

## Reviews

*After Empire. Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians.* Edited by G. Ausenda. 18 × 25 cm. 317 pp., figs. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995. ISBN 0-85115-634-7. Price: £39.50 hb.

This book's main title, and the picture on the dust-jacket of the mausoleum of Theoderic, suggest an interesting agenda on the reception of the physical and conceptual legacy of Rome by her successor states. The sub-title suggests a rather different, and perhaps over-visited, agenda about the peoples of the successor states. The contents suggest far less of any agenda, and that more directed to the sub-title than to the title. The book publishes the papers of a symposium which drew together archaeologists and historians dealing with the period after the political collapse of the western Roman empire, along with anthropologists interested in relatively non-complex societies. As well as the papers, the discussion of each is printed *in extenso*. This is a largely redundant exercise: severe editing could have preserved the substantive points. It does, though, occasionally illuminate uncomfortably the cloud of unknowing which lies between practitioners of different disciplines.

There are several papers which will be of interest to those who like to keep abreast of the debates concerning Britain in the early post-Roman period, and others which provide a context and comparison. David Dumville externalises more of his internal debate on Gildas, discussing the ways in which Gildas saw the politics and church of his time and the rights, duties and failings of their fornicating rulers and simoniac bishops, demonstrating clearly that Gildas had standards and expectations (sadly fallen short of by everyone else). This discussion involves Gildas' view of non-Briton peoples including the Picts and the Anglo-Saxons. John Hines examines the latter in the context of a wider review of Germanic ethnic self-definition. This, he argues, can be approached partly through archaeologically visible means such as costume or urn decoration, partly through the onomastically visible groupings reflected in the *-ingas* names, continuing the processualist line recently popular as an explanation for the emergence of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms out of smaller groupings. In the discussion Ian Wood makes some telling points about how these peoples may have defined themselves (in the Law Codes) at the time as opposed to our retrospective definitions. Julian Richards goes back to basics in his discussion of early Anglo-Saxon burial practice, with an introduction to post-processualist concern with symbolism as exemplified by urn decoration. Given the cloud of unknowing referred to above, this was probably a useful strategy at the symposium, but it does go over pretty familiar ground.

There are two more purely anthropological contributions. Giorgio Ausenda looks at the nature of segmentary lineages in the anthropological literature and attempts to apply this to the Langobard *fava*, though the discussion contains important cautionary points. David Turton points out that studies of modern East African pastoralists show social structuring, especially by age, which is entirely counter-intuitive (to us); he also emphasizes the active and reflexive roles of ritual and symbolism. Geographically and intellectually it is therefore in many ways of a piece with Ian Hodder's work in Kenya. Clearly such considerations have particular importance for the analysis of funerary material, where archaeologists may come up with retrospective schemes coherent to them but far removed

from what the people themselves thought they were doing. But then we are always constructing stories to satisfy ourselves, stories whose relationship to what went on in the past is uncertain.

A somewhat disparate group of papers examines wider European concerns ranging from urban functions within the former Roman empire, to the dendrochronology of the early Danish kingdom, by way of the linguistic identity and pagan practices of the Germans. Ross Balzaretti's paper on post-Roman urbanism of the Po plain is a very useful introduction for an Anglophone audience, both to some of the salient evidence and to the continuing intellectual debate and traditions within Italian archaeology: a nice comparison and antidote to the evidence from and discourse on Britain. The short paper by Sven Schütte performs a similar service for Cologne. For the other papers, this reviewer must follow Wittgenstein's line of 'that whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must remain silent', though they all look jolly informative.

By now it should be apparent that this is a work whose whole is rather less than the sum of its parts. The parts, the individual papers, are on the whole substantive contributions to the academic debates of which they form part, and will be read with profit by those engaged in those fields. The whole lacks focus and coherence: it tells us a lot about some of the things which were going on After Empire but not much about how being After Empire affected them.

SIMON ESMONDE CLEARY

*Two Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Beckford, Hereford and Worcester.* (C.B.A. Research Report 103.)

By Vera I. Evison and Prue Hill. 22 × 30 cm. xi + 157 pp., 62 figs., 6 pls., 36 tables. York: Council for British Archaeology, 1996. ISBN 1-872414-69-9. Price: £30.00 incl. p. + p. from C.B.A., Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York, YO1 2UA.

The cemeteries in question, excavated in the 1950s, were situated, not in Beckford, but in the neighbouring parish of Conderton. The report, which was finished in 1990 but not published until 1996, is well written and by-and-large very competently illustrated, and in its discussion of the grave-goods and the skeletal evidence it is thorough, balanced and authoritative.

The cemeteries were evidently in contemporary use. The earliest burials in each belonged to the last third of the 5th century and the latest to around the mid 6th. In Cemetery A 24 inhumations were excavated, and in Cemetery B 106 inhumations and four cremations in undecorated pots. Neither was completely uncovered, but the authors suggest that relatively few burials lay beyond the investigated areas. They also argue plausibly that both cemeteries belonged to one community, with the smaller one being used by a closely inbred, segregated group, on the grounds that they lay only c. 550 m apart, and that Cemetery A contained five people with spina bifida, of whom one had leprosy and another one may have done, as too may have a sixth person. (However, as the authors point out, the bones in Cemetery B were too decomposed for any incidence of leprosy to be detectable.)

The grave-goods suggest that the people concerned were poor. There were no swords nor any occurrence of gold or silver. They had access to amber which, uncommonly, was preferred to glass for beads; but in most respects their contacts were narrow, being in the main with the upper Thames valley and, in the latest phase of the cemeteries' use, with SE. England too. Most of the brooches, for example, were of local origin, and the grave-goods in general reveal little contact with the people living further up the Avon valley, whose cemeteries are characterised by strong Anglian cultural traits, let alone with eastern

England beyond; nor, in the authors' view, do the grave-goods or any other aspect of the burials show contact with Britons. The report portrays the 'Beckford' community as an isolated one, living at the very margin of the 6th-century Anglo-Saxon occupation area, with British territory lying only a few miles to the W. across the R. Severn. Their settlement is assumed — doubtless correctly — to have continued into the 7th century, but the decision to abandon the two cemeteries in the middle years of the 6th century is seen as being inexplicable.

Several aspects of this account are unsatisfactory. First, it is most unlikely that the people whom the cemeteries served lived in an otherwise thinly populated or even unoccupied area. The distinction drawn several times between Anglo-Saxons settled around Beckford and Britons living beyond the Severn is a spurious one. It is probable that the entire West Midland part of the Severn-Avon drainage basin was occupied throughout the migration period by descendants of its large Romano-British population, and that it was among these people that incoming Germanic people settled and began to farm. How far or for how long the two ethnic groups kept themselves apart is unknown, but intermarriage is likely. At least 140 burials in the 'Beckford' cemeteries in about 75 years indicate, as the authors note, a large population. Either the dead were all of Germanic stock, brought for burial from many miles around or, it may be surmised, the cemeteries served a substantial proportion of an increasingly mixed population in the Beckford area itself.

The latter explanation might well account for their abandonment in the mid 6th century. Whether or not the five W.-E. graves in Cemetery A held Christians, the influence of organised British Christianity in the West Midlands is the only credible explanation of the cessation of accompanied burial which occurred throughout the region in the late 6th century. Conderton, in which the cemeteries lay, formed part of an area (of known extent) served later by the minster church at Beckford. A district of that size could have seen 140 or more deaths in three-quarters of a century among the element of its population who practised Germanic mortuary rites. When the influence of Christianity grew, the cemeteries would have fallen out of use, as happened elsewhere in the Avon valley at the same period.

Another problem is with the authors' dismissal of *Cantwara-tun*, 'farmstead of the men of Kent', as the derivation of Conderton's Old English name. This widely accepted etymology should not have been rejected because (as the authors argue) the grave-goods which showed contact with Kent were very few and late. A name of this sort very probably belongs to a relatively late stage of name-forming in the Beckford area. The Kentish element in its population may only recently have arrived when the cemeteries were going out of use.

Finally, it is hard to feel confidence in the authors' argument that there was a prehistoric round barrow in each cemetery, with all the burials in Cemetery A dug into one and 42 of those in B dug into another. A comparison of the relative depths of all inhumations on each site conspicuously fails to corroborate the notion. Instead, we may note that a high percentage of the graves in both cemeteries lay on or close to the alignment of the predominant pattern of local roads and field boundaries — a pattern which, demonstrably, already existed by the late Anglo-Saxon period and may well be much earlier. It is likely, then, that the burials were made in a couple of unused fields on the modern alignment, with most graves being dug more or less parallel to their boundaries.

*England's Earliest Sculptors.* (Publications of the Dictionary of Old English 5.) By Richard N. Bailey. 15 × 23 cm. xx + 155, inc. 69 figs., plus 41 pls. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1996. ISBN 0-88844-905-4. Price: \$59.50 hb.

*Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture. Vol. IV: South-East England.* By Dominic Tweddle, Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle. 23 × 29 cm. 575 pp., 43 figs., 7 tables. Oxford: Oxford University Press, for The British Academy, 1995. ISBN 0-19-726129-9. Price: £95.00 hb.

*Grammar of Anglo-Saxon Ornament. A General Introduction to the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture.* By Rosemary Cramp. 22 × 29 cm. li, incl. 28 figs. Oxford: Oxford University Press for British Academy, 1984. Free with Vol. IV.

Professor Bailey has been a leading scholar in Anglo-Saxon sculptural studies — and, indeed, in others — for many years, and the Teetzel Lectures at the University of Toronto gave him a platform from which derives a book that sits a little oddly in a series hitherto concerned with Old English concordances and similar work. The implied spirit of interdisciplinarity is made manifest by Professor John Leyerle's interesting observation in his 'Foreword', that the audience most likely to have appreciated *Beowulf* would have been the patrons of those eclectic sculptures that distinguish parts of the Danelaw in the first generations after its settlement.

No-one whose special subject is Anglo-Saxon sculpture needs to feel embarrassed about its dating difficulties as long as *Beowulf* is around, and Bailey is quite up-beat about the matter, at least in the division between pre and post-900. For him, the stones provide a means for considering the transmission of ideas and the carriage of materials, the liturgies used and the origins of the patrons, the movements of craftworkers and the contexts in which their products are found. Thus the Gosforth cross may have used pagan images to flatter a patron by association with distant heroes, but also provided a Christian conversion text for those who could use its narratives as juxtapositions for New Testament themes. 'Rumination' by sculptures' audiences is an important concept for Bailey; the more they gazed, the more the wonder grew.

Bailey has written on Gosforth before, and it is particularly interesting therefore to read his ideas on southern English work, about which he overlaps with, and draws from, the *Corpus* volume. In this, Tweddle catalogues survivals from a swathe of counties from Oxfordshire to Kent, and from Essex to Hampshire, with Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle contributing the hitherto unpublished excavated Winchester fragments, as well as those like the Sigemund frieze (an interpretation that Bailey also favours) which have become well known. There are also useful contributions from B. C. Worsam on the geology, by H. R. Loyn on the background, and by J. Higgitt on inscriptions. The importance of stone identification as a way of showing the ability of the Saxon economy to move heavy goods over long distances was discussed by the late E. M. Jope, and it is useful to have Worsam's revision of some of his claims, such as that for the use in pre-Conquest London of Coral Rag from the Oxford area. As this is where A. G. Vince considers that most of London's 10th-century pottery came from, it is almost surprising that Oxford-area stone was not taken to the City as well; Bath stone, however, is recognised both there and in Winchester and Canterbury. Did it go down the Avon and all the way round the Cornish peninsula, or was an overland route used? If the latter, it would surely have used the Thames for the London and Canterbury deliveries, so the absence of Oxford-area stone (including Taynton) becomes all the more surprising.

One sculptured stone in Oxford itself is a large slab of Purbeck marble from St Frideswide's, here attributed by Tweddle to the mid 11th century. His references on it do not include an important discussion by J. Blair (*Oxoniensia*, 53 (1988), 266–68), who argued a late 11th/early 12th-century date. Blair quoted a J. C. Buckler note that the pieces of the

slab were found 'among the mason work of the latter part of the 13th century'; Tweddle, citing the same document but a different folio, has the wall as 12th-century! If the evidence of the wall is accepted as not of itself giving good grounds for the earlier date, the decoration alone is left, and here both observers cite parallels attributed to the 11th century; but Blair might be said to have the edge, having noted the 'marginal hollow-chamfers' that seem not otherwise to occur on 11th-century work. Blair also suggested a credible context for this remarkable piece. It might be added that the little head also looks as though it is unparalleled before the 12th century, when slabs with effigies begin to appear.

All this may seem very fine detail, but it is important because it testifies to the first post-Roman working of newly extracted Purbeck Marble — unless that honour belongs to one of the Winchester fragments (*Corpus* No. 85), from the foundations of late 10th-century building work, but perhaps still almost new when used as hard core. This piece is small enough as it survives to be a reused piece of Roman origin, but it is argued to be part of a much larger figure sculpture, which would be even more remarkable for Purbeck Marble, which is a very hard stone to work. Of course it was used later for effigies, but where did the sculptor's experience come from in the 10th century? Because it is described as an 'unusual variety of Purbeck Marble', Professor David Peacock was asked to look at it, and he considers that it is at least as likely to be an imported stone. It is not therefore good evidence of pre-Norman working of the Purbeck vein.

