spirituality by Sister Benedicta Ward. To use her terminology, Campbell's analysis is "horizontal" whereas hers is "vertical". She points out that Cuthbert was not at heart a "monks' monk" but was always away from the monastery praying with the poor and needy. His saintliness, part of a "living stream" was real, involving a life, "hard, difficult and other". Benedicta Ward demonstrates how Bede in his prose *Life* skilfully conveys this to his readers by the subtle use of scriptural passages to enrich and heighten key points in Cuthbert's spiritual life. In her hands the well-known story of Cuthbert and the otters, and the account of his last days on Farne take on an almost shocking reality.

Bede's techniques to induce concentrated meditation is also an aspect of Michael Lapidge's paper on the metrical *Life*. His discovery that the version of the poem in the manuscript Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale 186 is an early version quite separate from all the other extant texts was one of the most significant revelations of the conference. Lapidge expounds the history of the text with

characteristic lucidity and demonstrates Bede's developing technique as a poet. He points out in particular how in the later version distracting narrative detail is reduced in order to encourage meditation on the wider meanings of incidents.

Walter Berschin argues in his paper that by having both a prose and metrical life Cuthbert was being put on a par with St. Martin of Tours. But Cuthbert has two prose lives and the question addressed by Berschin is why this is so, particularly since the anonymous life is a monumental work cast in four books. His answer lies in the fact that both of Bede's *Lives* are planned to have 46 chapters, the importance of which depends on the 46 years taken to build the Temple in Jerusalem. If this is so, and the argument is seductive, then we have another insight into the complexity of literary intention in this period.

The remaining two papers revert to the historical Cuthbert and his cult. Clare Stancliffe provides a reassessment of the chronology of Cuthbert's life, and considers the various models—Egyptian, Martinian or Irish—used by Cuthbert's hagiographers in order to reconcile the two sides of his life, pastor and solitary, bishop and hermit. Allan Thacker's paper on the early cult comes out strongly in favour of the relevance of the model of the great episcopal cults of Gaul, presenting Cuthbert as a saint appropriate to an episcopal see. He makes the interesting point that written records, while undeniably useful, were not essential to a cult's survival, and that the *Lives*, should be read primarily as a "tract for the times" preoccupied with the current state of Northumbria's ecclesiastical establishment and the need for reform, rather than as an adjunct to the propagation of the cult.

The most disappointing aspect of this volume must surely be the apparently continuing poverty of our archaeological knowledge of Lindisfarne. Deirdre O'Sullivan, whose paper is placed first in Part two, "Lindisfarne and its scriptorium", has the difficult task of presenting the sparse results of a ten-year programme of fieldwork and excavation on the island. Unfortunately the model site, Iona, has

as many topographical disadvantages as Lindisfarne, but at least modern investigatory techniques produced a vallum, indeed, vallums, for Columba's monastery, whereas even this feature is proving elusive on Lindisfarne. Professor Herity's paper on Irish archaeological analogues to Cuthbert's hermitage on Farne as described in the *Lives* (placed in Part one) fills out the picture a little. The Irish material is full and largely undisturbed, and Herity's knowledge of it unrivalled, but he too has a problem, that of absolute dating.

The other great lacuna in the material culture of Northumbria is that of *de luxe* metal-work comparable with the work in its scriptoria. This has now been rendered less stark by the new finds from the Lindisfarne colony at Hartlepool reported here by Professor Cramp. The moulds for a trumpeting evangelist symbol, a panel of zoomorphic ornament, and an interlaced covered fan-armed cross are important both in themselves and as a testimony to loss. Her suggestion that the architectural sculpture with insular motifs carved in shallow relief at Monkwearmouth was modelled on lost work in metal or stone at Lindisfarne is eminently reasonable.

Palaeographers have to allow for the mobility of manuscripts as well as scribes and this has been one of the factors in recent discussions of the origins and relationships of the great Insular Gospel books. The work of Julian Brown and Rupert Bruce-Mitford in the introductory volume to the facsimile of the Lindisfarne Gospels published in 1960 is naturally at the centre of the debate. The recent death of Professor Brown disturbed some of the scholarly detachment appropriate to a conference and the traces of this which come through in the text and footnotes of some papers in this section should have been eliminated by the editors. As it is, there is a great deal of repetition of well-known or recently published views by the main protagonists present—Rupert Bruce-Mitford and Dáibhí Ó'Cróinín. Certainly the discovery by Ó'Cróinín of an Easter Table bound in the Calendar of Willibrord, which was written in Ireland, and dates to the earliest phase of the Frisian mission is an

exciting and crucial one, and deserves a wider audience. It is also clear from the papers published here that all now accept his view that the mission cannot be thought of as "purely Northumbrian" in origin, although it must be said that it was not "purely Irish" either.

