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Reviews

WELSH HISTORY. A CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE. By Glyn E. German. 122 × 174 mm. 320 pp. 30 illustrations. Y Lolfa Cyf, Talybont, Ceredigion, 2015. ISBN 978 1 847718 22 8. Price £7.95.

Dates are part of the historian's stock-in-trade, so I have always enjoyed this kind of book. It is annalistic, but it is also divided into chapters, such as 'Celtic Britain and the Roman Empire (AD 30–AD 405)' or 'Wales since Devolution'. In the early chapters great swathes of time are covered by a single entry of a few lines, while in those covering recent centuries each year will have an event of political or cultural significance. The annals open with a chapter on the Palaeolithic era, and end in 2013–14 with talk of Gareth Bale and Ryan Giggs, the fire at the National Library in Aberystwyth, and the threat of a campaign of civil disobedience by Cymdeithas yr Iaith (the Welsh Language Society). There are several pages of endnotes offering additional factual information, a biographical list mentioning people such as Hengist and Horsa, a bibliography, and finally, a list of Welsh history websites. The book has several unusual features: the author has been educated in Brittany and so is able to make cross-references to Brittany here and there, and perhaps the most unusual feature in an annalistic book, it has short poetic quotations, translated into English from Welsh poetry such as the *Gododdin* and the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym.

In the opening, prehistoric, chapters there is room to mention the theories of specialists such as Brian Sykes, Stephen Oppenheimer, Colin Renfrew, Mario Alinei, Barry Cunliffe and John Koch, and others, but this approach could not be sustained in the crowded annals of recent centuries. The author himself was brought up overseas and one of the best features of this book is its coverage of Welsh emigrants, people from Wales, for example, being prime ministers of places as far apart as Newfoundland and Queensland. I think that the book is likely to prove popular, and will go into revised editions, so I think it would be proper in such a factual book to make absolutely sure that all the facts are correct: for example (page 85), William II 'Rufus' was the brother, not the father, of Henry I, and on pages 92–3 Rhys ap Thomas is said to have been given Dinefwr Castle by Henry VII in 1485, yet the Rhys who lost it to Henry VIII on the next page in 1531 was not the same Rhys, but his grandson, Rhys ap Gruffudd. On page 145 David Powel of Ruabon is said to have written his *Historie of Cambria* in 1584 but that it was published by William Wynne in 1697, whereas in fact Wynne simply republished Powel's edition of 1584. On page 205 Sir Thomas Phillips of Newport is highlighted as the author of a fine analysis in 1849 attacking the 'Blue Books' on Welsh Education of 1847, but he was not the same man as Dr Thomas Phillips, whose fortune enabled Llandovery College to be founded in 1848. Sampson Lloyd III is highlighted as the founder of Lloyds Bank in 1765, but his Welsh origins are not made clear, and he should have been linked to Thomas Lloyd of Dolobran the Quaker pioneer of Pennsylvania the book mentions earlier. Dr William Price is mentioned (page 200) as a Glamorgan Chartist, but it would have been fair to have mentioned that in the 1880s he became far more famous as the pioneer of cremation. Under the year 1861 David Davies of Llandinam is shown as a railway pioneer, but he is not the same as the (cross-referenced) David Davies of Llandinam who founded The Welsh Outlook in 1914, who was his grandson, later Lord Davies. The coverage of Welsh institutions in the modern chapters is wide-ranging, but some readers will find it rather odd that we do not have the Football Association of Wales under the year 1876 or the Welsh Rugby Union under 1881, the National Insurance Commission for Wales under 1911—the Welsh Insurance stamps were probably the first use of the daffodil as our emblem—and we should have had the Llangollen International Eisteddfod under 1947. To have as full as possible a coverage of all the multifarious Welsh institutions would strengthen the coverage of recent history.

No doubt other historians would find other omissions, but the criticisms I have mentioned are only minor blemishes in what I found to be a most absorbing book, and since I am only familiar with a very small part of Welsh history, as I read I learned with great enjoyment a vast amount of interesting, and often amazing, facts collected and sorted by the exemplary industry of the author.

Swansea PRYS MORGAN

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF HEREFORDSHIRE: AN EXPLORATION. By Keith Ray. 172 × 242 mm. xii + 436 pp. 249 illustrations. Logaston Press, Almeley, Herefordshire, 2015. ISBN 978 1 906663 96 4. Price £15.00.

The author and publisher are to be congratulated upon the production of this substantial, attractive volume which is superbly illustrated with numerous images, mostly in colour, of objects, landscapes and sites, including many excellent aerial photographs by Chris Musson. The accompanying text is a tour de force by the author, Keith Ray, erstwhile Herefordshire County Archaeologist during the period of sixteen years between 1998 and 2014, who clearly has an intimate knowledge of the county's history from the earliest times up to the present day.

As noted in the Foreword by Sir Roy Strong (no less) much of what we know about the early history of the county has come about quite recently. This is reflected by the fact that perhaps over 50 per cent of the works cited in the extensive bibliography have seen the light of day since the turn of the new millennium and less than 5 per cent prior to 1950. Like much of the Welsh borderland the county has, archaeologically, been very much *terra incognita*, apart from say the notable contributions by Stan Stanford on Herefordshire's hillforts in the 1970s, Ron Shoesmith on its medieval towns and settlements in the 1980s, and George Zarnecki and Malcolm Thurlby on its Romanesque heritage. One of the most striking things about the book is the extent to which Keith Ray and colleagues, with the help of local volunteers, have enthusiastically tackled so many previously unstudied aspects of the county's history in such a short space of time.

The book is set out conventionally, with chapters on earlier prehistory, the Neolithic, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the Roman period, the early medieval period, the medieval period, and the industrial period, with one thematic chapter on iron-making between the Iron Age and the early modern period. Keith Ray provides a running narrative linking each of these periods, informed by many recent projects and by insights drawn from neighbouring counties in England and Wales and from further afield. Sites mentioned in the text are generally set within a broader landscape context. This is a tribute to aerial photography and the development and enhancement of the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record, both of which provide vital analytical tools. Many novel and often startling aspects of the county's history are explored for the first time as a result of recent work, particularly in the sphere of prehistory, such as unusual Neolithic multiple long barrows, hilltop enclosures and henges, Bronze Age barrows and intriguing linear monuments, and previously poorly documented Iron Age farmsteads, open settlements and field systems. Recent excavations also illuminate later and perhaps better known aspects of the county's history, including the reuse of Iron Age hillforts during the Roman conquest, the development of the Roman road network, farms and market towns, the emergence of early Christian sites and the kingdom of Mercia, Anglo-Norman manors and towns, post-medieval and early modern estates, designed landscapes, and rural industries.

The book thus very much delivers what its title promises—'An Exploration'. However, as impressive as the achievements of Keith Ray and his colleagues have been in such a relatively short space of time, the degree to which the arguments it presents depend upon work that has yet to be fully published and

exposed to peer review might seem a cause for concern. One must hope that this volume is to be hotly pursued by others subtitled 'The Publication'! Other quibbles are few and far between. The book contains many excellent maps, though for those less familiar with Herefordshire's geography one naming its major rivers would have been helpful. And the bibliography referencing the extensive endnotes is not infallible. All in all, however, the book provides a stimulating, well illustrated, up-to-date, and modestly priced narrative of the archaeology of Herefordshire.

Shrewsbury W. J. BRITNELL

HUNTERS, FISHERS AND FORAGERS IN WALES. TOWARDS A SOCIAL NARRATIVE OF MESOLITHIC LIFEWAYS. By Malcolm Lillie. 170 × 241 mm. xxii + 345 pp. 57 illustrations. 7 tables. Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2015. ISBN 978 1 782979 74 6. Price £40.00.

IRELAND'S FIRST SETTLERS. TIME AND THE MESOLITHIC. By Peter Woodman. 220 × 285 mm. ix + 366 pp. 345 illustrations. 17 tables. Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2015. ISBN 978 1 782977 78 0. Price £50.00.

Prehistoric archaeologists of the mid to late nineteenth century considered that there were just two early periods, a Palaeolithic and a Neolithic. Attempts by Hodder M. Westropp and later writers to gain recognition for an additional period between these largely went unnoticed. It was not until the 1930s when Grahame Clark's work resulted in the recognition and definition of distinct sites and technologies that the Mesolithic period was accepted. Much of Clark's and others' early work focused on the regional distribution of the material evidence, particularly the lithic industries, and this work has been built on and developed since. Now, for two books presenting regional Mesolithic studies to be published by one company in the same year may be a sign that such research has reached a state of maturity.