Tweddle wrote an important paper in a book published in 1983, and many of his opinions on dates and parallels were expressed there. He has a lot more of interest to say in the *Corpus* about the Canterbury and Reculver fragments, and Bailey and he agree in seeing early, Merovingian influence in the Sandwich markers. Tweddle is then unlucky in the geographical restrictions imposed by his volume's format, for much of what needs to be said about sculpture in Hampshire and Berkshire involves Wiltshire and the West, while the Bedfordshire work needs consideration in relation to the rest of Mercia, areas over which Bailey can roam freely. Both authors, I was glad to read, dismiss the possibility of Jellinge influence upon the Ramsbury and other shafts, which the late F. Cottrill was clearly correct to see as a late 8th/9th-century group. Both also treat Winchester as an important 10th-century centre of influence; Tweddle was probably writing before certain key manuscripts such as the so-called Athelstan Psalter were re-attributed by S. Keynes and D. Dumville, and Bailey talks more guardedly about important work in southern England generally, but even he claims that we 'know' that the Cuthbert Stole and Maniple were produced in Winchester, and that the great Crucifixions 'cluster around the city', which is hardly true of Langford and Bitton, both 50 or more miles away (as is Bibury, which should be included if the late H. M. and J. Taylor were correct to see vestiges of figures above the chancel arch there). E. Coatsworth has suggested that it may be more appropriate to think in terms of dioceses for some of the works of this sort.

Neither Bailey nor Tweddle discuss the recently excavated fragments from Romsey Abbey, Hampshire, a small number but important to anyone trying to assert Winchester's importance, as the two are only ten miles apart. They have now been published in the excavation monograph by I. R. Scott, where their inclusion in the then-forthcoming *Corpus* is alluded to, but in the event they are absent from it. The largest fragment, said in the excavation report to be Bembridge limestone, has a Line Pattern border (Professor Cramp's valuable classification is supplied free with the *Corpus*) of bead-and-lozenge, a type not otherwise represented in SE. England, nor anywhere else so far as I can discover except on the Strickland Brooch; and if that seems a far-fetched analogy, place its animal masks alongside Bailey's drawing of the Rowberrow cross-shaft (Fig. 9c). Is the Romsey piece late 9th/early 10th-century, carved when Edward the Elder founded a *monasterium* there? The leaf pattern in the main field is difficult to make sense of, but it hints at an acanthus leaf

and a long, curled stem not 100 imaginary miles from the Alfred Jewel. Although the border has no Winchester parallel, it is worth noting that there is a quantity from the excavations there of stones with other classicizing Line Patterns. They, however, tend to be Bath-area stone.

The second Romsey fragment is more immediately placed in a local context, probably 10th- or 11th-century. It is a piece of cable moulding in Greensand; there are several examples in Bath-area stone from the Winchester excavations, but one of the three at Breamore in Hampshire is identified by Worssam as Greensand, two of Bath — evidence that masons worked locally, not just at the quarries, to get the right match. The third 'new' Romsey piece is a Bath-area stone, as is the great Rood now set outside the S. transept. What these pieces show, therefore, is that the eclectic use of different stones at Winchester was not unique to it, and that even second-rating churches had a range of supply sources.

Sculpture impinges on a variety of different topics, art history, liturgies, distribution and patronage among them. Bailey provides a stimulating overview, while the data are supplied by contributors to the *Corpus*. Both contributions are welcome, though testing the latter by the Romsey pieces showed its layout and numbering system to be far from user-friendly.

DAVID A. HINTON

*Freswick Links, Caithness. Excavation and Survey of a Norse Settlement.* (North Atlantic Biocultural Organisation Monograph 1; Highland Archaeology Monograph 1.) By Christopher D. Morris, Colleen E. Batey and D. James Rackham. 22 × 31 cm. xxix + 295 pp., 167 figs. (plus 87 in fiches), 78 pls., 82 tables (plus 281 in fiches), 8 fiches. Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing with Historic Scotland and Highland Libraries. ISBN 1-874253-01-3. Price: £40.00 hb.

This book concerns the methodology of excavating and interpreting sand midden sites. Such middens have always been especially attractive to environmental archaeologists. In the first instance, the nature of the evidence can usually be seen before excavation commences in the form of talus of bone and shell, and secondly, the calcareous nature of the sand is especially suitable for the preservation of bone. These sites are especially important in Scotland as the acidic peaty soil that covers most of the mainland and islands does not allow for the preservation of such material.

Sand dune sites have also the potential to preserve archaeological deposits which cannot be easily identified elsewhere. Whole field surfaces, often with plough marks, can survive. It is so easy to identify natural, windblown sand and old turf lines that all other features, be they a few scattered stones or an area of heavily humified sand, are most likely to be due to human activity. Freswick Links, in Caithness, has long been known as a site of great archaeological importance. Along with the stray finds that are continually being eroded from the sand cliff face, a large number of buildings have also been uncovered. Excavations since the end of the last century have uncovered a brooch, several Norse houses and most recently, investigations were undertaken at the late medieval Freswick Castle.

Unsurprisingly, little attention was paid to the environmental evidence in the case of the earlier investigations. The aim of the present project was to devise an excavation strategy that would optimize the retrieval of environmental material. The excavation was preceded by intensive surveying of the dunes and coring of nearby peat deposits for pollen analytical investigations. A series of sections along the eroding cliff face were cleaned and recorded. An adjacent area was then horizontally excavated and environmental sample columns were then taken, usually from between the cliff face and the open excavation.

Recording was meticulous and it is clear throughout that the over-riding aim of the project was to secure a comprehensive set of samples from the site, and also to ensure that the integrity of each sample could be guaranteed. The outcome is admirable but in some aspects unsatisfactory, though not due to the efforts of the many writers whose work is contained in the published report. The nature of the evidence is often such that no matter how much one measures it, or describes it, it still fails to give up its secrets. Hundreds of layers and features are recorded and presented in scores of plans, sections and correlation matrices, while a further 368 figures and tables are to be found in microfiches. The hundred pages dealing with the excavation while exemplary in their detail are, unfortunately, almost unreadable. They are, however, essential for the monitoring and presentation of the sampling processes used for the environmental aspects of the project.

Such an excavation strategy will provide much information about soil accumulation processes but will often disappoint when it comes to the uncovering of coherent archaeological features. This method of excavation simply does not allow for the opening of large areas. In addition to midden deposits the archaeological features were confined to short sections of gullies, linear stone settings of unknown function, along with pits and extensive areas of cultivation marks. The advantage of the overall approach was that these features could be for the most part securely dated, and most of the features were of Pictish or Norse date.

The main value of this volume lies in some of the environmental reports. The small size of the mammal bone samples meant that they were of limited value as far as the reconstruction of early livestock strategies were concerned, but the results were comparable with similarly dated assemblages in northern Scotland. The reports on the carbonized seed, bird bone, eggshell and fish remains are especially useful. It was clear that fish were the main source of animal protein on the site and Andrew Jones' report is a major contribution to this field of study. Indeed the detailed way in which environmental information is discussed and presented contrasts very positively with the abbreviated way in which such data has been presented in some recently published Scottish excavation reports.

The analysis of the material allowed the identification of different site types defined on the basis of the depositional processes that accounted for their accumulation. These include dump areas from houses, fish processing to areas cultivation areas where cultural material had become incorporated due to maturing. The authors state that the object of the excavations was to 'maximise the retrieval of ecofactual, as opposed to artefactual material'. With the exception of large animal bones, they have generally been successful in this aim. The sand dunes at Freswick, with their rich archaeological content, have been eroding at a rate of 2.5 m. since the 1940s. The methods of excavation developed for the present project are suitable only for smaller areas of horizontal investigation. A more extensive strategy of excavation will have to be undertaken if the material culture and livestock economy of the Pictish and Norse settlers are to be understood before the site is destroyed.

This is an important book. Coastal erosion is one of the principal threats to archaeological sites in Scotland and in most cases it is virtually impossible to curtail, at least in the long term. Methods have to be developed to excavate these sites in an efficient way. Appropriate ways must also be devised in order to retrieve the different types of archaeological information that these sites contain. This volume shows how some of this information can be retrieved.

*Lewes Priory. Excavations by Richard Lewis 1969-82.* By Malcolm Lyne. 21 × 30 cm. viii + 19 pp., 32 figs., 3 pls., 22 tables. Lewes: Lewes Priory Trust, 1997. ISBN 0-9530839-0-X. Price: not stated, pb.

*The Church and Gilbertine Priory of St Andrew, Fishergate.* (The Archaeology of York 11/2.) By Richard L. Kemp with C. Pamela Graves. 19 × 25 cm. 299 pp., 141 figs. (incl. 9 in folder), 4 tables, 1 microfiche. York: Council for British Archaeology, 1996. ISBN 1-872414-60-5. Price: £38.00 pb. incl. p. + p. from C. B. A., Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York, YO1 2UA.

*Further Excavations at the Dominican Priory, Beverley, 1986-1989.* (Sheffield Excavation Reports 4.) By Martin Foreman. 22 × 31 cm. xiv + 300 pp., 91 figs., 17 pls., 38 tables, 3 fiches. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996. ISBN 1-85075-513-2. Price: £45.00 hb.

The last two years have seen the publication of three important monographs on monastic excavations. While all three reports are different in terms of site type, excavation strategy and the presentation of data, they nevertheless make very substantial contributions to our knowledge of medieval monasticism. They also raise general issues of approach and interpretation.

*Lewes Priory* (Lewes was England's first Cluniac foundation) covers the excavations undertaken by Richard Lewis between 1969 and 1982 in areas first investigated by St John Hope. Post-excavation research was undertaken by Malcolm Lyne. Large parts of the infirmary chapel, to the S. of the mid 12th-century great church, and the two (sequential) reredorters were excavated. The infirmary chapel sequence begins with a cemetery, followed by the construction of a square stone building, with a ritual shaft, interpreted as the church of a late Saxon monastery. (The apsidal chapel ('sacristy') which was incorporated into the S. part of the great church's chevet, is interpreted as a crypt contemporary with that monastery). The Saxon church was extended when it became the first Cluniac church, and two of the ten associated graves are interpreted as those of the founder, William de Warenne, and his wife. This building was replaced by a larger and more pretentious structure, the infirmary chapel, which may have been in part contemporary with the construction programme of the great church.

The first, later 11th/early 12th-century, two-storey reredorter was sited on the shoreline of the Ouse estuary. After some reclamation, in the later 12th or early 13th centuries, a new reredorter was built some 30 m to the S., along with an extended dormitory. A masons lodge was also located. The details of the water systems alone justified the work. There was little sign of later medieval activity other than attempts to stabilise the structures. The second block was turned into an industrial building (?malthouse) after the Dissolution.

Despite the fact that the recovery of the high medieval sequence was given a lower priority than that of the Anglian period on the rescue excavations at Fishergate, York, the result gives us the best archaeological information so far about a Gilbertine foundation. The site is already well known from the report on the cemeteries. The evidence for suburban occupation from the 10th and 11th centuries included a cemetery and a possible timber church, replaced by one in stone (as yet unlocated), probably St Andrews, which was standing when the site was acquired by the Gilbertines in 1195. The excavation of the N. and E. cloister ranges, to the N. of the aisle-less church, showed that the building programme extended over most of the 13th century. A major reconstruction occurred in the mid 14th century when the church was rebuilt to a smaller and more compact, but fairly pretentious, design; the E. and N. ranges were also altered. Such a major change, it is argued, occurred because the priory secured the patronage of Henry Burghersh, a prebendary of York and Bishop of Lincoln who also held office as Treasurer and Chancellor of England. The N. range may have become his York residence. The cloister ranges were

further altered in the later 14th to 16th centuries, but it is clear that this was a period of reduced activity. With the Dissolution, the buildings were extensively robbed, but the different character of the rubbish deposits may argue that the (lost) W. range and part of the northern block were retained as a residence. While this monograph follows the York fascicule format, it does include important reports on the stone and ceramic tiles, with extensive sections on architectural evidence, setting it in the context of other Gilbertine houses, the other monastic institutions in York and the county.

The second monograph on the Dominican Priory at Beverley, with the other reports of excavations in the southern part of the town, gives us one of the best pictures of a monastery in its urban setting. This report presents the results of the extensive excavation of the little cloister in combination with the non-destructive excavation (which in some cases entailed the reopening of old trenches) over parts of the church and E. side of the main cloister. An important chapter reconsiders all the work done on the priory, and relates the priory sequence to the development of the suburban area and of Beverley in general. The priory was founded in 1221 and was sited in a truly marginal suburban area. Nevertheless it was close to the minster and may have benefited from the pilgrimage traffic. Three main building phases were identified. The church and great cloister with timber buildings to the N. were constructed in *c.* 1240–75; the early 14th century saw the building of the little cloister over the timber buildings. Only three ranges were built, in an eccentric arrangement. In the later 14th century the little cloister was renovated, and at about the same time the N. range of the great cloister was rebuilt.

In all cases the authors have difficulty in presenting a coherent sequence from widely spaced trenches, but this is not helped by confusing illustrations reproduced at inappropriate scales, and repetitious texts. In some cases the problem could have been avoided by a clearer discussion of the basis of the dating. This is particularly the case with a fascicule publication where the dating is summarized but rarely discussed, and potential difficulties only surface in specialist reports which are impossible to check (p. 299). Greater integration of finds or specialist reports with the main text is clearly called for, and this is most obvious in the Lewes volume. Here one interpretation (usually the earliest possible) is advanced to the exclusion of alternatives which are raised by specialists. For example, the molluscan report shows that snails from the authors ritual shaft in the Saxon church were open grassland species, which suggests the shaft could not have been in 'an enclosed building' (p. 167). We only discover from another specialist report that the 'sacristy', claimed in the main text as a Saxon crypt, has previously been interpreted as the 11th-century chapter house (p. 126). The occurrence of polychrome wall painting at Lewes (in the 1090s) some 40 or more years earlier than its first use at Canterbury may also point to an over-reliance on the documentary evidence for dating.

