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BOOK NOTICES, 2008

Richard N. Bailey

Aron Mazel, George Nash and Clive Waddington (eds.), *Art as Metaphor: The Prehistoric Rock-Art of Britain* (Archaeopress, Oxford, 2007), pp. x + 256; numerous figs. and ills., many in colour. ISBN 978 1 905739 16 5. £19.95.

The essays in this impressive volume provide a stimulating over-view of the development and current state of rock-art studies in Britain. Many of the essays focus on our north-eastern region which is not only so rich in this material but which also gave birth to its study. From John Langland's work at Old Bewick in the early nineteenth century through to Stan Beckensall's tireless fieldwork in the twentieth century, Northumberland has proved a fertile area for the subject. The last two decades have seen a quickening of interest in this extraordinary art which is well reflected in the contributions to this book. Its editors are to be congratulated on the range of studies they have assembled, on the literacy of their colleagues — and on the remarkable quality of the colour photography which fills the pages.

Peter Cherry (ed.), *Studies in Northern Prehistory, Essays in Memory of Clare Fell* (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiq. and Archaeol. Soc., Extra Series XXXIII, 2007), pp. viii + 288, numerous figs. and ills. ISBN 1 873124 44 9. £30.

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, Clare Fell was at the heart of Cumbria's archaeology, not only encouraging successive generations of field-workers but herself contributing major papers on the region's prehistory. The affection in which she was held is apparent in every contribution to this volume, whose essays provide important contributions to our understanding of the prehistory of north-western England.

Ian Wood, *The Origins of Jarrow: the Monastery, the Slake and Ecgrith's Minster* (Jarrow: Bede's World Studies, I, 2008), pp. 40, 2 figs.. ISBN 978 0 9558234 0 4. £6

The first in a new series of Bedan studies is a provocative re-examination of the foundation of Jarrow and an analysis of its wider setting on the south banks of the Tyne. Ian Wood draws attention to the conflicts in eighth-century accounts of Jarrow's early years and its links to Monkwearmouth, arguing that Bede's picture of the two as an integrated double-house hides a more complex story in which Benedict Biscop's role may well have been minimal and King Ecgrith's involvement a dangerous legacy. Arbeia's later history as a major site overlooking a splendid harbour, the location of *Donemutha* which was sacked by Vikings in the 790s, the Lower Tyne as a Northumbrian royal centre — all these inter-linked topics are treated in this lively yet well-documented essay.

Anne Haour, *Rulers, Warriors, Traders, Clerics: The Central Sahel and the North Sea 800–1500* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), pp. xiv + 178, 6 maps, 19 pls. ISBN 978 0 19 726411 9. £30.

This book is a bold attempt to use archaeological data from one region, the central Sahel of West Africa, to illuminate our understanding of another, the North Sea area, in the period

between 800 and 1500. Though at first sight this appears to be a disparate pairing, both regions were moving to monotheistic religions and, in both, states were being consolidated and new trading networks established. The argument is tightly-woven and dependent on detailed recording, but the approach has much to commend it.

Stafford Linsley, *The Life and Times of Thomas Dixon 1805–1871* (Wagtail Press, Gairshield Farm, Steel, Hexham), pp. 256, numerous ills. ISBN 0 9538443 6 6. £17.50 + £2.50 p&p from publishers.

Thomas Dixon was a hearth-smelter at the Dukesfield lead smelting mill. He would have remained a mere name in the industry's ledgers and the national census returns if it had not been for the survival of his diaries for the years 1830–1838 and for 1841. Here is a voice of the ordinary worker which is so often difficult to hear against those of the 'captains' of his industry like Thomas Sopwith and Hugh Lee Pattinson. Making a gown, seeing a fox, setting potatoes, leading manure, hay-making, stolen geese, frozen rivers, infant death — here is all the trivia and tragedy of ordinary life. But Stafford Linsley, who has long been our leading industrial archaeologist, weaves around these entries a fascinating picture of contemporary society and the evolution of the Pennine lead industry. The book is illustrated with well-chosen contemporary prints and photographs.