The two books reviewed here are written by Malcolm Lillie, Reader in Prehistoric Archaeology and Wetland Science at the University of Hull, and Peter Woodman, Emeritus Professor of Prehistory at the University College Cork. Both have written about their homelands—Lillie on Wales and Woodman on Ireland. The two books therefore share a common genesis; however, the approach adopted by each is very different.

Lillie's book is titled to focus upon Wales, but its geographical scope is far wider than this suggests, for he cuts a swathe across Ireland, Wales, England, central, and particularly, eastern Europe. The book sets the scene by providing a very general and broad overview from the first humans in Britain to the early Holocene. He explores theories of coastal change and the different factors which have resulted in the British coastline being as it is. This chapter broadens out from its starting point of the Severn Estuary to draw on evidence from Doggerland and the North Sea Basin. Landscape and environmental themes are then tackled, detailing past vegetation by drawing on the evidence from cores taken across and off the shore of Wales. This section is very densely packed with great detail about each of the Welsh sampling sites and highlights the richness of the dating evidence that is available from these cores. The real purpose of this detail, however, is to examine the impact humans have had on the changing landscapes through woodland clearance and changes in biological diversity, not only across Wales, but also more broadly across the Mesolithic United Kingdom and Ireland.

Further chapters examine the available dataset, which Lillie has chosen to approach by drawing his data directly from the Historic Environment Records and a generalized catalogue of finds in the National Museum of Wales. This is despite stating that it is necessary to study collections and evidence first-hand. Used alone these resources may not be reliable enough for such research. Consequently there are

instances where the datasets are used too uncritically as, for example, Burry Holms where a hearth and fire-cracked stones have been found. However, both relate to the Iron Age use of the site, rather than to the underlying Mesolithic settlement.

Ethnographic data are used to present theories including violence, theft, lack of rules in society, theories of persistent places in the landscape and spatial and locational factors that may have influenced Mesolithic subsistence and survival strategies. Lillie creates a narrative that examines the structures there may have been for social organization amongst Mesolithic groups by seeking to determine who was hunting, any symbolic activities undertaken before, during and after the hunt, and how the kill was later divided up amongst the group. Whilst it would be wonderful to know how the groups organized their lives, the reality is that we will never know the detail at this level, as the Mesolithic evidence available from Wales and beyond inevitably will be too ephemeral.

A final chapter is devoted to the ritual aspects of life during the Mesolithic. This commences with detailed analysis of the actual evidence for skeletal remains in Wales and across Europe. The fact that in Britain, particularly in Wales, this is scanty, leads Lillie to examine the evidence from further afield to offer a complex picture of life and death in the Mesolithic. But the question arises, does one size fit all for the Mesolithic? How truly distinct were localized groups in Wales? By drawing so heavily on such a large geographical area and on ethnographical analogy the distinctions inevitably end up being broad-brush and would be challenged by Peter Woodman who uses his book to argue for more tightly focused local research.

Woodman's book opens with a reflection on his fifty-year career working on Ireland's Mesolithic archaeology. He produces some astonishing facts, including that in 1970 fewer than 50 excavations were taking place across Ireland each year and the majority of these were research-led. In 2006 over 2,000 excavations took place, but fewer than ten of these were research, rather than development, led. This explosion in projects provides the foundation for the book which aims to present the state of Ireland's current evidence for earliest prehistory in detail, before asking where research should be taken from here.

The early chapters present the background and examine the vegetation, faunal elements, dating evidence and the landscape of Ireland. Chapter three examines the history for an Irish Mesolithic in which the writer assesses and debunks the original myths of dating evidence one by one, concluding by warning of the dangers of failing to examine the evidence objectively. Woodman next considers the evidence for the Irish Mesolithic by looking at surface lithic collection sites, then at the evidence from excavated sites for structures, caves, underwater features and shell middens. He highlights how many new radiocarbon results dating a range of structures have enabled a chronology to be considers. However, whilst he shows that there are an impressive number of dates, the fact is that there are 'key' sites such as Mount Sandel which have been heavily dated and which consequently bias the results.

Woodman continuously uses the evidence from his own observations of lithic artefact assemblages across Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom to demonstrate the distinct differences between sites. He concludes that the early Mesolithic of Ireland is very distinct from the later Mesolithic, not only in terms of the raw materials selected for use, but also in the tools made and used. Later he returns to question the evidence for, or the potential for there to be, a Palaeolithic in Ireland. By focusing on Ireland's first settlers it is relevant for him to explore the evidence for sites or finds of this age. However, he quickly dismisses them all, concluding that whilst it would not have been impossible for people to have reached Ireland the evidence remains to be found. Ireland's first settlers must have had sea-going technology for them to reach its shores from departure points that may have been south-west Scotland, the Isle of Man or south-west Wales. Once Ireland was settled, the evidence suggests that the population expanded quickly and technologies developed that, in the main, were distinct from these other regions. Woodman observes some spatial patterning but has difficulties defining territory boundaries from the evidence available for

study. Instead, he suggests that there may be as many models as there are sites and the scanty evidence may be biased by local factors that necessitate consideration of the evidence at the local scale.

In the final section of his book Woodman provides a critical analysis of fieldwork and the methodologies that have been deployed to investigate Irish Mesolithic sites. He points out that the 'super sites' such as Mount Sandel or Star Carr have come to be seen as typical. Instead, Woodman offers the contribution that many small sites can each provide a glimpse of Mesolithic settlement at a specific place and together these may be built up to present a bigger picture. He discusses the methodologies in use in rescue archaeology, making the valid point that the decision as to where an excavation will take place will be determined by the development rather than to tackle a research question aimed at progressing an understanding of aspects of Mesolithic settlement. In his final chapter he examines the evidence for the people. The absence of human remains in Ireland is examined, but he draws on ethnographic data and other evidence to present his theories about life, population and territory sizes.

Woodman's final thoughts lie with the fact that historic attitudes to studies of Mesolithic Ireland have led to its perception today as marginal on the westernmost fringe of Europe. There is, however, no danger of these theories being perpetuated as Woodman demonstrates how thinking needs to be moved forward. To achieve this he believes that rather than considering the evidence elsewhere, it is necessary to focus on the fact that Ireland is distinct and to consider the local environment and research history at a local scale to develop new ideas based on the Irish evidence alone.

The topics covered in both books are broadly the same, yet the two authors offer different ways of utilizing the evidence available from their areas of study. Both use ethnography to differing extents to present their theories about Mesolithic life. Woodman has taken a more reflective approach to the data and demonstrates in his conclusion that he has considered Ireland as a part of Europe, as well as an island, before concluding that study at the local scale is preferable. Lillie would disagree with this approach and instead argues that landscape patterning is the same across Europe with subsistence strategies homogenized across the continent.

Whilst reading both books thoughts about myth-making came to mind. Woodman sets out to debunk the many myths that have crept into accepted literature over the past one hundred years to bring us back to a point where there can be new scrutiny of the available dataset and the application of new thought to it. His approach is focused on his own detailed examination of the collections and on the evidence. Indeed, whenever he does utilize other people's research he ensures that this is made clear in his discussion, leaving one in no doubt that had the opportunity been there he would have checked facts for himself. Lillie has relied heavily upon second-hand data-sets and consequently the inherent problems of the resources he has utilized are perpetuated here. Indeed there is the risk that he may be creating new myths in this work as the data-sets, if used uncritically, can lead to erroneous interpretations as highlighted above.

Woodman states that he may be accused of being 'an old fashioned empiricist [… quibbling] with the complacency about the quality of evidence available and a belief that what we really need is better theories.' Lillie is reliant on the formulation of such theories to create the social narrative he presents, although, to be fair, in his epilogue he makes a clear statement about the difficulties of the evidence and the problems that there are in creating a narrative for the Mesolithic of Wales. However, as this is what he has just done it leaves a doubt that the narrative he presents is as secure as he makes it appear. In contrast, Woodman's confidence in his approach results in an easier read in which his distinctive Irish sense of humour occasionally slips out. This said, both books offer food for thought and reading them together highlights two different approaches, each in its own way offering a new contribution to our understanding of Mesolithic life in both Wales and Ireland.