The two urban reports — Beverley and York — are remarkable for providing detail of domestic occupation in the claustral range; they also point to common problems encountered when working on urban monastic sites. First, of course, is the displacement caused by extensive robbing and the reliance for structural dating on stonework remaining in foundation trenches. At both sites, however, it was possible to show the interrupted nature of the construction sequence of the cloister (and changes in plan), extending over 40 years, and also a progressive diminution in building quality. Most of the finds came from destruction debris, and while both reports assume that the location of the finds reflects their *in situ* position, this problem is not discussed or tested, although the distribution (for example) of floor tiles from Fishergate points in that direction. The late medieval sequences show the trend to more private accommodation, but the comparative lack of evidence for the 15th century and beyond is notable. The lack of late medieval material is related either to reduced activity or increased cleanliness. However, the 14th-century change in use of the N. claustral ranges in particular, which on both sites is related to

secular occupation rather than monastic, is clearly an important development. Both authors realize the difficulty in distinguishing between secular and monastic use, and this is clearly a task for the future, as is the problem of explaining the other apparent changes of function within the claustral ranges. While there is much in common in the archaeological sequences, it is noticeable that some of the attributes of the architectural or archaeological evidence are related to the characteristics of that particular order. Much is made of the relationship between the Cistercians and the Gilbertines to explain architectural form, while the employment of much reused and poor-quality building material is regarded as a reflection of Beverley priory's mendicant status. Reuse, particularly of the grisaille glass from both sites, is notable, but is invariably discussed in purely functionalist terms, as a way of reducing costs, whereas the possibility that the communities may have specifically wanted to retain the earliest glass for other, possibly symbolic, reasons should have been considered.

All three reports provide much new information about their particular monastic orders, but perhaps more importantly they also indicate the ways in which we may have to rethink how we approach the excavation and publication of monastic excavations.

GRENVILLE ASTILL

*Romsey Abbey. Report on the Excavations 1973-1991.* (Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society Monograph 8.) By Ian R. Scott. 21 x 30 cm. 165 pp., 66 figs., 23 pls. 17 tables. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd for Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society and Test Valley Archaeological Trust, 1996. ISBN 0-907473-09-1. Price: £15.00 pb.

Romsey Abbey is undoubtedly one of the most important monastic sites in Hampshire, especially as the medieval abbey church survives virtually intact over the remains of its late Saxon predecessor. Not surprisingly the abbey has been the subject of considerable antiquarian and archaeological interest since the early 19th century, and from the 1970s onwards there has been a considerable number of archaeological investigations in and around the precinct. These have mostly been modest in scale.

The author rightly makes no attempt to hide the problems encountered in bringing this report to fruition (namely some very poor archives from the 1970s), but instead confronts the issue in the introductory chapter. The aims of the publication — to render the excavation results accessible and usable — are clearly stated, and the report asks the reader to decide 'how successful the volume is in achieving its aims' (p. 5). Given the scale of the problems detailed in the Appendix (which lists the projects and the state of their records) the report is a remarkable success.

The introductory chapter is followed by a further seven which describe the stratigraphic sequences from the excavations and, where relevant, information available in the surviving superstructure of the abbey itself. Chapter 9 summarises the finds record from the projects, while Chapters 10 and 11 go into considerable detail regarding the floor tiles and human skeletal material respectively. The original intention to publish the other finds more fully was abandoned towards the end of the analysis because of the paucity both of the material and much of the associated contextual information. A brief summary and conclusions follow in Chapter 12, which is followed by the aforementioned Appendix. The report is comprehensively illustrated.

Seven phases pre-dating the late Saxon abbey are defined (though some divisions are necessarily very subjective). The presence of burials and apparently substantial structures in Phases 5-7 indicates ecclesiastical activity before Phase 8, which belongs to the Saxon

abbey itself. Phases 9 to 16 relate to the medieval abbey (and the parish church within it), while Phase 17 covers the Dissolution and its immediate aftermath. As already noted the later phases incorporate much information from the extant buildings. At all times the description is clear and lucid, and the interpretations are mostly well supported by the available evidence. Indeed a great deal of subtlety is evident in the argument, especially regarding the transition between the late Saxon and the early Norman abbeys (e.g. p. 46).

Occasional lapses in editorial control are evident. A few internal cross-references have not been inserted (e.g. p. 16), some words are missing, and text and figures do not always agree (e.g. context 2043 is described as a layer truncated by cut 2210 on p. 52, but is shown as a fill of 2210 on Fig. 6c). The key to the drawings is not listed as a figure, and only appears on p. 158, virtually at the end of the report. The separation of Chapter 1 and the Appendix leads to some repetition, while the Appendix is essential to comprehension of the post-excavation problems. I would have incorporated it into Chapter 1. Chapter 12 is also repetitive of much which has gone before and could have been omitted. This might have prevented the need to print thirteen blank sides of paper at the end of the volume — useful for making notes but an unnecessary waste, especially as there are blank pages between several chapters as well.

Editorial concerns aside, the report is of high quality and will undoubtedly be of lasting value to students not only of Romsey Abbey but also of monastic archaeology in general. It is scarcely the fault of the author if parts of the report read like a 'how not to' guide to archaeology, and I am full of admiration for the skill with which so much has been teased out of these excavations. It is perhaps disappointing, but certainly not surprising, that the report rarely raises its sights much beyond Romsey itself (the tile report excepted), but there is much here of lasting value to monastic research.

GRAHAM D. KEEVILL

*Fortificaciones y Feudalismo.* By José Avelino Gutiérrez González. 17 × 25 cm. 460 pp., 105 figs. and pls., tables. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1995. ISBN 84-7762-462-3. Price: not stated, pb.

*From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle. Social and cultural change in medieval Spain.* By Thomas F. Glick. 16 × 24 cm. xxi + 201 pp., 10 figs., 2 tables. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995. ISBN 0-7190-3348-9 hb.; 0-7190-3349-7 pb. Price: £45.00 hb.; £16.99 pb.

The first of these two volumes is a published doctoral thesis about fortifications in the kingdom of Leon between the 9th and the 13th centuries. About half the volume is an S.M.R.-style catalogue of 39 hillforts (mostly reoccupied late prehistoric sites), sixteen motte and baileys, four ringworks, 37 castles, and 26 walled settlements, giving information on their location, class, state of preservation, aspect and any related archaeological or historical data with some plans and photographs. Three of these monuments have been partially excavated by the author, notably Valencia de Don Juan. This, in itself, makes an extremely useful guide to the sites for the touring Hispanophile, but those with more serious intentions will find much to interest them in the first half of the book which explains the classification of terms adopted, describes locations and details the various methods of construction from earthworks and cob (*tapial*) to stone and brick. A strong historical section links these fortifications to the imposition of feudalism in the North of Spain, though reference between the sections is greatly impeded by the lack of an index.

The castle at Ponferrada lies within the study area of this first volume but graces the blue-tinted cover of the second under review here. This is perhaps unfortunate since

Glick's real intention is to discuss not the architecture of castles but the evolution of the landscape and castles as a social phenomenon. This he does with a frothy style which is both discursive and provocative. The result is a twinkling emporium of facts and ideas, full of the first person singular and not-so-thinly veiled academic jousting which will infuriate some and delight others.

In his analysis of the first of three landscape transitions, Glick follows the settlement models of Pierre Guichard and other French scholars at the Casa de Velazquez (Madrid) in describing 8th- and 9th-century Islamic rural complexes (the *hisn/qarya*) as serving a myriad of central place functions and often comprising a cluster of monuments such as a mosque, fortress complete with tax collector (*qa'id*) and a refuge with cistern with one or more dependent dispersed hamlets (*alquerias*). Fortresses therefore cluster where population was at its densest, not simply along frontiers, and perform as centres of social organisation within one or more evenly spaced *c.* 85 ha. territories. More work is needed on the origin, ethnicity, place-name evidence and the agricultural organisation of this framework (the role of private estates, *rahals*, for example) and Glick is at pains to point out that there is more than one interpretation available, especially since the archaeological documentation on the relationship between fortified sites and the settlements and the irrigation systems around them is so poor. Nevertheless, many of the debates here, on the significance of place-names, ethnicity, the role of central places, the archaeological nature of settlement and housing, the difficulties of mapping territories, artefact study and the question of continuity will strike a chord with students of early medieval landscape studies. Other concepts may be unfamiliar, such as the study of irrigation systems on which Glick has previously written widely, and these undoubtedly require further and calmer explanation, just as the reader who is unfamiliar with some of the physical and political geography of Spain may feel shut out by the lack of maps.

The second transition under scrutiny is the spatial reorganisation around castles and churches which accompanied the rise of feudalism and the administration of estates in Christian Spain. The similarity in the process of *incastellamento* between Christian and Islamic cultures raises all sorts of questions about the definition, diffusion and chronology of *incastellamento* in Italy, Spain and throughout Europe. These are complex issues, and it is already obvious that the process continued at different rates and for different motives, some driven by internal social and economic forces, others by external pressures from church and state.

Glick's final transition is that from Islamic to Christian models of landholding between the 11th and 16th centuries in the wake of the Reconquest. Here he makes use of the remarkable *Libros de Repartimiento*, the registration of landholdings on conquered lands, to explain how the Islamic *hisn/qarya* complexes were transformed into seignorial castles and settlement patterns reorganised but irrigation systems were mostly kept intact. Much of the shape of the Muslim landscape was preserved but made to serve different concepts of land use.

This volume is a case study in how different cultures will organise the same space differently, depending upon their perceptions of the environment and production. At times eclectic and rushed, this stimulating book is nevertheless a welcome attempt to catch the moment, think more widely with an open theoretical stance and write an overview of recent Spanish landscape studies, much of it 'virtually unnoticed in recent English literature'. One hopes that Spanish medieval archaeology is sufficiently invigorated to pursue some of its themes.

*Dover Castle*. By Jonathan Coad. 19 × 25 cm. 128 pp., 84 figs. and pls. (incl. 13 colour pls.). London: Batsford/English Heritage, 1995. ISBN 0-7134-7289-8. Price: £15.99 pb.

*Stirling Castle*. By Richard Fawcett. 19 × 25 cm. 128 pp., 115 figs. and pls. (incl. 15 colour pls.). London: Batsford/Historic Scotland, 1995. ISBN 0-7134-7623-0. Price: £15.99 pb.

*Edinburgh Castle*. By Ian macro. 19 × 25 cm. 143 pp., 126 figs. and pls. (incl. 14 colour pls.). London: Batsford/Historic Scotland, 1993. ISBN 0-7134-7295-2. Price: £15.99 pb.

The three volumes reviewed here are part of a co-operative series with B. T. Batsford which has had richly deserved success. Sadly, Batsford's archaeological responsibilities have recently come to end, although, happily, their archaeological works have been taken over by another publisher. The joint publications (as well as Batsford's many other archaeology books) have conspicuously succeeded at what is often talked about almost as a cliché — simultaneously meeting the requirements of professional and amateur, scholar and layman alike. The series has combined up-to-date research with readability, accessibility to a wide audience, attractive presentation and (increasingly important) affordability. In a culture which places more and more emphasis on electronic storage and communication of data, items such as these are also a useful reminder of the artefactual value of real books. They are a pleasure to handle, easy on the eye and profusely illustrated to a high quality (with some photographs in colour). In many cases the Batsford treatment of a subject, whether period, place, theme or specific site, is the only modern account of its subject matter.

These three volumes (one with English Heritage, two with Historic Scotland) cover very famous medieval castles — Dover, Edinburgh and Stirling — but have much more to offer than accounts of the medieval period. All three sites had, in varying degrees, important phases of pre-castle and post-castle history. Dover's Iron Age origins remain speculative, but its late Saxon church and cemetery indicate permanent occupation. We are offered the interesting hypothesis that the Norman castle was a motte with two baileys (as at Windsor), the motte presumed destroyed in the numerous later operations and the baileys coinciding with Henry II's inner bailey and the 13th-century works around the earlier church. We are given a lucid account of the development of the Angevin castle — 'the key to England' — with its great square tower looking stylistically to the 12th-century keeps and its perimeter defences to styles soon to be widely exploited in the 13th century. We are reminded that the French siege of 1216–17 (after which the outer defences were completed) was resisted by only 140 knights and a (presumably larger) number of men-at-arms. The well-documented guard arrangements for this castle reveal a likely peace-time unit of a mere fifteen knights (plus others). Personal service was commuted to money payment after 1216 so that mercenaries could be permanently employed. The later 13th-century 'statutes' (produced by a long-serving and conscientious constable) give us a rare glimpse of many daily details of castle organisation. From the 15th to 18th centuries, Dover's military role declined. But from the 1740s (war with France and Spain) to World War II its value was again critical. Though the details of this modern period are beyond the scope of this journal's coverage, it must be acknowledged that the continuing evolution of the site in these centuries contributed much to Dover Castle as we know it.

Stirling and Edinburgh Castles have some topographical similarity: both are on volcanic outcrops and both evolved as great defended courtyards with ranges of domestic buildings. There was no equivalent of Dover's keep here, though the late 14th-century David's Tower at Edinburgh was a formidable defended house. Both were principal royal residences by c. 1100 and both had associations with major events — particularly the English war either side of 1300, the manoeuvres of later medieval Scottish domestic politics, Anglo-Scottish relations in the 16th century, the Civil War of the 1640s and so on.