Christopher Verey writes about the Gospel texts available at Lindisfarne at the time of St. Cuthbert. In doing so he makes the general observations that texts alone cannot prove the origins of books and that there is nothing mutually exclusive about the Irish and Italian Gospels tradition in Northumbria. Of particular interest is his recent look at the text of the fragmentary Gospel book now divided between BL Cotton MS Otho C.V. and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 197B. He reports a textual affinity with the Durham Gospels, MS A.II.17. This is significant in a number of respects, not least for the close artistic connections between Otho C.V. and the Echternach Gospels. Michelle Brown in a wide ranging paper also draws attention to the work of a scribe in the Otho fragment who was undoubtedly influenced by the distinctive script of the Lindisfarne Gospels. Janet Backhouse too adds to knowledge of this fragment by drawing attention in her paper to the existence of a hand-painted facsimile of one of its folios made before the disastrous Cottonian fire of 1731.

Ó'Cróinín believes that it is possible to identify a specifically Irish family of Gospel texts—something which Verey feels much less confident about. Ó'Cróinín's paper on the Augsburg Gospels (Universitätsbibliothek Augsburg, Cod. 1.2.4° 2) presents the results of his collation of that Gospel text with other major "Irish" biblical texts. His statistics, as presented, are formidable and would seem to show conclusively this Gospel book's Irish connections. Both Brown and Ó'Cróinín stress that scribes from different backgrounds, including Irishmen and Anglo-Saxons, will have collaborated both in Britain and in the continent, but clearly the expertise of these scholars cannot allow them to ignore specific issues. The accumulation of data is surely approaching a stage where firmer boundaries can be drawn.

Certainly Nancy Netzer's important paper suggests this. Her analysis of four Gospel books associated with Willibrord's scriptorium presents a convincing picture of a gradual shift from Irish models to Roman and Northumbrian ones, with the Trier Gospels (Trier Domschatz MS 61) using both. Her further conclusion, closely argued, that shared traits in script and decoration present in the Trier Gospels and in two other eighth-century Echternach Gospel books, provide evidence for contact between Lindisfarne and Echternach so ample that historical arguments become irrelevant, is surely compelling.

Part three, on the coffin and its treasures, invites direct comparison with the Battiscombe volume, and much progress has clearly been made. Richard Bailey produces new documentary evidence relevant to the nineteenth-century investigations of the shrine and provides a check-list of the fragments of relics (mostly textiles) that have strayed from Durham. In 1956 a board associated with the coffin incised with a stepped-base cross was considered to be late and not even illustrated. Bailey produces here art-historical arguments to support its being part of the original coffin, and in one of these pleasant conference coincidences, his view was confirmed by the dendochronological report given by J. M. Cronyn and C. V. Horie. Bailey rightly stresses the significance of this new assessment for knowledge of the development of stone sculpture.

Cronyn and Horie published a book entitled *St Cuthbert's Coffin, the history, technology and conservation* only two years ago, but since then they have had another look at the 6000 pieces currently held in the Cathedral. The result is the discovery of 31 fragments of decoration and 9 fragments with incised lettering.

Professor Page re-examines the runic inscriptions on the coffin-work entrusted in 1956 to an earlier holder of Page's Cambridge chair. His arguments are authoritative and his touch light but his conclusion is down-to-earth—runic script by the end of the seventh century was just a script like any other and the presence of mixed Roman and runic inscriptions is a regional quirk, and not evidence of arcane

spell-casting. He reveals the interesting fact that the rune stems are cut parallel to the grain of the wood suggesting that this is the work of carvers out of touch with the use of the script on wood.

The pièce de résistance of the 1956 publication was Ernst Kitzinger's reconstruction of the coffin (now modified very slightly) and his masterly analysis of the style and iconography of the carvings. Here there is only one paper on the carvings, a study of the iconography of the beardless and tonsured Peter shown on the coffin, by John Higgitt. He suggests that the notion, which until the Norman Conquest was a standard Anglo-Saxon type, came from an Irish text. His explanation is a complex one, but he has certainly isolated an iconographical puzzle.

Elisabeth Coatsworth takes another look at the pectoral cross and the portable altar. Bruce-Mitford's detailed study in the 1956 volume is unchallenged, but in an understandable attempt to find a context for the cross she points out how its "design geometry" links it with the gridded lay-outs of the Lindisfarne scriptorium and further, how its composition may be affected by number symbolism. She also makes a fully supported case for maintaining the eighth-century date for the silver casing of the altar.