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales ELIZABETH A. WALKER

UNDERSTANDING ROMAN FRONTIERS. A CELEBRATION FOR PROFESSOR BILL HANSON. Edited by David J. Breeze, Rebecca H. Jones and Ioana A. Oltean. 184 × 251 mm. x + 398 pp. 84 illustrations. 9 tables. John Donald, Edinburgh, 2015. ISBN 978 1 906566 85 2. Price £30.00.

Over some 40 years Bill Hanson has made a significant contribution, as Lesley Macinnes reminds us (page 373), to the study of Roman frontiers, native settlements and aerial archaeology. It is no surprise then to find a collection of his colleagues, former students and friends coming together to produce a celebratory Festschrift to mark his retirement from his post at Glasgow University. The resulting volume comprises 26 papers, ranging mostly but not exclusively across the northern part of the Roman Empire. In an effort to ensure cohesion and to emphasise underlying threads they have been grouped into three sections, each of which effectively reflects different aspects of Bill's wide-ranging interests. At the outset the editors have included a succinct appreciation of Bill's career and contribution, together with a select, though still extensive bibliography of his publications.

In the scope of a short review it is impossible to do justice to all the papers, without running the inevitable risk of offending individual contributors either by inclusion or exclusion. Hence the focus here will be on more general aspects. One important thread is the deliberate focus on current issues of scholarship and research in different sectors of the Roman frontier in order to foster cross-fertilization between them. Part One, for instance, which comprises seven papers, focuses on the wider aspect of 'Frontiers and their operation', often in their broader landscape setting. It includes discussion of four Augustan/early Tiberian '*stationes*' (Erdrich), the nature of later frontiers (Collins) and the Valu lui Traian (Rankov), as well as an important attempt to rethink the planning of the Antonine Wall (Graafstal *et al.*); one can but hope that Bill's concern about gates has been answered in part at least for the Raetian Wall (Sommer)! As such the papers range across an extended time frame spanning the period immediately prior to the establishment of formal frontiers through to the end of the western Empire.

Part Two, which is the longest with 11 papers, concentrates on 'Life in and beyond the frontier zone'. Virtually all the contributors concern themselves with the signal importance of material culture to the wider study of frontier installations and their inhabitants. They range from inscribed objects (Allason-Jones; Goldberg), through funerary portraits (Carroll), coin hoards (Hunter) and leather (Douglas), to wider aspects of frontier finds (Hoss) and artefact distributions (Allison). In combination they emphasise and reinforce the emergence of material culture studies, coupled with a healthy awareness of new theoretical approaches (Campbell), which have become such an important element in much recent Roman scholarship in Britain and beyond. They also remind us of the importance of the Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference in fostering a willingness to challenge long-cherished assumptions about the military and civilian communities living along the frontiers and of the pressing need to ensure that the next generation of scholars have the necessary artefact skills to continue the debate.

Part Three turns its attention to 'Prospection and perspectives in the 21st century'. Its eight otherwise diverse papers are interlinked by a recognition of the various techniques, old and new, which have been employed in both acquiring, reviewing and reconstructing our evidence. Not surprisingly they include aerial photography, geophysical survey and LiDAR (Maxwell; Jones and Leslie; Bödecker), as well as the increasing potential of virtual reconstruction (Dobat). Remote sensing also features in the paper on Dura-Europos (James), though it is perhaps the nature of the extensive looting at this site which should serve to remind us of the urgency of enhanced protection. It is fitting, therefore, that the importance of the ongoing project to establish a 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site' should form a suitably positive endnote to the volume (Macinnes), even if it also emphasises the current difficulty of extending it beyond the European sector of the Roman world.

For readers of *Archaeologia Cambrensis* there is obviously little content of specific relevance about Wales (only seven mentions in the index, none of them substantive), though the significance of fortlets (Symonds) and the contribution of geophysical survey (Jones and Leslie) at least find a parallel in the Principality, as recent publications have shown. The volume should, however, underline the need for more focused programmes of research-led excavation in Wales, not least if we are to generate a wider range of artefact assemblages which might make their own distinctive contribution to the kind of artefact studies outlined in Part Two.

All Festschrift volumes have the same strengths and weaknesses, and this one is no exception. Some of the papers will inevitably stand the test of time better than others; some will no doubt provoke a degree of debate, not least perhaps from the volume's recipient himself. As a collection, however, they are a fitting tribute to someone who has made a significant contribution not just in his own right, but also in terms of his influence on a generation of colleagues and research students. The three editors are to be congratulated for producing a very readable and enjoyable volume and for marking Bill's retirement in an appropriate way. The volume has been attractively produced and also reasonably priced at £30. I noted few typos, though the omission of Site 21 from the key in figure 19.1 ought perhaps to have been spotted! Quite rightly the last word was left to Bill's wife, Lesley Macinnes, who hopes to encourage Bill to turn his attention to supporting the development of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire as a World Heritage Site—that is if he has enough time left after making her tea (page 384)!

Lampeter BARRY C. BURNHAM

ABBEYS AND PRIORIES OF MEDIEVAL WALES. By Janet Burton and Karen Stöber. 156 × 234 mm. xvii + 260 pp. 85 illustrations. University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2015. ISBN 978 1 783161 80 5. Price £24.99.

This is a new and welcome addition to the studies of monasticism in Wales, to which the Monastic Wales project (www.monasticwales.org) has contributed considerably in recent years. The first 30 pages provide an introduction describing the background to the monastic way of life and tracing the introduction to Wales of the different orders of monks, canons and friars with their distinctive characteristics. The role of abbeys and priories, their provision of spiritual succour and hospitality, and, of course, their demise in the sixteenth century is examined, giving the student as well as the general reader an up to date overview, contextualizing both the gazetteer of sites which forms the main body of the book, as well as the actual physical remains of the ruins and church buildings that form so important a component of our Welsh landscape.

The gazetteer describes each of the 58 sites within the category of abbeys, priories and friaries as well as the single Hospitallers' Commandery at Slebech. Sites are listed in alphabetical order throughout Wales, rather than in any geographical or county order—sensibly enough in view of the continually dynamic nature of borders and names of Welsh local authorities—though when abbeys historically changed their name or position, they are only listed once. The reader must rely on the index to locate Maenan Abbey, for instance, as it is listed under Aberconwy, and on the maps to understand the distribution and relative densities of the houses of the different groups of monks, canons and friars. Each site entry has a section devoted to its history followed by one on the buildings and monuments. The list is complete—it is arguable whether the monastic hospital at Llawhaden should have been included—and includes sites at which nothing visible now remains, such as St Kynemark in Chepstow, long swallowed up within an ill-considered housing estate, as well as the friaries whose urban situation has rendered them especially vulnerable to demolition and redevelopment. Most site entries have at least one accompanying illustration, sketch or plan, some found within the good colour plates grouped in the centre of the book.

It is exclusively the abbeys, priories and friaries of the Norman and medieval period that are listed in the gazetteer and, thus, earlier religious sites—Celtic *clas* sites and early medieval sites of the Culdees—are only mentioned in passing, as are well-known religious sites such as St Davids with its cathedral, its bishop's palace and its history emanating from the position of the *clas*. However, the important relationship between cathedral, diocese, parish and monastic site is explored in the introduction which explains the role of the monastery in providing services both spiritual and practical to patrons, politics, communities and pilgrims. The foci of pilgrimage, also, rely upon the entries for adjacent monasteries, such as the holy well at Holywell on Basingwerk Abbey.

The book is not sumptuous in appearance but rather is practical and well considered. Many of the photographs are too dark to serve as a significant enticement to the reader to visit, but, once on the site, visitors will find that each entry will assist in their enjoyment and understanding. Accessibility, ownership and position of the monastic remains are given—with several errors in consistency in local authority names and site ownership—Caldey being positioned in Gwent might serve to baffle and Penmon should read as being in Cadw's management and in Ynys Môn/Anglesey. It is a pity that three of the four maps have suffered from inaccurate captions, one requiring the insertion of an errata sheet. Again, ideally, more plans would surely have assisted visitors further; with a few exceptions, such as the local authority owned Margam and Whitland, only those sites in the care of Cadw, usually equipped with their own independent on-site interpretation, are given plans in the book. Aberconwy and Strata Marcella have had their excavation plans added to the description and had the same been bequeathed to less well-interpreted sites, excavated or extant, such as Caldey and the Cardiff and Carmarthen monasteries and friaries, onerous task though this might have been, it would have been a significant enhancement. Of course many of the non-state monuments survive only as the church building, which continued in parochial use, while the remaining conventual buildings, or, in some cases the entire site, have been destroyed without excavation record. One hopes that the situation with survival has now stabilized and that the destruction of monastic houses such as St Kynemark would not be permitted now. But eternal vigilance is required to ensure that this remains the case; and books such as this volume will surely assist in promoting the understanding and enjoyment of our monastic landscape and hence the protection of its more vulnerable components.