Indeed the reader of these two volumes learns not a little about Scottish history and the overall setting of historical context is well covered. Both sites also had a prehistory. That at Edinburgh, in the later prehistoric and early historic period, has been partially revealed through excavation. But at Stirling we have to struggle with historical allusions which are difficult to pin down. The castles emerge into history soon after 1100. Both were royal properties, important residences of the dynasty which feudalised parts of Scotland and both attracted burghs in the 12th century. But virtually nothing remains, at either place, of the early castles — only St Margaret's Chapel at Edinburgh. It is striking, indeed, that despite the medieval defences, buildings and building works known from written sources there is almost nothing at all surviving above ground before the middle of the 15th century, when James I's great chamber was built at Edinburgh (and later incorporated in the palace range). At Stirling, it is James III's work, at the very end of the century, which starts our real appreciation of the architectural development, and at Edinburgh (which was by now Scotland's capital) it is the work of James IV (d. 1513). By the time we have a view, we are on the eve of their transformation into something different — palaces of the Renaissance. Both were transformed into great courtyard palaces whose planning and architecture were in the mainstream of European development (though Edinburgh's great hall had a hammer-beam roof of possibly English inspiration). We can see the transformation, now, better at Stirling because it suffered fewer later changes than Edinburgh. At the same time, political exigency meant that defences could not be ignored: Stirling's perimeter had artillery works in the modern Italian style by the mid 16th century, and Edinburgh's was also updated (including, after the English siege of 1573, an old-fashioned *lunette* bastion where an angled one would not work). From the later 17th century both were increasingly military in function, headquarters of garrisons rather than great houses. Edinburgh had, in any case, lost much of its residential function to Holyrood Palace since the 16th century. Edinburgh was besieged in 1640 and 1650 and Stirling was briefly invested by Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1746, the last siege of a British castle.

The authors are to be congratulated on presenting such lucid accounts of these important places. In giving full attention to their overall life-span they have also contributed, indirectly, to the on-going discussion about what castles actually were. These 'castles' were for a time the traditional medieval synthesis of high-status residence and defended place, created by kings who were either outsiders (in England) or intent upon major internal political change (in Scotland). But they grew out of earlier, indigenous origins (of varying character) and they had post-medieval phases of use which were no less important than their medieval use — at Stirling and Edinburgh major royal palaces followed by military roles to the 18th century, at Dover a revival of military value in the 18th century which survived within living memory. At the end of the day, this continuity and longevity of value, albeit within changing needs, speak perhaps more eloquently than do the often navel-gazing musings of castellologists on the subject of castle definitions.

It is ungracious to finish on a quibble, but it is a valid one. None of these volumes presents the reader with a map showing the general location and landscape context of the places in question. Overseas readers (and maybe some British ones?) are left completely in the dark!

BOB HIGHAM

*l Palatino Nel Medioevo. Archeologia e Topografia (Secoli VI–XIII).* By Andrea Augenti. 22 × 29 cm. 209 pp., figs., pls., tables. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1996. ISBN 88-7062-932-5. Price: not stated, hb.

*La Storia Economica di Roma nell'Alto Medioevo alla Luce dei Recenti Scavi Archeologici.* (Biblioteca di Archeologia Medievale 10.) Edited by L. Paroli and P. Delogu. 21 × 29 cm. 368 pp., many figs. and pls. Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio, 1993. ISBN 88-7814-025-2. Price: L90,000 pb.

The city of Rome has always been a central focus for understanding the ancient world, the nature and power of classical art and architecture, and the power of the emperors. Rome also provides an essential focus for late antique and early medieval art and learning, with its fine ecclesiastical survivals. Yet whereas for classical (or properly 'Roman') Rome we have a fairly full knowledge of the population, in terms of its housing, its material needs and food supplies, drawn from both written and archaeological sources, for too long there has been little concrete evidence available for assessing accurately the character of the 'Dark Age' population: how extensive was this, what form did its housing take, what was its material culture, and how far did 'classical' Rome persist in terms of its streets, amenities, functions? Archaeology, until relatively recently, was not adequately geared to coping with such questions and accordingly too many vague assumptions or presumptions have tended to permeate the literature with too strong an emphasis on the Church and its architecture. Krautheimer's wide-ranging survey in 1980 (*Rome. Profile of a City, 312–1308*) offered by far the best of these studies, a magisterial analysis of the impact and role of the Church on the fabric of Rome. He duly admitted deficiencies in the source material but stressed how, despite the words and works of the popes, Rome was a city undergoing dramatic transformations in the post-Roman period; he particularly emphasised the emergence of the *disabitato*, the zones of abandonment or open space created by the effects of war, plague and thus depopulation, lending Rome a semi-ruralised image which persisted through into post-industrial times. The slimmer volume by Ward-Perkins (*From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy, A.D. 300–850*, Oxford, 1984) broadened the discussion significantly, but used Rome as just one of many examples.

Systematic urban excavations have been undertaken in northern cities in the last decades, notably at Brescia, Milan and Verona, prompting lively debate on the quality of town life after Rome and especially on levels of decay and abandonment, attempting to determine how far these changes had roots in the late Roman epoch, the role of the Germanic incomers, and the causes of the process of revival from the 8th century (see C. La Rocca, 'Public buildings and urban change in northern Italy in the early medieval period', in J. Rich (ed.), *The City in Late Antiquity*, 1992, 161–180). These northern centres have all suffered through continuous medieval and modern growth, thereby creating problems in accessing the complex but fragile early medieval layers, but Rome has suffered more, not just through population expansion, but through the destructive tendencies of earlier excavators who have cleared back vast zones of the ancient city centre to its antique levels, to the detriment of the later levels. The two volumes under review here show how modern archaeologists are now able to start piecing together a first picture of this partly lost, post-antique Rome. Augenti examines a vital zone in the map of the old imperial capital, namely the Palatine hill, whilst the Paroli and Delogu volume offers a wider-ranging collection of papers extending also into Rome's hinterland.

Augenti's well-written and fully illustrated volume is an important uncovering and re-examination of an array of scattered and poorly studied information relating to the former seat of imperial power, the Palatine. Vast medieval and pre-modern deposits were destroyed in the clearance excavations of 1860–1937, leaving the hill, like the adjoining

Forum, an open-air late Republic/early Imperial museum, with the churches alone as guides to any semblance of occupational or monumental continuity. Recent systematic excavations have at least begun to redress this imbalance, as witnessed above all in the discovery of an official complex of the Carolingian period over a newly examined portion of the Forum of Nerva. In true detective fashion Augenti combines old Soprintendenza archive materials, excavation notebooks, stray finds, documentary data, and cartographic and iconographic materials with results from recent archaeology to piece together, in wholly lucid and convincing discussion, the early medieval Palatine.

Unexpectedly, Augenti reveals a decisive decline only from the 13th–14th centuries. Before this, as set out in Chapters 2–5, we observe the structural reflections of changing powers in the City: from Ostrogoths to Byzantines and popes; from Charlemagne's influence to German imperial overseeing; and to ownership and militarisation by a medieval aristocratic family, the Frangipani. Each in their way utilised the Palatine as a symbolic focus to legitimise their authority (p. 116): hence, for example, the Ostrogothic king Theoderic resided in the old *Domus Augustanus* and supplemented this with an adjoining private mini-circus (pp. 17–18, 155–162) — both acts reinforcing his 'Roman-ness' and royalty. Six centuries later, after a gradual intrusion of houses and gardens and orchards and a robbing of monuments, the Frangipani claimed the prime share of ownership, expressing this through fortification works, notably towers and fortlets on the roads, partly reusing ancient walls as defences (pp. 89–102, 107–110).

Alongside such displays of power, the Palatine and Forum zones witnessed a progressive Christianisation of space — oratories, churches and monasteries (pp. 119–21) — suggesting congregations still to tend them; and yet Augenti simultaneously makes clear the equally progressive decay, collapse and robbing of other monuments as well as the unexpected intrusion of burials (NB. pp. 29–37). Continuity and decay hence go hand-in-hand.

How far can this duality be extended for the rest of the City after Rome? The Paroli and Delogu volume provides valuable contributions on this issue. This too is a well-produced publication (in keeping with the *Biblioteca di Archeologia Medievale* series), fully illustrated, with papers in Italian and English which focus on the period of the 5th–9th centuries; of the seventeen contributions, however, only six specifically consider Rome itself, with the majority concerned with the ports and the countryside — although obviously economic issues always take us beyond the urban confines.

One of the best published recent urban excavations in Rome is that at the Crypta Balbi, producing a wealth of dumped material whose study has transformed our understanding of trade and production from the 5th century onwards, providing relatively secure dating for many ceramic and glass goods (see papers by Patterson, pp. 309–31 and Sagui, pp. 113–136 respectively). Significantly, the finds quantitatively reflect much wider trends within the city: in terms of glass fragments, the deposits produced *c.* 2500 for the 5th century, *c.* 1800 for the 8th century, but just *c.* 150 for the 6th to 7th; such middle-period levels denote both a dramatic decline in production/usage as well as a simplification in forms. Structurally the city matches this sequence of decay > collapse > revival: Manacorda (pp. 31–52) observes in the Campo Marzio zone (within which is set the Crypta Balbi) the redundancy of both theatre and grain depot in the 5th century, in part due to floods, earthquakes and German intruders, followed by a transformation into small workshops and, in time, a charity institution (*xenodochium*) — an interesting piece of continuity in terms of food distribution — and later churches and monasteries. Pavolini (pp. 53–70) charts similar results from the Coelian Hill (zone of Santo Stefano Rotondo, and the seat of rich houses sacked by the Visigoths in 410), noting also the appearance of occasional burials within the abandoned buildings from the 6th century. Of the intramural burials now being properly analysed and plotted (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani, pp. 89–111), the

most intriguing are those attested around the Colosseum, attributed to two phases from the first half of the 5th century, and thus seemingly much earlier than elsewhere in the City. Yet these appear at a time when the Colosseum remained in use, being restored in the late 5th/early 6th centuries; it lost its role in the 520s, however, by which time part of the outer arcade had already collapsed (Rea, pp. 71–88). The structure subsequently saw robbing for its travertine and marble, and areas were used for storing such materials — an oddity, given that in a setting of general decay, what was the market for these? Presumably we should think of the Church and its need to repair old structures and to equip the new deaconries which emerge in many of these otherwise abandoned sectors of Rome.

Other papers examine the character of settlement and economic activity in the rural environs of Rome, stressing the key role played by the Church in maintaining a semblance of order and supply: both Delogu (pp. 11–29) and Marazzi (pp. 265–85) draw together important data regarding the fragile 7th and early 8th centuries and highlight the 8th and 9th-century role of papal farm-estates (*domuscultae*) in helping to feed Rome's population; Monte Gelato may have been one such estate centre, well endowed with a church and baptistery in the 9th century and set over a 5th-century predecessor; but, as Potter (pp. 137–52) points out, the site lacks any consistent archaeological trace of continuity between the late 6th and 8th centuries. Whereas the *vicus Augustanus Laurentium* (Castelporziano) lacks any trace of activity between the 5th and 12th centuries (despite the documented reference to a *domusculta Laurentum* — Claridge, pp. 287–93), some vitality at least is witnessed 8 km to the N., at the old port of Ostia and its successor, Portus (Paroli, pp. 153–75; Coccia, pp. 177–202 — but see now the more up-to-date contributions by the same authors in A. G. Zevi and A. Claridge (eds.), *Roman Ostia' Revisited*, London, 1996). At Ostia the old port town persists well into the 5th century, but with various houses, public amenities (notably baths) and warehouses falling out of use; scattered burials then hint at the main decayed zones of the urban unit, whilst three suburban churches and cemeteries reveal adequate numbers of worshippers. The signs are indeed of a gradual shift in emphasis away from a crumbling Ostia to the Christianised suburb (Borgo) to the S., where in the mid 9th century Pope Gregory IV built a new fortress town to protect the locals from Saracen raids. Thus documents and archaeology neatly combine to reveal decay yet continuity.

Finally, there are extremely useful contributions on ceramic production and coin circulation within Rome and Lazio (Patterson, pp. 309–31; Rovelli, pp. 333–51). These, and the preceding texts, help Hodges in his overview (pp. 353–66) to conclude that, following the undeniable decay and degradation of the former metropolis and its territory, 'Rome in the late 8th century stands out as a place of remarkable activity': churches, documents, pottery, and art then merge as expressions of a revived vitality and a redefined focus to the ancient, but now medieval, City.

NEIL CHRISTIE

*La Ville de Cluny et ses Maisons. XI<sup>e</sup> — XV<sup>e</sup> Siècles.* Edited by Pierre Garrigou Grandchamp *et al.* 26 × 33 cm. 247 pp., many figs. and pls., incl. 18 colour pls. Paris: Picard, 1997. ISBN 2-7084-0516-0. Price: 390F hb.

Cluny is well known for its abbey, but this book is about the houses in the town. Or rather, the spectacular stone houses, dating in the main from the 12th to the 15th centuries. It is a large, lavish production supported by two French regional councils, the Ministry of Culture, the town of Cluny and two heritage groups. The book is a feast, but will not fit in the knapsack.

The project has been undertaken over ten years by a group of French and British historical architects and archaeologists in the context of the Centre d'Études Clunisiennes. Detailed recording and reconstruction of buildings has been supported by study of archives (though those for Cluny are sparse, and the authors say that they therefore cannot reconstruct the town in detail as has been done for late 12th-century Oxford or Canterbury) and a limited programme of dendrochronological sampling. No excavation is reported.