The remaining papers in this section, by Hero Granger-Taylor, Clare Higgins and Anna Muthesius together comprise a significant body of new knowledge about the textiles associated with the Cuthbert shrine. New dates and provenances are proposed and the remains of a Greek inscription have been discovered by Miss Granger-Taylor on the Nature Goddess silk. The picture conjured up by these highly technical papers of the vast quantities of textiles, some of which are datable by their inscriptions, available for study in European treasuries is truly impressive. Cuthbert's textiles are clearly placed in a context of royal patronage and diplomatic gifts.

Part four is devoted to St. Cuthbert's community at Chester-le-Street and Durham, and is a far cry from the simple narrative account provided in the Battiscombe book. Eric Cam-

bridge asks the question why the community of St. Cuthbert settled at Chester-le-Street, and his paper is one of the most powerful in the collection. His evidence is slight and some of it negative, but the sheer logical force of his arguments carries one with him. His answer is that Chester-le-Street was one of a series of roughly equidistant staging posts on the road between York and Lindisfarne. If he is correct, then the move to Chester-le-Street becomes simply a move to another residence, but to one which will always have had the character of temporary second home, and this could explain some of the curious features of life there.

Gerald Bonner reviews the evidence for the intellectual life and aspirations of the community at Chester-le-Street, focusing usefully on the career of Aldred, to whom we owe the crucial colophon which describes the history of the Lindisfarne Gospels. Luisella Simpson's very substantial contribution argues that the well-known account of St. Cuthbert's appearances to King Alfred in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* are not, as has previously been thought, an eleventh-century interpolation, but originates in the political milieu of Wessex in the mid-tenth century. David Rollason's paper sets out to give further definition to this special relationship between Cuthbert and Alfred's progeny, by analysing the extensive collection of material relating to Cuthbert which comprises the tenth-century Cambridge manuscript, Corpus Christi College MS 183. Using his knowledge of a wide range of texts he demonstrates that both the sources of the Corpus material and the later influence of the collection itself, suggest that its affinities are firmly in the south. This is surprising if, as has generally been supposed, the manuscript was given by Athelstan during his lifetime to Chester-le-Street. Rollason points out that the documentary evidence for the gift is slight and that the prefatory miniature can be interpreted as depicting Athelstan's devotion to Cuthbert rather than his donation of the book to his community. In an interesting paper that will make readers look more closely at the bishop's seat attributed to St. Wilfrid at Hexham, David Hall describes the operation of sanctuary in the

vicinity of the shrine of St. Cuthbert and elsewhere. He shows how the royal prerogative to deal with those who sought sanctuary was jealously guarded, so that once again the theme is the relationship between royal and ecclesiastical interest.

A. J. Piper, writing on the first generation of Durham monks and their handling of the cult is a perceptive guide through Symeon's *Historia*. He notes how the clean sweep of the old personnel made it possible to return afresh to the days of the founders—a change of perspective heavily dependent on the writings of Bede. He points to striking visual witness to the new relationship in the "architectural propaganda" evident in the similarities between building work in Durham and in the church of the later priory of Lindisfarne at the beginning of the twelfth century.

Dr. Victoria Tudor, finally, takes us fully into that century. Her paper concentrates on the rich store of evidence found in Reginald of Durham's *Little Book about the Wonderful Miracles of Blessed Cuthbert which were Performed in Recent Times. The Libellus* gives us a first-hand account of the vigour of the cult; in describing the creativity of twelfth-century Durham Dr. Tudor writes of the cathedral that it still provides "one of the greatest architectural experiences in Europe". Indeed so, and for many attending the conference the experience of listening in the dimly lit cathedral to the twelfth-century vespers for St. Cuthbert, reconstructed from Durham manuscripts by Dr. Susan Rankin (strangely unmentioned in the Preface) was a high-point in this most productive occasion.

ISABEL HENDERSON

Stephen Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall* B. T. Batsford/English Heritage, London, 1989. Pp. 144, col pls 11, pls/text figs 97. Price £17.95 cased, £9.95 limp. ISBN 0 7134 59573 cased, 0 7134 59581 limp.

This volume is described as the first of a major new series, jointly conceived by English Heritage and Batsford, under the general edi-

torship of Dr. Stephen Johnson, academic editor at English Heritage, who also wrote this volume. It is a clearly-designed, well turned out and informative work which contains plenty of new material of equal interest to the general reader, questing visitor and Wall specialist alike. Printed on excellent quality paper (one remembers some of the near newsprint used in the past), with high-definition photographs, it is also reasonably priced (again, unlike some previous archaeological works). However, a 4-page fold of my own (soft back) copy has not been stitched in, so some improvement is possible.