The inconsistencies encountered in the volume are minor inconveniences compared with its considerable usefulness. The glossary will assist the general reader and the comprehensive index (coinciding in date with the publication of George Nash's new book on Abergavenny Priory that is therefore not included) leads the scholar to less well-known publications, drawing attention, incidentally, to the extraordinary contribution to the subject given by past Presidents of the Cambrians, notably Glanmor Williams, Laurence Butler and David Williams.

Raglan SIAN REES

AN ANATOMY OF A PRIORY CHURCH. THE ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY AND CONSERVATION OF ST MARY'S PRIORY CHURCH, ABERGAVENNY. Edited by George Nash. 175 × 246 mm. x + 203 pp. 141 illustrations. Archaeopress Publishing Ltd, Oxford, 2015. ISBN 978 1 784911 08 9. Price £29.00.

St Mary's Priory, Abergavenny has a remarkable history. An alien priory, with all the shortcomings of that status, in later medieval times a pair of rectangular chapels flanked the choir, memorials or chantries for the lords of Abergavenny. On the south was the Herbert Chapel, for the family whose magnificent tombs, are amongst the finest in British parish churches, spoke of their newly enriched status. That on the north

perhaps commemorated the earlier de Hastings family. It was later the Lewis Chapel, named from the tomb of Dr David Lewis, son of a vicar of Abergavenny, Elizabethan Judge of the Admiralty and first Principal of Jesus College, Oxford. Abergavenny's role in the civil wars had consequences for the church and its monuments, as Richard Symonds' description of St Mary's under Charles I, with its organs and stained glass shows. In the 1920s the Priory was considered as a possible cathedral for the new diocese of Monmouth, though it lost out to Newport. More recently it has undergone a renaissance—a rebirth—inspired by the Revd Jeremy Winston, and a group of supporters. Sadly, Father Jeremy died in November 2011. This book and the present condition of St Mary's and its surroundings are his memorial.

Eleven writers contribute to a comprehensive study of the Priory; the tomb monuments; the fifteenth-century choir stalls; a remarkable oak figure from a Jesse Tree recording the genealogy of Christ, and the neighbouring tithe barn, now a visitor centre. After a scene setting by George Nash, Frank Olding describes the archaeology of the medieval town and its defences, with period plans showing its development. An early rectangular enceinte outside the castle was replaced by much larger thirteenth-century defences of timber, reinforced with a stone wall in Edwardian times. The Priory, as in early twelfth-century Brecon (but unlike earlier Chepstow or Monmouth), lay outside the town, since monks should not have the cure of souls. So, surprisingly did the parish church and market until the thirteenth century.

Kay Blackwell and Sir Trefor Morris outline the medieval history of the Priory and Michael Bartoch documents the conservation programme on its fabric. Two papers discuss the medieval tomb monuments, which have also been the subject of recent studies by Claude Blair and Philip Lindley. Michael Eastham describes their conservation and Rhianydd Biebrach their wider context. Raised floor levels had truncated the monuments and their alabaster panels were threatened by groundwater. The tombs were dismantled and conserved, including the surviving areas of polychrome colour and the floors restored to their original levels. An altar table proved to be the reused panels from the early fourteenth-century tomb chest of Lord Hastings. Eastham's account is a valuable record of the state of the monuments before and after treatment and a masterclass in conservation. Biebrach, whilst recognising the multiple messages of the monuments, not least as signalling the continued pre-eminence of the Herbert family, considers them as appeals for prayers for release from purgatory. Part of a distinctive south Wales group of alabaster tombs from a Midlands workshop, sadly, we now see them shorn of their setting of armorial glass enriched with heraldry and kneeling donor portraits.

As well as the tomb monuments, Abergavenny has an outstanding collection of medieval woodwork. The fifteenth-century choir stalls, with St David's the finest in Wales, were of urgent need of conservation after long neglect. The Prince of Wales' feathers and pomegranate badge of Catherine of Aragon indicate a date after their marriage in 1501 and the name of Prior Wynchester (1493–1516) and tree ring dates for the north stalls of 1482–1512 agree. Hugh Harrison's structural analysis shows that the two ranges are not of precisely the same date and reflect different workshop traditions, one south-west English, the other possibly Welsh. Two early fifteenth-century stalls were also incorporated. Herbert family emblems suggest their patronage. The stalls survived owing to their use by the schoolboys of Abergavenny Grammar School—hence the many carved initials.

The figure of Jesse, father of King David, formed from half of a split oak trunk, was part of an elaborate reredos, probably at the east end of the Lewis chapel. This showed the branches of a literal family tree of Christ, his descendant, 'defaced and pulled down in peeces' under Edward VI (not under Cromwell, as is sometimes said). The figure was in urgent need of conservation and Carol Galvin's restoration has revealed its original colour scheme. An angel with burnished gold hair and a purple tunic supported the head of a grey-haired, sleeping Jesse in a red, black and gold cloak with a blue lining. Muriel Adams considers the context of the figure and suggests as patron Richard Herbert of Ewyas, whose wyvern badge appears on the choir stalls, or Jasper Tudor.

George Nash describes the extensive archaeological excavation within the church as part of the conservation programme. This was a matter of recording deposits and floor levels rather than recovering the building history of the Priory. However, it found important evidence, including Malvernian decorated floor tiles and painted glass, one fragment with the head of an heraldic boar—a sad reminder of what we have lost. Nash and Huw Evans Johns also describe the structural history and conservation of the neighbouring tithe barn.

The Jesse Tree is to be set in its probable original site, under a newly commissioned stained glass window, as a memorial to Jeremy Winston. It is fitting to conclude with his words 'one of the finest churches in Wales. . . . for the local, national and international community it serves as a place of welcome, grace and beauty'.

Caerphilly JEREMY KNIGHT

CASTLES OF THE MARCHES. By John Kinross. 184 × 233 mm. 95 pp. 90 illustrations. Amberley Publishing, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2015. ISBN 978 1 445648 00 2. Price £14.99.

The single page introduction to *Castles of the Marches* begins with the claim that 'The Saxons had developed motte and bailey castles of earth and wood palisades', setting the tone for what is essentially a whimsical and eccentrically compiled gazetteer in which the author John Kinross attempts to explore the architecture, politics and history of the castles of the Welsh border, and in doing so betrays a limited understanding of all three. The book is illustrated with a range of photographs and unaccredited antiquarian prints and drawings, some of which appear to have been included to fill space, such as the pair of near identical photographs of Hay; the few sketch plans are small and of poor quality. Whilst it would be harsh to treat this as a serious academic volume, as the author makes no attempt to do so himself, *Castles of the Marches* equally falls short as a popular guide, failing to provide a coherent overview of a broad and complex subject and being riddled with factual inaccuracies and misleading terminology.

The inclusion or omission of sites within the gazetteer appears to relate to the author's erratic consultation of other published county gazetteers as there are entries for numerous obscure Shropshire, Herefordshire and Cheshire castles and manor houses, yet only twelve castles of the hundreds that exist on the 'Welsh' side of the border, which Kinross may or may not have grasped also lay within Marcher lordships. Indeed, the Welsh dimension to the Marches is largely overlooked and restricted to passing comments, notably that 'The risings of Owain Glyndwr and Llewelyn were kept in check by the Marcher Lords and the castles built by Edward I and later kings', no native castles warranting a mention. Elsewhere, important castles such as Shrewsbury or Oswestry are covered in short paragraphs whilst the relevance of others is exaggerated, Ludlow being cited as 'The most important of all the castles in this book', seemingly on the misconception that its status as the seat of the Council of the March originated in the initial Norman invasion.