The study is organised in ten chapters and conclusions. The first two (by the two main British authors, assisted by Philip Dixon) set the scene, explaining the regional setting of Cluny and giving a brief tour of the abbey and its precinct. The third chapter, by Roger Leech, touches on the question of previous timber buildings (there must have been some) and medieval economic development in the towns of southern Bourgogne. Then follow four chapters which are the main part of the text, largely by Garrigou Grandchamp and Salvèque, two researchers already known for their work on Cluny and other French medieval towns. The formation of streets and building façades, some plan forms, domestic and commercial functions, construction techniques, plumbing and architectural embellishment are all dealt with. The book then seems to change direction with a survey of the origin and evolution of the Cluny house from the 12th to the 15th centuries; and after an intervening chapter on the decoration and sculpture (with the participation of Brigitte Maurice-Chabard), which should have been placed somewhere else, a second survey (with Dixon and Susan Content) briefly runs through the 16th–19th centuries. Garrigou Grandchamp and Meirion-Jones then conclude, using maps of the whole town which would have surely been better at the beginning. One gets the impression that the British came along and tried to put the detailed recording work of their French colleagues into a historical context, by stressing what came before and after the stone houses. Still, it works very well and all are to be congratulated.

The 12th- and 13th-century houses, 119 of which are described here (a tabular inventory lists 124), speak for themselves; at last they emerge triumphantly from the shadow of the great, perhaps too-famous abbey. While the treatment of the abbey is commendably brief, it would have helped to provide a modern map of the precinct and of its towers, one of which still has 11th-century features. The chapter by Leech on various wider aspects of urban archaeology in the area includes maps of several nearby towns and hints at how the study of medieval houses in their setting can be a form of demographic and social geography. He points out that other towns such as Tournus and Saint-Gengoux-le-National also have significant numbers of medieval stone houses, and he illustrates several timber-framed houses from those towns; Cluny apparently has very little if any timber-framing left.

The main chapters are superbly illustrated; most of the photographs, drawn street elevations and axonometric reconstructions are by Salvèque. Some houses are represented by older photographs and a series of colour elevations of the 1850s. Features of note for students of medieval housing include the famous 12th-century shops, double superimposed 12th-century wooden galleries between a house and rear block, a first-floor hall served at both ends by stairs from the street, buildings of stone four storeys high (they are higher at Regensburg, but why are the known English examples only two storeys high — are we missing something?), a 12th-century wooden shutter, an armoire with a secret compartment in its floor, six examples of wall-painting from the 12th and 13th centuries, and a gorgeous variety of friezes, arches, and wide windows with sculptured columns.

And yet, one can be critical. There is a passion to reconstruct the houses in their original form which has driven out other approaches. There are no plans showing the development of the houses, or their adaptation in later centuries (despite having a chapter on the post-medieval developments); they are all presented as monolithic one-period structures. Even though there are two city rentals extant (of 170 and 200 properties

respectively), there is no attempt to find out who the owners and builders were. The houses are typologised by their façades, not their plans or arrangement on the plot. The study of materials is miniscule and there is no analysis of the stone used. The greatest omissions concern an appendix dealing with dendrochronology. Fifty-six samples (though only from eleven buildings) are correlated to form a curve, Cluny Moyenne 6, which covers 854 years, from 904 to 1757. Of these 56, the last ring of 29 of them was before 1300, and a remarkable 27 before 1100. Sadly, only two buildings contained samples with sapwood, and that enabled dates of 'between 1095 and 1107' in the first case and '1758' in the second to be suggested. But the first of these two, with 24 of the 11th-century dates, is a single building, the Stables or Hospice of Saint-Hugues, which is only described briefly in the text, is an abbey building, and is not in the gazetteer. Five other houses have absolute ring-sequences, but no sapwood. But there are few diagrams and little information about where any of these samples came from within the buildings. Of the six houses which produced samples, two are not in the inventory (one appears to be from out of town), a third is illustrated by a fragment of wall-painting only, a fourth is in the inventory but not illustrated at all; the fifth, a notable 12th-century house illustrated several times, creditably has a drawing of the 16th-century ceiling from which the sample came, and the sixth does show the early 12th-century roof, in axonometric, from which the sample presumably (though not certainly) was taken. One hopes that more dendrochronology can be undertaken in the future.

The conclusions of the study are indeed an agenda for future action. The houses are said to provide much information on the phases of growth of the town, but this is not mapped as such and the reader has to go to the inventory maps to find out where the districts or streets mentioned are within the town. So far the authors cannot prove Duby's theory that buildings began to concentrate along street frontages in French towns during the 11th century. The role of the abbey in developing its town remains unknown. There were no underground cellars, no stone houses away from the street as in N. European and English towns, and often no special room that from its size or decor could be called a hall. On the other hand, the traditional pessimistic myths about standards of living in towns should be thrown out; some of these houses had a degree of comfort not excelled until the 18th century. Excavations are necessary to elucidate the courtyards and other spaces behind the houses. To quote the final sentence, 'the abbatial town could incontestably become a key site for research on the medieval habitat and, by a detour of history, rediscover a lustre acquired in the past in the shadow of the most powerful abbey in the West'.

This study increases my desire to go to Cluny. I just hope that the café tables are big enough for all the students of medieval towns carrying copies of this splendid but large volume.

JOHN SCHOFIELD

*Excavations in Cowbridge, South Glamorgan, 1977-88.* (B.A.R. British Series 245.) Edited by J. Parkhouse and Edith Evans. 22 x 30 cm. x + 252 pp., 73 figs., 41 pls., 31 tables. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1996. ISBN 0-86054-819-8. Price: £36.00 pb.

This report of excavations in the Roman and medieval town of Cowbridge is something of a triumph over adversity. The various delays to the post-excavation programme are catalogued by the editors (p. 2) but these are as nothing compared to the devastating fire of March 1983 which destroyed the finds warehouse of the Glamorgan/Gwent Archaeological Trust. As a result there are major gaps in the completed report, notably the absence of most reports on the medieval and post-medieval ceramics.

This review, as befits this journal, will concentrate upon the post-Roman evidence. One would not wish to ignore any relationships with the earlier settlement but connections do not appear to exist (p. 240), despite the fact that the Roman road between Neath and Cardiff (now fossilised as High Street) would seem to be a mutual topographical determinant. This is not explored by the text but then, at the outset, neither is topographical development in general. Reference is merely made to the 'Robinson Report' of 1980 which provides 'a historical context and background for the present volume', thereby obviating 'the necessity for any extensive description of the geology and topography of the area under consideration'. This does not help any reader who lacks ready access to Robinson's work.

A lack of linkage is apparent throughout. There is one plan of the borough upon which all the excavations are located by symbols, but only in the case of Hopyard Meadow is there a detailed location plan showing the relationship of trenches to the urban landscape. It is stated on p. 1 that all pre-1977 observations are described on pp. 124-27, but actually only those observations which can be specifically located are so described. The clay pipe assemblage is the largest located in the area but 'the complete report is due to appear at a later date'.

Two sites are of particular interest: that at the Midland Bank (p. 91 ff.) and at Hopyard Meadow (p. 110 ff.). The Midland Bank site included the discovery of a section of the northern circuit of the town wall still standing 2.3 m. high. It is described and a photograph is given but, other than a schematic plan on p. 104, it is not drawn nor is it clear whether it still survives — the text is phrased in the past tense implying its demolition. A substantial feature interpreted as an abutment for a bridge over the town ditch was also found; this is an interesting addition to the small but growing corpus of such discoveries and the isometric projection on p. 107 is welcome.

The structural evidence from Hopyard Meadow rightly excites comment in the report, as does the status of the site itself. It seems to this reviewer, however, that too much emphasis is put upon the 'urban location' of Hopyard Meadow. The concluding discussion subsumes evidence from this site in a text which contains much of interest concerning urban modelling. However, the Hopyard Meadow is tangential to the urban core with an apparent settlement layout with few 'urban' characteristics. The writers go so far as to state that the excavated features 'do not necessarily have to be explained within the context of burgrave plots and dwelling houses' (p. 242). They may not need to be explained in urban terms at all.

The reader is left with an impression of great archaeological potential in Cowbridge, but one which needs greater integration into the continuum of socio-economic development in this part of South Wales if its relevance to urban studies and rural hinterlands is to be understood. The editors have clearly been frustrated in their efforts to produce the report, but their frustration is now shared by the reader, often without the benefit of increased understanding. As an example, a sculptured stone, clearly lost in the warehouse fire, is described thus (p. 215): 'A Romano-British date would appear unlikely. The decoration is faintly reminiscent of the interlace on late Dark Age sculptured stones. It could possibly be a piece of renaissance decoration from a house interior. Alternatively it could be a segment from an arch, perhaps of medieval, possibly even Norman date . . . (Not illustrated)'. Would that we could see such a chameleon artefact!

BRIAN AYERS

*Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales 1300–1500. Vol. 1: Northern England.* By Anthony Emery. 23 × 28 cm. xiv + 435 pp., 104 figs., 210 pls., 3 tables. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. ISBN 0–521–49723–X. Price: £80.00 hb.

This is an enjoyable book, essentially Anthony Emery's well-informed personal assessment of almost 200 late medieval houses, which should provide a starting point for research (for those who can afford a copy) for years to come. In particular, it allows us to define clearly what future work is needed. It is obvious from the text that he greatly enjoyed his visits during 1989–92, and my own experience of visiting many of these buildings in earlier years (but failing to produce any synthesis even in individual reviews) underlines for me Emery's achievement.

The book is the first of three volumes to cover 600 or more houses in England and Wales, but not Scotland or Ireland. It is well produced, lavishly illustrated and clearly written. The inevitable first question is: how comprehensive is it? There are certainly some omissions, the courtyard house in Dunstanburgh for example. But the question is difficult to answer, and probably the wrong question anyway. The book's date range is commendably flexible, being 1300/1327 to 1500/1539, but where necessary looking backwards into the 13th century. Urban buildings are excluded, but there are exceptions to this rule such as Suffolk Palace, Hull. This is also an exception because it no longer exists, and other important 'lost' buildings are allowed in too. Its social limits usually, but not always, exclude clergy and lesser gentry. It also excludes (by virtue of the accidents of building chronology) most of the major castles. In general, the review anyway restricts itself to residential, not defensive, structures. Domestic apartments within earlier castles are usually covered if their building dates fall within the date range, but the adaptation of existing buildings to new socially led usage could not be covered given the book's architectural orientation.

What we do have in Vol. 1, however, is a wide-ranging collection of descriptions and analysis of the architecture of the majority of the surviving high-status houses of the late medieval period in Northern England. The slightly pragmatic approach to selection which Emery has adopted allows him to thread a number of interrelated themes throughout the book, and to make of the book an interpretative essay as well as a descriptive gazetteer. It is a usable book because each description in some way refers back to central themes which are developed as the book progresses, and it therefore escapes the pitfall of most gazetteers or corpora, that of achieving comprehensive coverage to the detriment of interpretation and meaning.

The principal underlying themes (e.g. the role of hall and solar, tower, towers and tower houses, the interplay of the domestic, defensive and symbolic, the evolution of northern 'palace-fortresses') are discussed in the opening section and pursued through the site descriptions. There are also regional overviews (Emery's North is divided into three parts: Northumbria, Cumbria with Lancashire, and Yorkshire) of political history and architectural history. In addition each volume contains essays on related topics: in Vol. 1 these comprise a valuable synopsis of the work of the great Northern architect John Lewyn, the significance (or otherwise) of licences to crenellate, and household organization as exemplified by the 16th-century Percy household books. There are smaller digressive but useful essays within some site descriptions, either exploring family history (e.g. the Percys and the Nevilles under the entries for Alnwick and Raby Castle respectively) or other themes (e.g. monastic lodgings and guest houses, under the entry for Monk Bretton). Interesting patterns also emerge through cross-references: between Edlingham, Aydon and Widdrington for example, or between Edlingham, Haughton, Dally, Langley, Harewood, and Hazlemere. Embedded within the various descriptions too is a cogent overview of the late medieval palace-fortress, a group which includes Bolton, Darby, Sherrif Hutton, Wressle, Brancepeth and Raby as well as Alnwick and Durham Castle. Useful maps

demonstrate regional patterns, such as the different distribution of holdings of the Bishop and Prior at Durham, and the Percy and Neville families throughout the North.

The book is copiously illustrated. A few buildings benefit from detailed plans (and occasionally planning diagrams), but in many cases the plans are simplified block-diagrams, and in too many cases there are no plans at all. This reflects less on Emery than on the amount of primary research that still needs to be carried out. For the vast majority of the houses, Emery's description is the first publication, indeed the first survey, for decades. Most buildings have photographs, and while some are excellent (e.g. Hexham and Monk Bretton), many are printed too darkly. More serious is the absence of provenance for photographs, and especially the dates of photography. In many cases the photographs are clearly old (strange clothes, no cars or television aerials!), and a few are of now-demolished or ruined houses. Presumably they are mainly R.C.H.M.E. archive photographs, but such material really ought to be treated as primary data (with appropriate critical apparatus). Similarly, a further presentational detail is bibliographical. There are references in footnotes, a short bibliography for each building, and bibliographies for each region, but their format is idiosyncratic by modern standards, and there is no unified bibliography. Perhaps one is planned for Vol. 3.

Emery tells us at the end of his 'Introduction' that he 'sought to provide a source book . . . essentially a stepping stone'. This above all is what Vol. 1 does. It is no criticism to say that the book (by bringing current knowledge together in one place, consistently and within an explicit and rational analytical framework) has as its main consequence a demonstration of how little we actually know about the subject. Even the most important buildings (often those still occupied for their primary symbolic purpose of demonstrating control and power) have not been fully studied. We do not have studies of Alnwick or Raby, let alone most of the smaller houses. We can date very few buildings closely — virtually none if suspect methods such as inference from family history or architectural style are excluded. In addition, whilst one of the strengths of Emery's book is that it begins to draw comparisons between buildings within regions or by ownership, such contextualisation needs to go much further than current knowledge has allowed him to. These contexts include local and regional landscape relationships and social purpose, and it is clear from Emery's review of what we know already that most of these issues have not yet reached the buildings research agenda in any meaningful way. The surviving greater houses in Northern England need to be seen not merely as architecture, nor as illustration of history written from documentary sources, but as a principal archaeological resource for understanding the society and mentality of the period, especially given the scarcity of other architecture of the period or even of excavated evidence. The same point is likely to become evident in Vols. 2 and 3. What Emery's three-volume set will give us is precisely what he set out to produce: a baseline survey of the resource from which to build future archaeological research. If we are lucky Emery himself will begin the process — when Vol. 2 is completed perhaps we can ask him to return to his original intention of writing a book to pull together the threads laid out in this volume, as an overview of the primary material evidence for medieval ways of life.