The first chapter sets the scene with the Wall, surely one of the wonders of the ancient world, Johnson observes, winding its way dramatically along the crag-tops that mark the northwestern corner of the Empire. Chapter two leads up to the building of the Wall, acquainting us with the Stanegate and describing impressive new finds at Carlisle, Corbridge and Vindolanda, with due emphasis on the writing tablets from the last-mentioned and their remarkable pictures of contemporary frontier life.

In chapters three and four the building of the Wall is outlined, together with the modifications which occurred during its construction. We are introduced to the three legions which did the actual work and the differences of design and style which characterize their individual building at the milecastles and along the curtain wall. The attribution of work to Legions XX and VI, however, is not quite as certain as Johnson implies, as their so-called "signatures" are not beyond dispute, witness the switch in the latest edition of Drs. Breeze and Dobson's *Hadrian's Wall*. But the greatest modification, undoubtedly, was the decision to move up the garrisons from the Stanegate onto the Wall itself, which necessitated the construction of forts not originally planned. Here again, in his description of the forts Johnson emphasizes current and recent work at the same time as pointing out where the most interesting and most important remains are to be found. But there are some slips that need correcting: on the plan of Wallsend fort E (=workshops) has

been attached to all eight barracks and omitted from the single workshop identified, while the fourth block in the southern garrison area could usefully have been labelled a stable, which it most probably was.

Chapter five asks the difficult question what was the Wall for? In answering it Johnson discusses what (we believe) it was designed to do and how it probably functioned as an all-purpose frontier. The map of the Cumberland coastal system on page 63, however, needs some emending. Chapter six deals with the advance north again into Antonine Scotland, the ensuing 25 years of predominant, if not complete, demilitarization and the changes which occurred on the army's return to the Hadrianic frontier. The last two decades of the second century saw disruption in Britain and beyond, during which the Wall may have suffered the one and only barbarian attack which breached it. Thereafter, it functioned as the northern frontier of Britain for the next two and a half centuries. These are covered in chapters seven and eight, in which a picture is presented of civilian life in the settlements (which now reached their greatest size and prosperity) and army life in the forts that existed cheek-by-jowl with them, in an Empire where Roman citizenship was universal and soldiers and civilians were sibling members of the same common stock.

The last two chapters take us through the oblivion which followed the end of Empire, the rediscovery of antiquity in the late sixteenth century and our subsequent journey to the present, by way of XIXth century investigations, modern rescue excavations, current conservation awareness—and a full-scale fort gateway at South Shields. Some well-chosen further reading and a brief summary of what can now be seen on site and in museums along the Wall concludes the volume—all in some 140 very readable pages.

The illustrations are one of the selling points of the book. The high-quality of the photographic reproduction has already been remarked upon, the pictures themselves are generally well-chosen and informative and include some good, up-to-date excavation shots.

A particular attraction is undoubtedly the use of reconstruction drawings and colour paintings to give an idea of the nature and appearance of the Wall and its component parts in antiquity. Such must be commended: but it does highlight the problems that occur above the point where standing masonry stops and invention starts—not to mention the major differences of opinion that exist over such basic essentials as roofs—as Johnson himself points out—and it would be misleading to imply that there are not grounds for questioning some of the reconstructions used in this volume. For instance, my gut reaction to Frank Gardiner's bare stone surfaces is disbelief. Even if we ignore the evidence of Pompeii and a score of foreign examples, as early as 1872 Thos Wright had noted plaster facing at Wroxeter which was "painted with stripes of red and yellow; from which it appears that the Romans in this country painted in fresco the outsides of their homes as well as the interiors." And this was a century before the discovery that parts of Hadrian's Wall had been rendered and painted white (and study of the Heddon and Limestone Bank lengths shows that rendering survives there too). Surely it is not unreasonable to expect fort buildings, at least, to be presented in reconstruction paintings with a proper covering of their stark stonework! It is also disappointing to see that the reconstruction drawing of a milecastle given on page 32 does not show a rear gate-tower. The massive ashlar stonework employed in the south gateways of type I construction (as clearly visible in the illustration) and the inwardly projecting piers of type III (example C on the opposite page) both surely point to a tower-bearing function.

Other questions leap to mind—why for instance is a Second Legion milecastle inscription placed above the door of Brunton Turret? Is this mere carping over details? I think not; the worry is that the illustrations accompanying such a well-written account will unhesitatingly be believed and their idiosyncracies taught to the next generation as received truth. We know the popularity of the coloured postcards of Wall reconstructions and life in general, which are currently on sale at most Wall sites

and museums, complete with some amazing errors.