The individual gazetteer entries are without locations or grid references and the descriptions within them frequently comprise a haphazard serving of historical or architectural facts or the author's anecdotes and opinions, many of which fail to describe even vaguely the monuments in the past or present. The errors and inconsistencies are too numerous to list here, but a few can be plucked out at random: for Chepstow there is a photograph of the modern Kemeys memorial plaque to illustrate an entry that somehow omits to mention one of the most significant structures of any Marcher castle, its eleventh-century Great Tower; Whittington has gained a round keep; whilst at Wigmore, Kinross appears unaware of the innovative million-pound consolidation programme by English Heritage, lamenting that 'alas, they have not spent any money on it and the ruins are not all that safe'.

All in all, *Castles of the Marches* sheds a very poor light on Amberley as a publisher, this bearing the hallmarks of a book produced to deadline and showing little sign of any informed editorial oversight. It is otherwise difficult to understand how consultation of the varied sources listed in the bibliography could have resulted in such a confused, cursorily researched and potentially misleading volume that barely acknowledges the advances in castle studies and historical thinking of the last half century. Indeed, the text could have been considerably improved in under a few hours by anyone with a working knowledge of the subject and I would imagine that *Castles of the Marches* will offer nothing to the readers of this journal who would be better advised to invest in some of the fine regional guides cited in its bibliography.

Abergavenny WILL DAVIES

WIGMORE CASTLE, NORTH HEREFORDSHIRE. EXCAVATIONS 1996 AND 1998. By Stephanie Rátkai. 210 × 297 mm. xi + 254 pp. 251 illustrations and tables. Society for Medieval Archaeology, London, 2015. ISBN 978 1 909662 19 3. Price £30.00.

English Heritage took Wigmore Castle, a fragmentary picturesque ruin, into guardianship in 1995 following the collapse of a section of curtain wall. Rather than excavate the castle, consolidate and restore the walls and lay out the site for visitation with paths, lawns and a ticket office/retail opportunity/cafe, English Heritage sought to preserve this site 'as found' and retain it as a picturesque ruin in natural woodland (Coppack 1999). This was an interesting attempt to do things differently and led to limited consolidation work. Just two small excavated trenches were undertaken as a commercial contract by Marches Archaeology and following several assessment reports the excavation has been written up by Stephanie Rátkai and published by the Society for Medieval Archaeology in their monograph series.

Though the castle preservation and presentation approach is considered novel, the excavation report follows traditional lines; an 'Introduction' (Cool, Rátkai) followed by chapters on 'Historical and architectural overview' (Cragoe), 'Excavations' (Linnane), 'Pottery' (Rátkai), (all other) 'Artefacts' (Mould, Shaffrey, Symons), 'Building materials' (Mills, Shaffrey), 'The faunal remains' (Thomas, Vann, Gouldwell, Campbell), 'The plant remains' (Vitolo), completed by 'An overview of the excavated evidence' and a final chapter placing 'Wigmore castle in context' (Rátkai). This report has been brought to publication by Rátkai and her post-excavation colleagues and there is considerable detail and scholarship in some of the post-excavation reports as well as the historical research on the site. Some useful pieces of information have emerged such as the evidence that phrases such as 'worth nothing' in the written accounts are not synonymous with a site being derelict or decayed.

Although the excavation produced an impressive 8m-deep section, and thus a very useful pottery sequence, the total area of castle excavated was 70m^2, less than 1.5% of the area of the Inner Ward and keep, and an even small fraction of the castle as a whole. The extent, nature and construction sequence of buildings within the castle remains largely unknown. Whilst all archaeologists struggle to interpret sites with only small areas excavated, 70m^2 is simply not a large enough sample to draw meaningful conclusions for a major Marcher castle. This reality is frequently and honestly acknowledged by the authors in this report; 'just as the purpose for the recess remains obscure so does the reason for blocking it' (page 54). These problems are clearly compounded with some problems in the stratigraphy and the fact that several of the original excavators have left the profession. The lack of excavated buildings and thus archaeological context has left the finds to be interpreted against the historical accounts, which encourages over-interpretation: 'The find of an oxshoe in the 1996 demolition deposits suggests that material was salvaged and carted away' (page 238).

It might be imagined that given the small area excavated, the excavation report would need to present as much of the recovered evidence as possible; but this has not been done. Some specialist report chapters such as those on pottery and shellfish are hugely detailed, but there is no architectural assessment of the upstanding remains; this is due to be published elsewhere by Jon Cooke (English Heritage Research Report). The reports on the archaeometallurgical remains (Doonan, Dungworth) and architectural glass (Brown) are not presented and only briefly summarised in discussion, whilst there is no catalogue of the stone artefacts or details about the stone ammunition. The interesting ironwork collection appears only to have been drawn from X-rays. We are all concerned when we see so many excavation reports lost to unpublished grey literature. Rátkai and colleagues have undoubtedly worked hard to salvage some meaning from the limited archaeology which has emerged from this site, but the resultant monograph has a very uneven range of information.

Many readers might have expected an excavation report on Wigmore Castle, caput of the Mortimers, one of the most powerful of Marcher families, to provide key information on the development of castle defences, warfare with the Welsh in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the castle architecture of display of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But the limited area excavated leaves its authors unable to do this. Published as a substantial monograph there is a real danger that readers will forget what a small area has been excavated and how unrepresentative the conclusions may be. Suggestions in this report that Wigmore Castle principally displayed wealth through feasting as high status pottery was not evident in the assemblage or that occupation and activity on this site was very limited during the English Civil War owing to the lack of pottery from that period, are conclusions which depend on the excavated deposits being typical; this is far from certain with only 70m^2 uncovered.

Whilst the castle preservation and presentation approach may be considered novel, it appears that English Heritage have not worked out how evidence from limited area excavation of such sites should be handled. Without the detailed tie in to the castle structure, excavation data lacks the context of buildings, while dating is bedevilled by questions of residuality. This issue of limited area excavation is the same one that plagues contract archaeology and leads to the need for regional assessments based on multiple sites. This may now appear to be necessary for guardianship as well as developer-funded sites.

Coppack, G., 1999. 'Setting and structure: the conservation of Wigmore Castle', in G. Chitty and D. Baker (eds), *Managing Historic Sites and Buildings* (London: Routledge), 61–70.

University of Durham CHRIS CAPLE

THE REVOLT OF OWAIN GLYNDŴR IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH CHRONICLES. By Alicia Marchant. 160 × 241 mm. xi + 273pp. 6 figures. York Medieval Press/Boydell Press Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2014. ISBN 978 1 903153 55 0. Price £60.00.

It is important at the outset to establish the nature of Alicia Marchant's book. The object is not to extend empirical knowledge of the revolt, nor to assess the reliability of the English chronicle accounts of Glyndŵr's revolt, but to present 'a new reading of the texts as literary constructs'. As such it focuses on 'the narrative strategies involved' and is heavily dependent on literary theory. The reader thus enters a world of 'narratological theory', of narrative voices that may be homodiegetic or heterodiegetic, of focalisors and the focalization of narrative, of analepsis and prolepsis. It is a world in which we are solemnly informed that a narrative is a text in which a narrator recounts events, that the narratee is the implied audience or reader of a narrative text, and that narrativity is 'simply' the state of being a narrative.

The book is based on a study of sixteen chronicles compiled in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Six of those chronicles were composed during the period 1400–30, five in the years 1450–85, and a further five from 1485–1580. The long time-span from which the chronicles are drawn encompasses the revolt itself, the dynastic upheavals of the fifteenth century, the arrival of the Tudor dynasty, the Reformation, the Acts of Union, and the development of printing and new audiences for written works. Significant developments in the ways in which the Glyndŵr movement was viewed are thus to be expected—though it is interesting that 'despite the parading of 'Welshness' by the Tudor monarchs . . . there was by no means a major shift in the representation of the Welsh as a whole' (page 216).

After an Introduction which establishes the scope of the work, the inquiry falls into two main sections: 'Narrative Strategies and Literary Traditions' involves chapters on the role of the narrator, representations of time, and representations of space, while 'Imagining the Rebellion' looks at the depiction of individuals, of the Welsh and of Wales in the revolt narratives. A short conclusion, useful as a summary of the bulk of the book, is followed by a substantial Appendix of extracts from the Latin chronicles with translations into English. These translations are generally sound, though there are occasional instances of variation between translations in the main text and those in the appendix.