GRAHAM FAIRCLOUGH

*Village, Hamlet and Field. Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England.* By Carenza Lewis, Patrick Mitchell-Fox and Christopher Dyer. 16 × 24 cm. 44 figs., 2 tables. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7190-4577-0. Price: £45.00 hb.

This monograph is presented in a soundly constructed report form, the results of a field and documentary survey initiated in 1990 on four East Midland counties under a

Leverhulme Foundation grant. A clear justification is made for locating the study in this region, benefiting from a legacy of professional and amateur field study which was ripe for some synthetic analysis.

The authors provide an excellent overview of medieval settlement studies in England in Chapter 1, contrasting 'champion' and woodland *paŷs*. The only quibble here is that the text might have been borrowed from another source, because it is only in a separate concluding section that we are made aware of its relevance to the study area: a few cross-references would have kept the reviewer in touch with its purpose.

The volume sets out to use this region to explain settlement pattern in the wider context. There is a clear search for a new perspective, because Chapter 2 questions the validity of the established way of distinguishing early settlement forms, i.e. dispersed versus nucleated settlement.

Applied too rigidly, the antithesis of dispersed versus nucleated settlement could be an obstacle to explaining the origins or evolution of this settlement pattern: all "nucleated" settlement need not be the end product of the same process, just as many "dispersed" settlements are likely to have originated in different ways' (pp. 71-72).

Recent in-depth investigations of two adjacent Wiltshire settlements (Compton Bassett and Yatesbury) have highlighted this paradox: medieval dispersed settlement had become 'nucleated' by the 19th century, while the medieval nucleated settlement had done the reverse. For the present volume this is the signal for the authors to look at the evolution of settlement to resolve the antithesis. In a series of case studies split up geographically and historically, p. 95 has some useful analysis of the sequence at Raunds, and there is much anecdotal information.

Chapter 4 addresses the antithesis from a different direction by studying regular elements in the plan-form of post-Conquest rural settlement, the 'regular row' and the 'gridded cluster', which can occur in combination or in multiple as 'agglomerated'. This geographical approach follows that published previously for Wiltshire. It is still refreshing, though one might expect more comparative observations. The conclusion (p. 155) is that the authors are looking at 'stable and conservative phenomena', that high-status settlements tended to be successful, that settlements on clay were not unusually disadvantaged, and that many dispersed settlements were also often resilient. The conclusions are slightly qualified however, and the real message is perhaps that it is still too large a step from Raunds-type fieldwork to a regional survey.

Chapter 6 sets out to explain settlement form. It concludes that no factor on its own will explain observed differences, and proclaims enigmatically that 'Settlements were objects but they were also ideas' (p. 223). This might usefully be restated as 'settlements were (and are) organisms', because this would lead conceptually into the final chapter which charts a way into the future based on 'evolution'. A significant milestone is the 'village moment', a term which is new to the reviewer (Chapter 7, pp. 227-42). The authors define it as a period between the mid 9th and early 13th centuries, when 'villages formed in those areas prone to nucleation'. If the term is new to historic landscape studies then what a pity that it appears unheralded, i.e. it is not referred to in Chapters 1 or 2 as an Aunt Sally to be shied at. Worse, it is not used in the conclusion to its own chapter (p. 242), which instead embodies new rhetoric. In the evolution of settlements a natural sequence would be disorder controlled by aggressive strength, the control then being devolved to lesser and lesser centres, with periodic return to disorder. The authors refer to the decay of the elephantine empire of Charlemagne (p. 232) which happened contemporaneously with the 'village moment'.

If a cycle of settlement growth, maturity and senility was repeating asynchronously over a region of this size the picture would certainly be complex, and would need to be studied organically as well as geographically. Certainly there will be places where early settlement was continuously successful and aggressive, and which we now see as towns and

large villages, but there may also be a class of settlements which were ecologically even more successful precisely because they never outgrew their resource, and which therefore each maintained a continuous stabilising influence on a halo of surrounding areas beyond their direct control, i.e. the founts of the authors' 'stable and conservative phenomena' (p. 155). Might such founts be amongst the productive 'non-village' economies (p. 242), or would they have been a separate species? The reviewer has little doubt that the data and scholarship needed to identify new species of settlement are embodied in this research; and the gazetteer which no doubt must lie behind it, though not referred to explicitly, could be the basis for answering new and more probing questions, so that the multidisciplinary approach can ultimately yield some substantial new insight.

Hopefully the scope of the author's 'evolutionary' thesis will be analyzed critically before it is tried out. Students of the historic landscape can perhaps save themselves some anguish by borrowing from the biological sciences and moving directly to ecological analysis. A conceptual target could be a model of an ecologically sustainable 'Ur — settlement' which existed in 'stable and conservative' harmony with its total environment. On the biological parallel this model could have had a continuous existence until the arrival of fossil fuel, and would provide the logical antithesis of the boom-and-bust type of settlement evolution.

Overall this is a useful and thought-provoking regional volume which in its final chapter lays the basis for a fundamental change of approach to settlement studies generally.

BRIAN DURHAM

*Romney Marsh: The Debatable Ground.* (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph 41.) Edited by Jill Eddison. 21 × 30 cm. x + 174 pp., 79 figs., 5 pls., 16 tables. Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1995. ISBN 0-947816-41-0. Price: £25.00 pb.

Romney Marsh is the third largest area of reclaimed wetland in England but, compared with the Fens and Somerset Levels, its geomorphological evolution and its exploitation by man have, until recently, received relatively little investigation. The Romney Marsh Research Group, founded in 1984, has achieved a great deal towards redressing the balance, and the volume reviewed here is the group's second major publication (following O.U.C.A. Monograph 24, 1988).

The 1988 monograph identified a number of outstanding requirements, including the need to establish a reliable chronology for the prehistory of the shingle and peat deposits and the testing of settlement models for the Roman period and the Middle Ages. It also promised that the combination of rich archives, complex relict landscapes of early sea defences and drainage systems, and sites available for excavation, offered exceptional opportunities for interdisciplinary studies. The modern move away from sheep grazing towards large-scale arable farming also represented a threat to some of the evidence which necessitated urgent action.

The present volume shows how much has been achieved in the intervening seven years. After a good introduction by Michael Tooley the first three papers deal with palaeoenvironmental investigations. Andrew Plater and Antony Long demonstrate that the successive shingle ridges of Denge Beach are a product of the interaction between long-term changes in sea level and short-term changes in the magnitude and frequency of storms between the Roman period and A.D. 750. Antony Long and Jim Innes reassess the nature of the Midley Church sand bank, once thought to be part of an ancient bar across the Romney inlet. Borehole transects have now shown that peat extends beneath the bank,

indicating that it has developed since *c.* 2200 B.P., either through wind-blown dune deposits or as a riverine sand eyot. Martin Wass examines the sedimentological and microfaunal evidence along the supposed northern course of the Rother or Limen E. of Appledore, concluding that this channel was not a former river course, but a sheltered tidal arm of the Hythe inlet.

Anne Reeves then describes how a two-year programme of field walking on old pasture ploughed since the 1960s has produced Roman and late Saxon sherds from areas of calcareous marshland previously thought to be of later origin. It has also emphasized the intensive, though dispersed, nature of medieval occupation. She deduces that population reached a peak before 1250, thereafter declining gradually until about 1450, when a sharp decline set in, with the Marsh subsequently becoming depopulated for sheep pasture. Sarah Pearson points to the lack of surviving medieval dwellings, in striking contrast to the rest of Kent, and suggests that this reflects a social polarization in the late Middle Ages, between wealthy men owning grazing land on the Marsh but living outside it, and resident smallholders occupying poor-quality dwellings which have not survived. Maureen Bennell presents a survey of the ruined 12th-century church of Hope All Saints and the neighbouring earthworks. One wonders why only two of the eleven detailed elevation drawings were reproduced here, and why the different building stones described in the text were not differentiated on them. It may have been taken for granted that the church's deterioration reflected the decline of the settlement which it once served, but, again, it is a pity that this relationship was not explored further.

The remaining six papers consider the varied human responses to the problems of flooding, silting and land drainage in the medieval and early modern periods. Anthony Gross and Andrew Butcher show that, despite the devastation wrought by the great storms of the 1250s and 1280s, the combination of immediate remedial measures and long-term improvements undertaken by the greater landholders such as Canterbury Cathedral Priory brought about a rapid economic recovery. These measures included new sea defences, legume cultivation to replenish nitrates, manuring, and application of lime and marl to neutralise the acidity of the marshland peat, along with intensified livestock husbandry (especially for the production of cheese and butter), replacement of oxen by horse traction and investment in new cowhouses and granaries. Eleanor Vollans uses the records of Bilsington Priory to explore the evidence for medieval salt-making and reclamation of tidal marshes at Belgar in Lydd. Mark Gardiner traces the progress of reclamation in the Brede valley in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, the damage caused by storms and flooding after the 1250s, the partial recovery following the construction of new sea walls, and the renewed flooding in the mid 14th century. Stephen Hipkin examines the local political background to marshland drainage between 1550 and 1650, and shows how reclamation caused a severe decline in Rye's trade by reducing the effects of tidal scour and accelerating the silting of its harbour. Jill Eddison describes the costly and unavailing attempts between 1613 and 1624 to restore the heavily silted Rother Channel N. of Oxney in order to relieve freshwater flooding. Dorothy Beck discusses a newly discovered document which provides interesting evidence for the early 17th-century administration and financing of the maintenance of the Dymchurch Wall and its associated drains.

It is made clear that many of the papers offer progress reports rather than definitive conclusions. Many raise further questions and point the way forward to future research. It is inevitable that at the present stage some unresolved conflicts of evidence remain. To contrast Pearson's suggestion that the wealthier Tudor graziers were living beyond the bounds of the Marsh while only smallholders remained (p. 97) with Reeves' statement that 'through the 16th and 17th centuries . . . pottery evidence shows that some successful yeoman farmers must have remained there' (p. 91) is not intended as a criticism of either author, both of whom have arrived at conclusions which are entirely justified by their own

particular programmes of investigation. However, a full evaluation and synthesis of the different strands of evidence is still some way off. Nevertheless, one important point which already does emerge from many of the essays is the very delicate balance between natural and human forces, and the ways in which woodland clearance or reclamation and drainage activities in one area often produced unexpected and unwanted repercussions through coastal erosion, flooding or silting elsewhere. The papers in this well-produced and informative volume offer some valuable contributions to our understanding of the Romney Marsh landscape, but their lessons are also of interest far beyond that region.

JAMES BOND

*Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066–1550.* By Christopher Daniell. 15 × 23 cm. ix + 242 pp., 13 pls. London: Routledge, 1997. ISBN 0-415-11629-5. Price: £35.00 hb.

*King Death. The Black Death and its Aftermath in Late-Medieval England.* By Colin Platt. 16 × 24 cm. viii + 262 pp., 90 figs. and pls. London: U.C.L Press, 1996. ISBN 1-85728-313-9 hb.; 1-85728-314-7 pb. Price: £35.00 hb.; £12.95 pb.

*Medieval Death. Ritual and Representation.* By Paul Binski. 18 × 25 cm. 224 pp., 100 pls. (10 in colour). London: British Museum Press, 1996. ISBN 0-7141-0561-9. Price: £25.00 hb.

These books are suitably late millennial in their concern with death, disease and dying. Each addresses a specific agenda and hails from a different disciplinary perspective. Daniell aims to unite history and archaeology in a general survey of death and burial in medieval England; Platt reviews the experience and subsequent impact of the Black Death on all levels of late medieval English society; and Binski contemplates the wider culture of death in relation to medieval religiosity and visual representation. All are essentially works of synthesis, drawing on recent scholarly thought to provide an introduction for the student or general reader.

In *Death and Burial in Medieval England* Christopher Daniell surveys attitudes towards death and treatment of the dead, the geography of burial, cemeteries and grave-goods from the Conquest to the Reformation. His perspective is largely historical, omitting anthropological or art-historical approaches. A chapter on 'bodily evidence' considers taphonomy, demography and physical anthropology; one on cemeteries and grave-goods usefully surveys the complexity and variety of medieval Christian burial practices. Variation is demonstrated in such mortuary practices as clothing of the corpse (cowls, linen shrouds, hair shirts), inclusion of grave goods (quartz pebbles, lead crosses, coins, pendants, croziers, staffs, rings, pilgrims' staffs) and organic grave linings, and the incidence of coffins, charcoal burials, pillow and cist stone-lined graves. Unusual burials are considered, including those of executed criminals from St Margaret in Combusto, Norwich, who had been thrown into graves fully clothed and with their wrists tied, and those who had received medical treatment, such as a male skeleton from St Andrew's, York, which had two copper alloy plates attached to the knee. Occasionally, the author proposes certain views that are unsubstantiated. For instance, he argues that the tendency for predominantly male burials within monasteries should result in the higher representation of female burials within parish cemeteries (despite the likely differences in social status between the two populations). Because a roughly equal ratio of male to female burials in fact tends to be observed, Daniell proposes — on the basis of no supporting evidence — 'that there was widespread infanticide, especially of girls, which occurred in medieval England (and continued until the 20th century)'.