This point made, the volume is one which can be recommended to anybody wishing to obtain some idea of what the Wall was like, what new work has been carried out on it in recent years and what can today be seen of its remains. Even the experienced Wall student will find new material in it; and certainly the reconstruction drawings contain food for thought.

CHARLES DANIELS

COALS ON RAILS, Or the Reason for My Wrighting: The Autobiography of Anthony Errington from 1778 to around 1825, edited by P. E. H. Hair, Liverpool University Press, 1988, 281 pp.

This represents the first publication of a most interesting manuscript from Gateshead Central Library. Anthony Errington was a waggonway wright on Tyneside, following the same trade as his father who had been a farmer's son. The manuscript is couched in erratic style and spelling, often representing local dialect usage and pronunciation. The text consists of an incomplete memoir which includes a variety of anecdote, description and reflection. The survival of such an autobiographical document from a working man of the 1820s is very rare and here it has been very well edited in a way which greatly adds to the interest of the publication. For Professor Hair, this has obviously been a labour of love, and he uses his encyclopaedic knowledge of the background involved to place Errington in context and use the memoir to illuminate the history of our region in these years. The very full accompanying editorial material is every bit as interesting as the memoir itself.

Errington's account touches upon a great variety of matters in the Tyneside of these years. Social relationships with other workers and with more prominent local groups are illustrated. The Erringtons were a Roman Catholic family, and Errington is constantly in mind of supernatural agencies. We are given

instances of contemporary education—"haveing a small stopage in my speach which made me Lisp, I oft got the Lether strap over me", and medicine—"I had the hooping Cough and had medisine from a man riding upon a pye bald gallaway who Brought me 2 peney worth of Suger Candy and Ordered Cream and Cours Shuger 3 times a day which soon restored me to health". The pre-Pelite police on Tyneside is shown as modestly effective on more than one occasion, if much given to celebrating a successful intervention with "bear".

It is easy to be amused by some parts of this engaging though unsophisticated account, but

the memoir has genuine historical interest as a personal memoir of a Tyneside worker of this period. Taken with Professor Hair's fascinating glosses dealing with many facets of Errington's life, this is a most welcome publication. It is a pity that the reproduction of the typescript text contains some blemishes. The editor tells us that "I find A.E. a nice man, a 'canny soul' in the best sense of the Newcastle expression. It is possible to laugh at him and yet respect him, perhaps even admire him. I have enjoyed meeting Anthony Errington and I hope the reader will too." The reader (and I hope that there will be many of them) ought to.

NORMAN McCORD

SHORTER NOTICES

H. F. W. Saggs, *Civilization before Greece and Rome* ISBN 07134 52773; xii+322; 25 plates, 17 figures, 4 maps Batsford. Hardback £19.95.

In a systematic survey of the development of government, writing, trade, law, science, technology, medicine and religion in the pre-classical civilizations in the Near and Middle East, Professor Saggs shows how much ground had been gained before the Greeks emerged from barbarism. As Professor Saggs frequently illustrates some point by a reference to the Old Testament, older readers who were brought up on that remote literature will soon feel quite at home. For the general reader this comprehensive survey offers an opportunity to become more conscious of our inheritance from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, Syria, Anatolia and Iran.

Caroline Malone, *English Heritage Book of AVEBURY* Batsford/English Heritage, 141 pp. & Index, 110 figures, £9.95 limp.

The purpose of this new series is to offer to the common reader an exposition of successive major English archaeological monuments. The exercise of presenting the latest archaeological thinking without technical jargon and appar-

atus is a salutary discipline and the result in the *Avebury* volume is pleasing and useful. Impressed by its lucid style the writer of this notice applied a hasty "litmus" test and found "prior to" only twice in 141 pages of text. As most archaeologists under fifty, oblivious of the guidance of the Fowlers, seem to cherish the illusion that "prior to", a prickly substitute for the simple and beautiful "before", adds elevation to their style, this confirms the promise of a readable series. The formula for layout of text, caption, and illustration is labour-saving and orderly, and sufficiently broken by changes between tone and line and full-page colour not to be tedious.

David J. Breeze, *The Second Augustan Legion in North Britain*, National Museum of Wales £3.00 (£3.50 by post).

In this, the second Annual Caerleon Lecture, Dr. Breeze examines the activities of *legio II Augusta* in the north under the heads of fighting, building, living and dying. The presentation in pamphlet form is distinguished, the paper on which it is printed better than that usually accorded archaeological publications, the public should be grateful to the publishers for making available this interesting study.