There are some points where Dr Marchant presses her case too hard. Discussing the contrasting portrayals of the earl of Arundel and Glyndŵr by John Rous, writing about 1480, Marchant notes, *inter alia*, that in one part of Rous's account Arundel 'occupies a garden alone, playing chess. He is depicted as a cultivated individual. In comparison, Owain Glyndŵr occupies a castle.' It is then explained that 'castles in the revolt narratives were places of disruption.' One might remark that narratives of rebellions, whether focusing on castles or not, are often marked by disruption. But the more important point is that in this passage from Rous Arundel is nowhere said to be alone in the garden, and given that he is said to be playing chess it is a fair assumption that he had company. And in Marchant's translation Glyndŵr is pictured as 'often besieged in a castle, but when the castle had been captured, he could not be found'. The Latin text specifically refers not to 'a castle', but 'castles', and fairly clearly refers not to an habitual residence but to beleaguered strongholds. The contrast between Arundel and Glyndŵr is further developed by Marchant in a fashion that hardly rings true, either in terms of the historical facts or in Rous's presentation of them: 'According to Rous, not only is Arundel executed under the authority of the cruel and tyrannical King Richard, but then his [Arundel's] squire [Glyndŵr] rebels against the new king for whom he [Arundel] had fought and died.' Given that Arundel was executed two years before Bolingbroke, the future Henry IV, rose against Richard, it is odd at the very least to claim that Arundel had fought and died for Henry, who had been one of Arundel's junior allies in the aristocratic opposition to Richard.

There are times when one is tempted to wonder whether what is treated by Marchant as literary construct is not something rather more prosaic. For example, the Dieulacres chronicle contains a passage regarding the attacks on towns made by Glyndŵr in 1400 '*villas angligenas in Wallia, scilicet, Conway, Ruthin. Oswaldistr et alias tam muratas quam nudas, spoliavit et incendit*' ('English towns in Wales, that is to say Conwy, Ruthin, Oswestry and others, both with walls and without, he pillaged and burned'). Marchant makes much of this, suggesting that it 'reveals patterns regarding the naming of built landscapes', being a 'selection . . . out of towns that could have been named [which] serves to illustrate the geographical extent of the revolt in Wales.' But there is surely little artifice in the naming of these three places: the chronicler seems to have conflated with the attacks on Ruthin and Oswestry the seizure on 1 April 1401 of Conwy castle by men who would become associates of Glyndŵr—probably because it was a spectacular coup, and thus widely reported. Ruthin was well-known as the first of the towns attacked by Glyndŵr in 1400, and was at the heart of the lordship of the same name controlled by Edward Grey, Glyndŵr's great enemy. Oswestry, prominent as a place of Welsh trade, was particularly severely hit by the rebels. If the Dieulacres chronicler had wanted to emphasise the extent of the first wave of revolt, he might have

mentioned that it extended further south, to Welshpool. But Oswestry lay in a region where Dieulacres had an important historic and economic presence. Marchant indeed points to the knowledge of Wales shown by the Dieulacres chronicler (page 172), and suggests that this may have derived from the fact that Dieulacres was a Staffordshire abbey. It was surely more significant that the abbey had until 1214 been sited at Poulton, on the very border between Cheshire and Flintshire, and retained significant lands in that region, less than twenty miles from Oswestry, until the Dissolution.

At the close of the book Marchant notes that her intention is twofold, 'to elucidate the range of narrative strategies employed by chronicle narratives and also to examine closely the documentation of an intriguing historical event'. She succeeds more fully, if somewhat laboriously, in the first of these aims, because to accomplish the second, in any meaningful sense, would involve integrating the study of the chronicles with that of other forms of documentary evidence.

Bangor University DAVID STEPHENSON

WELSH SOLDIERS IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES. By Adam Chapman. 160 × 239 mm. xv + 264 pp. 1 figure. 5 tables. Boydell Press Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2015. ISBN 978 1 783270 31 6. Price £60.00.

When Edward I conquered Wales, many of his troops were Welsh. The proportion of Welshmen in English armies was never again to be as great, but their contribution continued to be significant. Adam Chapman has written an important book, both for the study of English armies in the later middle ages, and for the history of Wales in the period. He has made full use of the extensive administrative records held in the National Archives, while a distinctive feature of his book is the way in which he brings the evidence of Welsh poetry into play. The book is divided into two parts. The first provides a chronological account of the Welsh contribution to English armies, while the second provides an analytical examination of the key aspects of the topic.

Edward I relied heavily on Welsh troops in his armies, and this is skilfully discussed. The number of Welsh knights who served could be counted on the fingers of one hand, but very substantial numbers of infantry were employed, both in Wales itself, and in the Scottish wars, as well as in Flanders in 1297. These footsoldiers were drawn from the Marches, and the south, where Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and his brother Dafydd had little support. It was only in 1300 that Edward did not call upon the Welsh; whether this was, as he declared, in recognition of their past services, or because they had not played a full part in the battle of Falkirk two years earlier is an open question. Under Edward II Wales continued to be a fruitful recruiting ground; about a third of the force that invaded Scotland with a remarkable lack of success in 1322 were Welsh.

Muster accounts and other records enable Chapman to provide a convincing narrative of the Welsh contribution to Edward III's wars in France. Not all of the Welsh troops were archers; many were equipped with spears. The documents suggest that Welsh contingents were better organized than the English, with every hundred men having not only an officer in command, but also doctors, interpreters, and a *clamator* to shout out orders. The intention in 1346, the year of Edward III's triumph at Crécy, was that half of the infantry should be drawn from Wales, though in practice the proportion was probably not quite so high. The Black Prince drew troops for his *chevauchée* of 1355 and the Poitiers campaign in the following year from both his lands in Cheshire and in North Wales. The Welsh served the prince as footsoldiers, the Cheshire men as mounted archers. As the war progressed, the numbers of Welsh troops declined. Relatively few served on Edward III's unsuccessful campaign of 1359–60; the target of 2,600 was reduced to 1,000. In addition to these men, there were some Welsh troops attached to retinues, such as the eight

archers in Edward Despenser's following who distinguished themselves in a minor skirmish. A later muster roll for the Despenser retinue, dating from 1373, shows that three squires and forty-nine archers out of a total of 599 men had Welsh names, but in a great many cases such details are not available. The popular belief that Henry V owed his victory at Agincourt to Welsh archers is demolished by the detailed evidence of the army payrolls, which shows that the Welsh contribution to the English army was very limited, with a maximum of 400 archers drawn from royal demesne lands. Strikingly, only five of Sir John Grey's retinue came from his lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd.

Chapman shows that although Welsh traditions of military obligation were distinctive, in practice recruitment in Wales followed patterns similar to those in England. Commissioners of array were used to recruit levies in both counties and lordships, but as the Hundred Years War progressed, recruitment by retinue leaders became more important. Welsh troops were normally paid at the same rates as the English, though as most of them were footsoldiers, theirs was generally the minimum wage of 2d a day.

Discussion of the weaponry used by the Welsh soldiers inevitably centres on the bow. Chapman is, surely rightly, sceptical of the view that the English longbow was ultimately of Welsh origin. Many of the Welsh were archers, but Chapman suggests that, at least until the mid-fourteenth century, their most characteristic weapon was the spear. He dismisses the notion, derived from Gerald of Wales writing in the twelfth century, that this was particularly characteristic of North Wales. In battle, it may well be that the main contribution of the Welsh was in the *melée*, where nimble lightly-armoured men could use daggers and knives to great advantage.

This is largely a study of those who served as archers and spearmen; there were few Welshmen who had the resources to fight as well-equipped mounted men-at-arms, much less as knights. One notable exception was Gregory Sais, who prospered in the 1370s and 1380s. When he was in command at Berwick, he led a retinue of 322 Welshmen, many drawn from his native Flintshire. Another exception was Owain Lawgoch, claimant to the title of Prince of Wales, who fought for the French. Individual careers are difficult to work out, not least because of the problems English clerks had with Welsh names. Three men from Cydweli, identified as mounted archers in 1413, were all serving together in 1420, but it is not possible to trace their careers further. Chapman would have liked to show that Owain ap Maredudd, who served in Lewis Powell's retinue in 1420, was in fact Owain ap Maredudd ap Tudur, ancestor of the Tudors, but this has to remain no more than a possibility.

This is a fine book, primarily intended for an academic audience, written with admirable clarity. It is based on a great deal of detailed research on a wide range of sources, particularly the records kept by the English government. Rich in detail and persuasive in argument, it makes an important contribution both to the history of English armies, and that of later medieval Wales.