This expansive survey does not take a systematic or quantitative approach, however, so that some intriguing patterns remain unresolved. Archaeological and historical evidence

is treated unproblematically, and interpretation of archaeological patterning is through 'explanatory historical texts', all the more contentious for the absence of historical source criticism. Some themes are not given adequate archaeological treatment: for example, the physical division of the body for burial in different locations is considered only historically, with no discussion of archaeological evidence for visceral burials. The subject demands better illustration than the thirteen monochrome plates provided here.

Colin Platt's *King Death* concentrates not on the bodily suffering or treatment of plague victims, but on the social and economic consequences of bubonic plague for the subsequent shaping of England. Indeed, his thesis is that the plague that first appeared in 1348 was more significant in its impact than the crisis of population growth from c. 1300 or the famines and animal murrains of the agricultural crisis of 1315–22. He does not analyse the factors which caused the late medieval crisis, but focuses instead on the character of post-plague England. Put simply, he proposes that 'what mattered was how many people died in the Black Death'. He outlines evidence for mortality rates (in some regions up to 40–50 per cent), arguing that the sudden population collapse encouraged change in all areas of life, resulting in greater freedoms, mobility, and prosperity that would not have come about without the catalyst of the Black Death. Chapters review evidence in turn for mortality, changes in urban and rural settlements, the experience of the aristocracy, gentry, clergy and monastics, the impact on architecture and religious beliefs. This broad, seamless sweep draws on the most recent historical research. However the accessible, narrative style masks any critical appraisal of evidence or consideration of scholarly debates. The text is well referenced and illustrated, but archaeological and art historical sources are used more as scenery than as independent sources of evidence.

Paul Binski's *Medieval Death* considers the special treatment of death within the Christian tradition, which 'placed death at the centre of its drama of salvation'. He begins with the roots of death culture in the classical and late antique, demonstrating that close interaction between the living and the dead was a new and fundamental characteristic of Christianity. He proceeds to offer a European perspective of later medieval death rituals, representation through tombs, shrines and chantry chapels, and a discussion of the emergence of the Macabre, viewed as a fusion of secular individualism and Christian guilt culture. A final chapter considers death and the afterlife, reviewing hierarchical and spatial representations of spiritual states and places, such as Paradise, Heaven and Purgatory. He argues that despite the increasing emphasis placed on Purgatory, late medieval representation continued to be essentially binary in its depiction of the spiritual condition, consistently featuring the two oppositions of Heaven and Hell. Binski views the absence of a tradition for visually representing Purgatory as a reflection of the ambiguity with which Purgatory was perceived, more a state of being than a physical place. Binski paints a lively canvas of medieval death, placing the topic within the spiritual and intellectual context of its time, yet offering new interpretative insights drawn from anthropology and allied disciplines. The book is beautifully illustrated and provides a comprehensive bibliography. A criticism is the absence of footnotes or referencing of individual points or sources, no doubt intended by the publishers to increase the book's accessibility. This apart, *Medieval Death* is an excellent overview and introduction to the nexus of ideas and beliefs that informed Christian representations of death in the Middle Ages.

*Archéologie du Cimetière Chrétien.* (Actes du 2<sup>e</sup> Colloque A.R.C.H.E.A., Orleans 1994.) Edited by Henri Galinié and Elisabeth Zadora-Rio. 21 × 27 cm. 310 pp., figs., pls. Tours: Association en Région Centre pour l'Histoire et l'Archéologie, 1996. ISBN 2-9507320-7-0. ISSN 1159-7151. Price: not stated, pb.

The volume consists of papers given to the second colloquium of the Association en Région Centre pour l'Histoire et l'Archéologie held at Orleans in 1994. It provides a modern overview of numerous facets of the archaeology of Christian cemeteries, from Roman to modern times, in many areas of France and a few beyond.

We have now in Britain become familiar with the extension of mortuary studies into Christian milieux as part of the developing interest in the Church; this has now come to maturity with the foundation of the Society for Church Archaeology and the publication of the first issue of its Journal. This volume therefore offers a useful comparison of our work with what has recently been done in France. The only exceptions are two papers from Spain and Italy, and one from our own Wharram Percy (by Charlotte Harding).

An introduction by Henri Galinié is followed by three principal themes comprising 27 papers, a good cross-section of recent work. The first part deals with the beginnings of burial in towns, the second with spatial organisation at various levels, and the third concerns the grave itself and the various types of container and associated structures. The range is, however, wider than this, some topics (such as radiocarbon dating) not sitting very easily in these three themes.

The *Advent of urban burial* discusses the chronology of the gradual transition from extra-mural cemeteries of Roman origin to the intra-mural ones developing in Christian contexts of shrine, chapel, church or cathedral; the Spanish example, from the region of Valencia, includes also the effect of Islam in the 8th century. We see in general a gradual encroachment on urban areas from the 4th century onwards, selective or exclusive: cult/commemoration-centred at first, becoming more populist with the establishment of parochial cemeteries in the 10th century and later.

The second theme is more wide-ranging. *Spatial organisation* is discussed under many headings: the separation of the living from the dead; the proximity to 'saints', or relics; preferred parts of the church or enclosure, autonomous spaces (vaults etc.); boundaries, ditches, walls, banks, fences. There are some useful plans here of large church and cemetery excavations, such as the opening of 70 ha at Portjoie (in a bend of the Seine), comparable with the large excavations by the Rodwells and Biddles.

Rather beyond the spatial aspects is an illuminating essay on pictorial representations, partly symbolic, but providing data for surface features, high crosses, ossuaries, lanterns, chapels, and mortuary lamps; but not secular features such as the 'guard-dog's kennel' — a structure I do not remember ever being noted in Britain! The images are of the 'archaeologically perishable'. There should be scope for a similar synthesis here in Britain.

There are good examples of how the incidence of pathology can vary from rural to urban cemeteries, in (for instance) the location of fractures and anomalies, and the high number of childhood bone problems in the cemeteries of religious communities.

Another novel class of evidence is that of pastoral visitations. A database of 693 of these in 384 cemeteries in the Bordeaux diocese is informative on boundaries, demarcations, burial plots and secular use.

It is good to see Wharram Percy with its 681 burials in such company, with its diverse spatial data.

The third theme deals with the *Technology and typology of the grave*. Wood, stone and lead coffins, and composite constructions of stone and wood, are classified. Burial vaults have their own typology; they are late, but show the development of 'veritable allotments'. Artefacts with graves include pottery and glass vessels for incense or holy water; and glass

funerary chalices, wholly of base metal in this country as far as I am aware. There is a good typology for these, with illustrations.

Finally there are regional chronological typologies for body containers in Normandy and Angou-Poitou-Touraine, with comprehensive tables; and a descriptive terminology from *Ad Sanctos* to 'Zone funéraire'.

There is, however, no discussion of the major problem that faces all cemetery archaeologists — the human biology. Apart from the pathological aspects, one is left wondering how far this has progressed for the cemeteries in Roman and later France.

It will be clear that this compilation provides very useful comparative material for British students of mortuary behaviour, and many openings for research on topics not yet explored. It also indicates the ultimate scope for a study of all aspects of Christian cemeteries on a European scale.

The book is nicely produced, though many illustrations are rather basic. The papers I have noted are of course only summaries, but the appended bibliographies will lead serious students to the sources on which they are based.

PHILIP RAHTZ

*Burial and Society. The Chronological and Social Analysis of Archaeological Burial Data.* Edited by Claus Kjeld Jensen and Karen Høilund Nielsen. 21 × 30 cm. 198 pp., 140 figs. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1997. ISBN 87-7288-686-2. Price: not stated, hb.

This edited book arose out of a series of lectures in 1994 organised at Moesgård, Aarhus University's Department of Prehistoric Archaeology. The lectures, framed around the theme 'From Burial to Society', were aimed at providing an overview of Danish burial archaeology. However, as the research interests of the invited speakers were predominantly Iron Age (lasting to c. A.D. 800 in Denmark) and Viking, this overview is somewhat biased in terms of chronological coverage towards the later prehistoric and protohistoric periods.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first two sections, on theoretical and methodological frameworks, and chronological case studies, consist of a mere two papers apiece. It is the third section, the social case studies, wherein the variety and (I would argue) the main value of this book lies. The papers are prefaced by a useful introduction by Jensen and Høilund Nielsen, which provides a brief history of the role of burial excavation and interpretation in the development of Danish archaeology, and the impact of various external influences, such as New Archaeology, since the 1970s. The first section consists of a paper by Heinrich Härke (the only non-Danish contributor) on 'The nature of burial data' and another by Jensen and Høilund Nielsen outlining the technique of correspondence analysis. Härke's paper starts by contrasting the debates on burial analysis which have taken place within (and not between) German and 'Anglophone' archaeology during this century; again, a useful summary for those interested in how theoretical debates develop. He then goes on to argue that symbolic and structuration approaches represent a considerable advance over positivist approaches, and that the ritual context of burial practice, and its potential for shaping society itself, must be borne in mind when interpreting burial data. There is no such theoretical debate in Jensen and Høilund Nielsen's paper which is an introduction to correspondence analysis, a technique widely used in Scandinavian archaeology over the last two decades, especially in the field of burial analysis. Like cluster analysis and seriation, it aims to demonstrate similarities between groups of variables (and a burial can be thought of as a group of variables), but unlike those two techniques, it gives more indication of the degree of difference between them. It is thus a useful way of analysing large quantities of quantitative and qualitative data, and showing

whether patterning exists. However, as any statistician will tell you, it is one thing to demonstrate patterning, and entirely another to interpret the meaning or significance of that patterning, and this is where the paper falls short. The case studies given demonstrate the operation of this technique, but there is no interpretation of what such patterning may mean in social terms.

The second section contains a paper by Karen Hornstrup on the early to late Bronze Age transition (the sole paper dealing with non-Iron Age or later themes), and contains the valuable argument that differences in the adoption of the new material culture, previously interpreted as spreading from central to 'retarded' areas, are in fact due to appreciable regional variations in the ways of adopting foreign influences; in other words that regions (or rather, their inhabitants) choose to use this material, rather than being involuntarily over-run with it. These conclusions have important implications for the study of chronology, which usually assumes uniformity of attitudes towards material culture. Such sophisticated argument is not, unfortunately, present in the other paper in this section, Høilund Nielsen's 'The schism of Anglo-Saxon chronology'. While the rather patronising introduction attacks Anglo-Saxon archaeologists for the lack of time spent developing detailed chronologies to parallel those available for areas of the continent, the rest of the paper looks at different artefact types in turn (a useful source of references), and concludes that the lack of absolute dates from associated coins, and the great extent of inter (and even intra) regional variation makes it an extremely difficult task. Her attitude seems to be summed up by the statement 'To be able to establish firm and detailed chronologies, it is therefore necessary to eliminate the influence of regional variation and social groups' (p. 94). A chronology obtained by eliminating all this 'interference' would surely not be very useful for anyone attempting to understand the social processes which underlie use and selection of different items of material culture. As Hornstrup points out in the previous paper, such approaches assume uniformity, rather than explore regionality.

The papers in the third section encompass a variety of approaches and themes. Søren Diinhoff's 'The custom of sacrifice in Early Iron Age burial tradition' is avowedly post-processual in its review of material remains of ritual practice in North Jutland early Iron Age graves, and draws some interesting parallels between burial practices and contemporary bog offerings, both being interpreted as ways of accessing the power of the ancestors. Jytte Ringtved's paper on social structure in Iron Age cemeteries is only reproduced in summary (odd for an otherwise professionally produced volume). Härke provides an interesting extension to his already published work on Anglo-Saxon weapon burials, seeing them as material correlates to the later conquest myths. Høilund Nielsen (again) looks at the use of Style II ornamentation, and argues that it was used in a symbolic and political sense to confront 'Roman' traditions. The remaining papers in the volume, Jørgensen on the Scandinavian Germanic Iron Age weapon burials, Sørensen on the Ladby Ship and associated cemetery, Pedersen on Viking Age burials with riding equipment in Scandinavia, and Kieffer-Olsen on the pagan-Christian transition in Viking Age burial practices, all form useful and informative introductions to topics which have, as yet, not been widely available to a non-Danish speaking audience.

This book does not provide, therefore, an overview of Danish burial archaeology. What it does provide is a number of useful case studies on predominantly Iron Age and Viking Age themes. The book could have done with more comprehensive coverage of other periods, and fewer papers on methodology and chronology by Høilund Nielsen, if it really wanted to provide such a representative overview.

*Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología* LIX (1993) and LX (1994). Universidad de Valladolid and Junta de Castilla y León. No ISBN or ISSN.

*Boletín de Arqueología Medieval* 5 (1991), 6 (1992) and 7 (1993). Asociación Española de Arqueología Medieval. ISSN 0213-6090.

The annual B.S.A.A. volumes are very similar in style and format to a British national society journal. They are available at about £17.00 to a private subscriber and have been published since 1932. Bulky at about 550 pages, these volumes are divided more or less equally between articles on archaeology and art. Coverage stresses the northern Spanish regions but includes all things Iberian, from Palaeolithic cave art in Cantabria through Bronze Age funerary urns and Spanish Roman amphorae in Venice (in Italian) to polychromed Spanish terracottas in the Victoria and Albert Museum (in English). There is even an article on Spanish-financed Roman excavations in Jordan, which seems oddly misplaced here. Predictably, amongst the archaeology the emphasis is on prehistory (ten articles) and the Romans (ten articles), with only four articles covering the medieval period, of which three concern artefacts. Obituaries and reviews follow, though the round-up of excavation and conference news focuses only upon subscribers and must therefore be largely valueless as a research tool. The high quality of glossy paper means that photographs and figures are well reproduced, though scales and N. signs are often absent and lines are over reduced.

What are the differences between B.S.A.A. and an English equivalent? The production values in these Spanish volumes are certainly higher and one suspects more powerful financial backing. The leading role in publication is taken by the University of Valladolid in partnership with the regional statutory agency, rather like English Heritage teaming up with a centre for higher education. The content is more international too. How many journals in England would have contributions in Italian and Spanish? Full marks for appearance then, but the contents report little original fieldwork with the exception of excavation; the focus is on monuments and not landscapes. Finally, much that would be published in this country as medieval archaeology (standing building recording of barns of the Military Orders, to take one example here) is to be found under the 'art' section. If Spanish medieval archaeology is to your taste then be sure to look through art, art history and historical sections of the major national journals.

The Spanish equivalent of the Society for Medieval Archaeology is the Asociación Española de Arqueología Medieval. This society publishes a slimmer annual journal with the usual range of articles, indices, conference reports and reviews at a cost of 4500 Pts. per year (about £18.00). The content of the three volumes here is somewhat exceptional since more than half of the 1992 and 1993 issues contain reprints of a selection of those papers of Spanish interest given at the York Medieval Europe Conference held in York in 1992. The frontispiece states that the publication of these papers was partially funded by that Conference.

The 1992 volume is mainly dedicated to ceramics and includes short articles by Hurst, Hughes, Berti and Gelichi, Gutiérrez Lloret on medieval pottery from the Mediterranean basin, as well as others on jewellery and coinage. Some of these articles are already accessible in the UK. The 1993 volume deals with settlement studies and includes some important articles from Zozaya, Scales, Riu and others on Islamic and later settlement. The article by Edward Cooper on urban fortified houses, vendettas and grazing rights is especially good. Readers are cautioned that the translated English summaries are somewhat creative!

If the remaining 20 articles are anything to judge by then the boom topic in Spanish medieval studies is faunal and human remains. No less than one quarter of the articles here deal with 10th- to 12th-century bone assemblages. A varied picture emerges of local

adaptation. A small bone assemblage (c. 500 fragments) from a rural settlement (10th–12th centuries) near Motril in Andalusia suggests the dominance of young sheep/goat and domestic chicken and notes the lack of wild animals in the Muslim diet (Riquelme Cantal). A quite different picture is provided by a fascinating reconstruction of the seasonally inundated 10th-century marsh and meadow ecosystem around the isolated Islamic religious complex or *ribat* at Guardamar (Alicante). On the basis of the faunal and molluscan evidence from recent excavations, the author (Aznar Ruiz) describes how this community survived by combining a diet of sheep/goat with snail collecting and snaring of wild animals. It seems that the *ribat* may not have been alone in exploiting so-called 'marginal' terrains between the sea and the hills inland. A long way further inland the analysis of the marine and freshwater fish bones from Calatrava la Vieja includes the suggestion that dried and salted herring were transported intact into the heart of the peninsula (Roselló Izquierdo and Morales Muñoz), while an assemblage of 90 bird bones from three 9th- to 11th-century rubbish pits outside Madrid is dominated by domestic chicken and red-legged partridge (Hernández Carrasquilla). Finally, these results can be compared with an urban assemblage of 724 bones from 10th/11th-century Granada which show evidence for consumption of sheep/goat and cattle, with mountain goat, rabbits and domestic fowl also represented. While faunal specialists will want to know that this site provided the first archaeological evidence for a Califal camel (Riquelme) I did wonder just how much of this could have been published as notes with tables confined to an appendix? The data is useful, but the assemblages are not large and rarely seem to lead onto to any wider thematic discussion or to be integrated with the rest of the finds.

Aside from a note on the remarkable discovery of the 13th-century skeleton of a slaughtered Muslim male buried beneath destruction levels at Silves (Valera Gomes and Santinho Cunha) the remainder of the articles mostly focus on monuments. There are major contributions on the architecture of Islamic fortifications (Martínez Lillo, Navarro Suçrez and Mateo Saura for Murcia) and the role of atriums throughout Spain (Martínez Tejera) and no less than four articles on 9th- to 11th-century Mozarab ecclesiastical architecture. Two well-illustrated discussions of three little-known 10th-century Mozarab churches in the Duero valley (Regueras Grande and Grau Lobo), and a fourth outside Cordoba (Regueras Grande), are complemented by another on two 9th-century monasteries near Cordoba (Arce). Wall paintings of a 9th-century church near Barcelona (Barroso Caraera and Morín de Pablos) are discussed together with Christian sarcophagi and tombstones in Galicia between the 5th and 11th centuries (Quiroga and Lovelle). Special mention should be made of the extraordinary case of a magnificent 10th-century Cordoban embroidered linen shroud 'found' almost 30 years ago under shadowy circumstances in a church near Burgos and 'washed' at home by the parish priest before being recognised for what it was and published here, admirably complete with colour plates, for the first time (Casamar and Zozaya).

The archaeology of the later medieval centuries scarcely registers in these three volumes. One brief article deals with the results of 'rescue' excavation at La Seo in Zaragoza, but the finds are listed and not drawn or photographed for this publication (Souto). Two further articles do provide an archaeological, topographical and historical analysis of the place-names mentioned in concessions made by Alfonso VIII to the Order of Calatrava in 1189 in order to establish the territorial limits of the Military Orders in the modern province of Ciudad Real (Ayala Martínez *et al*), but this is as close as we get to a wider chronological and geographical context for the monuments, or to multidisciplinary. Elsewhere there are discussions of the marks on the bases of 11th-century ceramics from Zamora (Larrén Izquierdo) and part of a 13th-century processional cross from Burgos (Aparicio Bastardo) but, outside the foreign contributions, the 13th-16th centuries are

hardly mentioned. This reflects a genuine lacuna in the study of the landscapes, monuments and artefacts of medieval Christian Spain.

Like all period-based journals, whether English or Spanish, it is hard to achieve a good balance in the contributions offered. The editors have very limited control over what readers come forward with. All the same, it is surely lunacy that the A.E.A.M. will only publish contributions by its members, except in exceptional circumstances. Most of the articles for each year's journal must be found amongst its *c.* 400 *socios* or members, a very limited constituency indeed and surely one which discourages younger and foreign authors or those with only fringe interests in medieval archaeology. Might not an interested palynologist or sedimentologist be put off by such a 'club' façade?

If we are to compare A.E.A.M. and S.M.A. then there are lessons to be learnt on both sides. Perhaps the A.E.A.M. publication would benefit from a 'Notes' section, and more draconian editorial control over the quality of the maps and figures in these volumes would surely be welcome. Some of the illustrations on view here would be unacceptable even for an first-year undergraduate essay. More effort might also be made to ensure that sites under discussion are properly located and that the English summaries, if they are to be included, are intelligible. It is a shame that the notes on medieval excavations only include a fraction of the country, and notable that few of the autonomous regions are represented on the A.E.A.M. Council. If this is a national society why is there no mention in any of these volumes of sites past or present in Extremadura, the Basque country, Navarra, La Rioja, Asturias, or Cantabria? Perhaps the emphasis is too much upon al-Andalus and the centre and S. of the modern country, and contributions might be encouraged from elsewhere.

While the chronological and regional balance of S.M.A. might be better, the translated abstracts in the Spanish journal seem to me to be an excellent idea. Could we not have more than one language if the abstracts were short enough? The comprehensive lists of Spanish conferences and symposia are also admirable, and the index of recent books and journals, as users of B.A.B. will know, is a useful research tool. I am more hesitant to recommend the unerring and faithful transcriptions of A.E.A.M. Council meetings which, though very frank and most revealing, would soon turn S.M.A. meetings into very meek and toothless affairs for fear of personalising any debate and finding oneself in print!

CHRISTOPHER GERRARD

*Cirencester. Town and Landscape. An Urban Archaeological Assessment.* By Timothy Darvill and Christopher Gerrard. 23 × 28 cm. xvi + 22 pp., 60 figs. and pls., 7 tables. Cirencester: Cotswold Archaeological Trust, 1994. ISBN 0-9523196-0-8. Price: £25.00 pb.

Crucial to understanding this book is its second sub-title, 'An urban archaeological assessment.' It is not, first and foremost, about 'Town and Landscape.' Instead, it is an excursion into the Sites and Monuments Record and Monuments Protection Programmeled world of curatorial or development control archaeology. The Monuments Protection Programme, an exercise to place the protection of the national archaeological resource on a sounder footing, in particular through a review of scheduling, has tried to tackle the complex problem of urban archaeology through the devising of a threefold hierarchy of urban databases, urban assessments and urban archaeological strategies. The Cirencester study is an intensive urban survey commissioned from the Cotswold Archaeological Trust by English Heritage and Cotswold District Council, and carried out over a period of almost two years in 1991-1992. It is a model of how to use the principles established by English Heritage, with the assistance of the Cotswold Trust, in their *Monument Evaluation*

*Manual. Part IV: Urban Areas*, issued in 1992. The result is a handsome publication, clearly produced with commendable despatch, but one with something of a split personality.

Fundamental to this assessment is what is identified as the 'Cotswold system'. Archaeological records or investigations of any sort are given the name of 'sites'. From these sites are constructed 'monuments'. The archaeological elements of whatever type retrieved from an urban area are in their totality termed 'accumulated deposits'. From these can be extrapolated 'urban forms', such as in the case of Cirencester a Roman provincial capital or a medium-sized medieval market town. Monuments and accumulated deposits can then be evaluated using a series of discrimination criteria, from which in turn can be calculated 'monument interest values' using a mathematical formula.

All this is set out in a portentous and didactic way, and there is clear evidence of an appetite for system building and language, or jargon, invention (a glossary is provided). Perhaps the most important feature of this (claimed in the 'Foreword' as 'the single most radical rethink to date of the way in which S.M.R.s are constructed'), is the distinction between records (i.e. sites) and their interpretation (i.e. monuments), analogous to the evolution of improved field recording in the 1970s with the development of context sheets firmly separating description and interpretation.

The book is a sandwich: the outer layers consist of an explanation of this methodology and a detailed description of the development control process and the legislative framework within which it operates, whilst the filling is a chronological account of the current state of knowledge of the urban forms identified at Cirencester. It is difficult to know at whom the theoretical and technical apparatus is aimed, and who, apart from the authors, will find any delight in it. Much of it is specific to Cirencester, and in many ways the book is no more than a development control manual for that town. As what is probably the only urban assessment to have been published, it will be of interest to development control officers in other towns. As what must also be one of the few published accounts of the development control process, it will be of value to students and will perhaps help relieve university teachers of archaeology of some of their ignorance of what happens in the real world of professional archaeology.

The central sections of the book, the 'filling' of the sandwich, will probably be of wider interest. But whilst a useful summary, it is no more than that and inevitably one that tends to revolve around lists and descriptions of monuments. As the authors recognise, the project stopped at the point where it began to get interesting, inasmuch as new research and analysis lay beyond its scope.

For the Roman town, which is of course that urban form which is best known archaeologically, the book highlights areas of ignorance and raises doubts about what has perhaps been too readily accepted. The early medieval settlement is all but non-existent in the known archaeological record, apart from the 8th-century minster. As far as the excavated evidence goes, not much more is known about the medieval town, and discussion hinges mainly on surviving buildings. Here there begins to be a lack of context and perspective, illustrating the difficulties that archaeologists can experience in the historical periods. It is not clear from the text, though sometimes it is implicit, whether Cirencester was a hundred centre, and whether it was a manorial town or one with burgage tenure. There is no analysis of the parish boundaries or the manorial estates, or the surrounding field systems. The most dynamic part of any medieval town, the market place, does not warrant any special discussion and its importance as an area of rapid change and development is underestimated. Plot analysis is briefly mentioned but not illustrated. (The authors are right to be sceptical of narrow plots at right angles to the streets being original). Strangely, apart from one or two conspicuous surviving examples, very few medieval secular buildings have been recognised, implying an extensive 'Great Rebuilding'.

The application of the 'Cotswold system' to the 'accumulated deposits' at the end of each chronological section does not throw up any new insights that are of value except for the Monument Protection Programme or the development control officer. Strangely, inasmuch as this process is partly about ranking, there is no clear picture of how important they think the medieval town is at a national level. With its exceptionally wealthy Augustinian abbey, and its thriving cloth industry, it would be interesting to know where it might lie on a national scale. It is also difficult to assess its archaeological potential for the medieval period. Remarkably, despite a long history of archaeological investigations, it was considered that there were insufficient data to attempt a model of the archaeological deposits for the town. Presumably, though this is not openly stated, the medieval strata have been summarily removed in the eagerness to get to the Roman levels, and the records of the older excavations are inadequate to obtain any overall picture of the stratigraphy. An understanding of the character of the sequences of deposits present in a town is fundamental to the development control process. The 'Cotswold system' generates maps of high, medium and low archaeological sensitivity or interest based on discrimination criteria scores for the urban forms. Since it is admitted that the scoring system cannot be used mechanistically and is no substitute for professional judgement, and since archaeology is notoriously unpredictable, it would be more realistic simply to map those areas where deposits are thought to have escaped cellars (recorded in a survey for this project), modern development and old excavations. If surviving medieval deposits are indeed rare, then they at once become sensitive and any judgement as to their importance would have to await field evaluation. A map constructed on these lines would give different results to their map of high archaeological interest.

From the assessment is born the urban archaeological strategy, but at this point the project had to call a halt because that could not be formulated by the authors who are commercial contractors. Instead, it will have to await a new initiative from English Heritage in consultation with other interested parties. A provisional list of research objectives is, however, provided in an appendix and it is to be hoped that they will be addressed in forthcoming work in the town, for which this book, and the archive on which it is based, will provide a firm foundation.

DAVID ANDREWS