Durham University MICHAEL PRESTWICH

LATE MEDIEVAL LITURGIES ENACTED. THE EXPERIENCE OF WORSHIP IN CATHEDRAL AND PARISH CHURCH. Edited by Sally Harper, P. S. Barnwell and Magnus Williamson. 178 × 250 mm. xvi + 349 pp. 75 illustrations. 6 tables. Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Farnham, 2016. ISBN 978 1 472441 37 9. Price £95.00.

In 2011, John Harper and his colleagues were awarded a substantial grant by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council for a project exploring the practicalities of the medieval liturgy through practice-led research. This book is one of the products, along with a website (http://www.experienceofworship.org.uk/) and some other publications.

The aim of the project was not just to investigate the medieval liturgy and its material culture but to explore the experience of medieval worship through a series of enactments. The book under review discusses in some detail the theory behind this kind of practice-led research, including an explanation of the choice of the word ‘enactment’ for the liturgical events. The authors are acutely aware of the profound issues raised in asking modern Christians to engage with what may be a very different and even disconcerting form of worship. (There is more material on these debates on the web site.) There are still some unresolved issues. The project team actively avoided ‘role-play’ in favour of engagement with the liturgy in the here and now, but this begged the question whether the experiences of a modern worshipper could tell us anything about medieval beliefs and responses.

There is also a detailed analysis of theoretical and practical issues involved in establishing and reanimating the liturgy. The chapters by Matthew Cheung Salisbury and Magnus Williamson make abundantly clear the impossibility of arriving at a definitive, authoritative or normative set of text and instructions. Working out the variations involved in scaling down the ritual for the resources of a small and poorly funded parish church was even more of a challenge, and the book discusses the ways in which informed practice illuminated the experience of celebrant, assistants and observers.

Readers of this journal will probably be most interested in the Welsh aspects of the project (as the church of St Teilo’s, now at the National History Museum in St Fagan’s, was used as the parish church) and the work on experimental archaeology and material culture. Much of the project funding was devoted to commissioning liturgical artefacts (ranging from a small medieval organ to the pottery vessels used for washing the priest’s hands) and handmade vestments. The thinking behind the design and manufacture of these has much to tell us about the material aspects of medieval worship.

There is unfortunately much less on the specifically Welsh implications of the research. This is partly inherent in the evidence: we have no medieval parish records, very few wills and only sporadic references to guilds and chantries. We may suspect that the people of a parish like Llandeilo Talybont would have had a church life as rich and varied as that of the similarly remote parish of Morebath in Devon studied in such detail by Eamon Duffy, but we have no way of proving this. Possibly as a result of this lack of reliable information, the parish liturgies seem to have been set in a geographically non-specific community. Magnus Williamson’s chapter offers a range of examples of parishes with choirs (some sponsored by guilds, some trained by chantry priests), parish clerks with musical training and skills, small parishes with organs (often played by the parish clerk): but we have very little evidence for any of this in Wales. There are a few rural parish churches with surviving medieval misericords (Llanengan and Abererch in Gwynedd, both like Llandeilo Talybont on pilgrimage routes, are examples) but that is all.

As a result, a number of special narratives were needed to allow for any sort of elaboration in the parish services. A wealthy visitor who gave an endowment for an organ; the local landowner who endowed a chantry with provision for a school and a choir; a couple of visiting academics on pilgrimage who shared in the Mass and sang in the processions; a group of beguines, also in pilgrimage, who sang Vespers and the Antiphon of the Blessed Virgin Mary. All these did rather remove the enactments from the experience of the individual parish.

The other weakness of the project (and this is reflected in its very brief treatment in the book) was the lack of attention to the congregational experience. The interest of the project team, and the main thrust of the research, was the performance of the liturgy. Members of the congregation were mostly singers with no role in a particular service. They were offered a background in what was expected of them—meditations for different points of the service, short prayers, instruction on when to kneel, when to bow, when to reverence the sacrament—but there did not appear to be any consideration of what else they might be doing (gossiping, flirting, trading, arguing, thinking about anything other than the actual worship). The analysis of participant diaries in the book nevertheless makes it clear that the project was

able to challenge the traditional view that the medieval laity were disengaged from the performance of the liturgy. There was evidence of private rituals of prayer and devotion, but also of engagement with sound, sight and smell.

In spite of these reservations, the book offers a valuable overview of the logistics of medieval worship and of the ways that it *may* have been experienced by participants, both clergy and laity. It is a pity that the publisher, Ashgate, as an independent publishing house, is no longer in existence, but the book is now available through the Routledge website. The price will probably deter all but the most enthusiastic of students: we do need to find ways of bringing academic work to a wider audience, at a price more of us can afford.

University of South Wales MADELEINE GRAY

DERELICT STONE BUILDINGS OF THE BLACK MOUNTAINS MASSIF. By Christopher George Leslie Hodges. 210 × 297 mm. x + 333 pp. 516 illustrations. 8 tables. Archaeopress Publishing Ltd, Oxford, 2015. ISBN 978 1 784911 49 2. Price £48.00.

Walking the Welsh hills, no one at all conscious of their surroundings is likely to overlook the collapsed remains of stone-built dwellings and barns that dot the landscape, abandoned to the local wildlife and vegetation. Much has been written in general terms about these vernacular structures, whether it be from a historical perspective, as in David Howell's *The Rural Poor in Eighteenth-Century Wales* (2000), or the architectural as seen most recently in Eurwyn Wiliam's *The Welsh Cottage* (2010). In *Derelict Stone Buildings*, however, Christopher Hodges breaks new ground by examining in detail the entire range of stone buildings that survive above ground in one specific geographic area.

The Black Mountains are set where three counties—Breconshire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire—and two countries converge. The contours depicted on any Ordnance Survey maps immediately reveal the nature of this upland massif with long, finger-like ridges separated by deep, sharply incised valleys. Hodges takes four adjacent valleys in this massif as his study area, the more westerly two carrying the rivers Grwyne Fawr and Grwyne Fechan, southwards towards the Usk between Crickhowell and Abergavenny, the more easterly two taking the Honddu and the Olchron to join the Monnow which ultimately converges on the Wye.

While there is nothing out of the ordinary about this setting, what the researcher brings to his study is a specific appreciation of the subject in his capacity as a professional drystone waller. As Hodges points out 'few writers in the fields or archaeology and history ever actually physically work on a daily basis in the subject(s) they research or write about' (page 2); a passionate advocate of the technique, he is somewhat dismissive of architectural historians who have tended to overlook it.

His introduction claims 543 stone structures derived from documentary and cartographic sources and 499 derelict structures that he has been able to visit and record on the ground, all constructed of Old Red Sandstone. He remarks, too, on the importance of the mountain wall that separated the enclosed grounds from the open hill. Inferring a construction date after 1560 and suggesting that it is a more homogeneous construction than is normally realised, he also emphasises its relative chronological importance in as much as it appears to incorporate earlier stone-built structures.

The volume begins with a consideration of the physical characteristics of the region, its geography, geology, climate and river systems, and a somewhat superficial examination of its cultural boundaries. Next a chapter on 'drystone walling and vernacular architecture' works through the existing literature to force home the point that in the past little has been written on drystone techniques, even though the

section on sources from beyond Wales may appear rather thin to the reader. Completing the background account, Chapter 4 outlines the author's research methodology taking the reader through Ordnance Survey mapping, aerial photography, and field recording methods and photography.

Thereafter, the volume is devoted to the findings of the research. Chapter 5 on site analysis and site types looks at the causes of dereliction, the alignment and orientation of buildings, site layout, intra-site relationships, place-name analysis and incorporates an exposition of the classificatory scheme adopted by the writer utilising specific examples accompanied by occasional plans. Next comes a section on the various elements that constitute the typical building: the entrances, windows, roofs, floors, chimneys, ovens, stairs and alcoves, with interesting points emerging about the removal and reuse of such things as doors and their frames, and the significance of the small triangular apertures which this reviewer had been led to believe were inserted to encourage barn owls, but which the writer convincingly shows were primarily for ventilation. A chapter on industrial buildings and their associated industries looks at mills and milling, charcoal burning, relevant in as much as there is occasionally an associated drystone shelter, lime production and the kilns. Strangely, neither in this chapter nor elsewhere is much written on the quarries that must have produced the raw material for the buildings that are the focus of the study.

Chapter 8 provides a historical narrative pitched at both the general and a local level to present a building type chronology. Hodges adopts current thinking based largely on dendrochronology that Welsh domestic buildings survive from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards. The Black Mountains stone buildings suffer from a very obvious shortage of documentary references and a sparsity of readily datable diagnostic features, and his rather speculative four-phase chronology that is initiated by some small isolated stone structure perhaps being as early as the late fifteenth century needs to be treated with caution and requires to be tested further. A final chapter looks at documentary sources such as rentals and early map sources with a view to pinpointing and commenting on the setting of selected examples—possibly it would have sat more comfortably before the historical narrative—as well as on perceived changes in patterns of encroachment.

Derelict Stone Buildings suffers from several of the traditional problems inherent in post-graduate theses that have advanced to publication in this particular format: a structure occasionally haphazard, that a more experienced writer would probably have avoided; word omissions and misspellings; idiosyncratic punctuation and missing entries in the bibliography, coupled in this case with a variation on the Harvard system of citation which was entirely new to this reviewer; a lack of expertise in studying and using historic map sources; and the absence of an independent copy editor. In addition there is an over-reliance on ground level photographic images, Googe Earth aerial photography and numerous maps that on occasions duplicate each other. Four site-pattern types are defined, but only one of the four has a small-scale plan accompanying it. More building plans, even in the form of rapidly measured sketches, would have been helpful. Nevertheless we must put all this aside. This is an innovative study and the text confirms that the writer has put a considerable amount of thought into developing his ideas over a number of years. He must be congratulated on completing a major study on a topic that usually attracts little more than passing attention, and also in publishing his doctoral research so that it is readily available to others. In doing this he lays down a challenge for other upland areas of Wales, for the Black Mountains create an extreme topography with structures clustered exclusively in the valleys. It will be interesting to compare Christopher Hodges' results when similar field analyses are completed elsewhere.

Meifod — Bob Silvester

WELSH SLATE. ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF AN INDUSTRY. By David Gwyn. 224 × 283 mm. 291 pp. 243 illustrations. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2015. ISBN 978 1 871184 51 8. Price £45.00.

In 1974, as an historian rapidly being transformed into an industrial archaeologist, this reviewer acquired a copy of the detailed survey of *Rhosydd Slate Quarry* by Michael Lewis and John Denton. This was the result of some 240 man-days of fieldwork backed by hundreds of hours of archive research to produce what was then probably the most comprehensive exercise in industrial archaeology yet undertaken. This book influenced my own fieldwork on Welsh and Cornish metal mining sites, and I also explored many slate quarries, both above and below ground. Surveys of similar sites have continued, many arising from the Practical Industrial Archaeology courses run mainly from the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre at Plas Tan y Bwlch by Dr Lewis and his successors, including Dr Gwyn himself. The bibliography of the book being reviewed attests to the many individual publications which have resulted. As in England, however, the decline of traditional industries created the need for urgent recording on a scale that was beyond the capacity of most voluntary groups, although many still continue to produce valuable work. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) stepped in with large-scale surveying projects as well as extensive aerial photography throughout Wales in an effort to preserve by record the important industries of the country.

For the Welsh slate industry, what was needed was an overview which could bring together the volunteer-led surveys and the RCAHMW recording work and archive on a scale not previously attempted. David Gwyn was certainly the right man to do this. An archaeologist with hands-on experience, he also has considerable engineering knowledge, particularly of railways as he himself fires up locomotives on some of the Welsh narrow-gauge lines. One of his previous books, *Gwynedd: Inheriting a Revolution* (2006), had already revealed the extent of his scholarship and his deep understanding of the nature of Welsh culture. He is also a Welsh-speaking Welshman, a vital prerequisite in dealing with this 'most Welsh of Welsh industries'. His linguistic skills have enabled him to understand, for example, the true purpose of the *cabans* where the quarrymen met not just for their lunches but for music, poetry and political discussion: these become, in Dr Gwyn's text, meaningful places and not just stone ruins.

The dramatic landscapes of the Welsh slate industry were created by the active participation of its people. An understanding of the nature of slate was essential to its processing, slate splitting being undertaken by hand even into the late nineteenth century in order to produce the very thin roof slates which made it possible to use less robust roof timbers on the industrial terraces being created in many towns. The development of mechanisation of slate sawing created many 'integrated' mills from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, driven by either water- or steam-power, and some excellent diagrams in the book illustrate the typology of their development, an outstanding example being the unusually architecturally splendid Ynys y Pandy slate slab mill at Cwmystradllyn. Dr Gwyn's discussion of prime movers and power systems in Chapter 5 illuminates the extensive use made of water—plentiful in North Wales—for both waterwheels and water-balance engines during most of the nineteenth century and then later for generating electricity by means of turbines. Many people will have seen the great suspension wheel in the National Slate Museum in Llanberis without being able to envisage the large numbers of these wheels which were once common throughout the quarries and the means by which water was fed into them. It is something brought to life in this book through the old engravings and paintings which show these before they became disused—or became 'archaeology'—and the modern photographs indicating their former existence.

Archaeological studies of any industrial site have to consider how the products were removed for wider distribution. For a product as bulky and heavy as slate, means had to be found of moving both waste materials and finished products around the huge quarries and then taking the latter to the ports on the

coast for export. Dr Gwyn really comes into his own in the two chapters on internal and overland transport systems; he is a frequent contributor to the International Early Railways conferences. The inclined planes down which slate was lowered from the quarries into the valleys are still very much a feature of the landscapes of this area, and the remains of many of the drum-houses at their summits can still be seen; the transporter incline in the Vivian section of Dinorwic Quarry, not far from the National Slate Museum, has been recreated. Steam locomotives were first used on level sections within the quarries from the mid-nineteenth century, and then on the narrow-gauge railways to the ports on the coast, with which the Welsh slate industry will always be associated. Dr Gwyn maintains that the *c*. 0.6m railway gauge (at the time, usually either 2ft 3in or 2ft 6in) was exported for industrial railways built elsewhere in the world. My only quibble with the book is that the otherwise excellent maps of the overland transport systems in Chapter 13 do not really distinguish clearly enough between the roads and railways shown, and it is to be hoped that this might be remedied in any reprinting.

In such a labour-intensive industry, settlement was clearly important. Quite a few quarries built on-site barracks for their workers, but most of them seem to have returned to their homes at night. Interestingly, few of the quarry owners built company villages, unlike, for example, the textile industries of the English Midlands. Dr Gwyn's knowledge of the land-holdings in the area has enabled him to demonstrate how the settlement pattern often reflected the willingness of landowners to release land for building, and many quarrymen occupied houses with smallholdings attached, which can still be seen from the long, narrow plots surrounding their dwellings. Chapels were, of course, a feature of most settlements, as elsewhere in Welsh industrial communities.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Welsh slate—and particularly the slate of Gwynedd, hewn from the great quarries of Dinorwic, Penrhyn and the Oakeley quarries around Blaenau Ffestiniog—dominated the market but the book does not neglect comparisons with other slate-producing areas, not just in Wales but other parts of the United Kingdom, even the small quarries local to this reviewer in Charnwood Forest. Attention is also paid to the transfer of technology between the Welsh quarries and those elsewhere in the world, including France, Germany and the USA, and not just technology but the slates themselves which roofed many buildings worldwide. The final chapter demonstrates the global significance of the industry and the book is a major contribution towards the recognition of the Welsh Slate Industry, now on the UNESCO Tentative List, for World Heritage status.

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Other books received

WHO WERE THE DRUIDS?. By Michael Senior. 123 × 184 mm. 99 pp. 34 illustrations. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, 2015. ISBN 978 1 845242 41 1. Price £6.50.

Dedicated readers of Gwasg Carreg Gwalch's small books will be familiar with Michael Senior's writings. In his latest offering, it is the understated sub-title—*Facts you may have wanted to know about the basic themes of early Welsh history*—that clarifies the broader contents for the reader. He writes not only on the eye-catching 'Druids', but on 'Celts and Saxons', the 'Anglo-Saxon Invasion' and 'Arthurian Themes'. It is evident that the author has but a limited faith in the views of 'acknowledged experts', and in the individual essays he attempts to differentiate facts as presented in early writings from academic theories. Sadly though, some of the archaeological premises that underpin his statements passed into obsolescence several decades ago.