

contributors stress in relation to the Stone. Its fixedness as a symbol of nationhood is largely a retrospective one, arising out of a life-time of use, appropriation and evolving ritual and tradition.

There is one notable absence from the volume and that is a focused treatment of the Stone's role in fictional narratives. These include the novels of Nigel Tranter, notably *The Stone* (1958) and *The Steps to the Empty Throne* (1968) and of Terry Pratchett, particularly *The Fifth Elephant* (1999), in which the prize exhibit of the Dwarf Bread Museum is the Scone of Stone:

Dwarf bread was made as a last resort and also as a weapon and a currency . . . 'Here we are the Scone of Stone. A replica of course.' It was vaguely scone-like . . . otherwise the term a lump of rock was pretty accurate. It was about the size and shape of a well sat on cushion. . . . 'It's 1,500 years old,' said Carrot, . . . 'I thought you said it was a replica?' 'Well, yes, but it's a replica of a very important thing.' . . . 'The Low King is crowned on the Scone of Stone and sits on it to give his judgements because all the Low Kings have done that ever since B'harain Bloodaxe, 1,500 years ago. It . . . gives authority.' . . . 'This is the true Scone . . . so was the one destroyed by Dee, . . . and so were the . . . 5 before that.'

The volume is handsomely and accessibly laid-out and generously illustrated in both colour and black and white. One or two niggling typographic errors remain, the most unfortunate being the absence of an asterisk against Professor Barrow's name, thus erroneously suggesting that he did not give his paper to the conference. These should not detract from an immensely useful volume of cultural biography which will serve anyone interested in the Stone of Scone for years to come.

MARK A. HALL

## Short Reviews

*Origins of the English* (Duckworth Debates in Archaeology). By Catherine Hills. 14 × 22 cm. 128 pp. London: Duckworth, 2003. ISBN 0-7156-3191-8. Price: £10.99 pb.

England, the most fertile and accessible area of the British Isles, lay in the Middle Ages at the edge of the world. People from Ireland migrated eastward (and from Britain, westward), and have continued to do so, people from Europe and beyond migrated westward. Catherine Hills sums this up with the comment that the English 'never were and never will be homogeneous' nor 'ancestrally defined' (p. 115). This is an excellent contribution to the 'Debates in Archaeology' series. The wise exclusion of 'The' from the title betokens a challenging and thoughtful little book. One of the many strengths of *Origins* is that it treats different sources of evidence — archaeological, genetic, historical and linguistic — separately before drawing the strands together in a clever and scholarly conclusion. Her last words 'Another place to seek the origins of the English is now' reminds us of the relevance of questions about English origins today.

At the time this was published, this reviewer was completing a broader project *The Story of England* (2003) and Hills's contribution to the debate on the origins of the English provided thought-provoking grist to that mill. There certainly appear to be different traditions in England — long-haired country people, perhaps cultural descendants of those Anglo-Saxon invaders who were at home in our forested landscape making their laws in woodland clearings; and contrasting with the short-haired maintainers of urban, Roman traditions. Such distinctions are apparent today in English society.

Catherine Hills leads us through a wealth of evidence contrasting historical sources (which have, of course, provided us with the term 'English') with unwritten materials from archaeology. Thus archaeology may support the view that English medieval leaders traced

their ancestry back to celebrated Germanic, pagan leaders who may have been part of a North Sea, undocumented 'Germanic' group, successors to their predecessor Romans. It is very hard, as she readily admits, to write early English history without preconceptions.

There are many areas beyond the scope of her work here which cry out for further work and discussion. The expansion of genetic studies is one example. In Orkney, genetic studies tie together historical accounts of Viking occupation and present islanders thus linking different sources of evidence. Thus, despite grave doubts about historical evidence between A.D. 400 and 600, history is not always of doubtful value. Another topic, excluded for lack of space, but of huge significance for present attitudes to our Anglo-Saxon past, is the subsequent archaeology and history of relations with the rest of the world, and with Germany in particular. It is really only since the early 20th century that Germany has fallen from favour as our cultural ancestor. Professor Freeman declared in 1882 'No part of European history is more attractive than the early history of the German kingdom . . .', warming to that theme under the heading 'Europe: an Aryan continent'. If Germany was then in favour in Oxford, no less so were our German origins lauded in Cambridge where Professor Maitland in 1887 traced the origins of English law and thus of the English 'individualistic path' to Ethelbert of Kent's lawcode of c. 600.

Clearly the debate about English and Englishness continues in Cambridge today between Catherine Hills and her colleagues. She introduces gendered notions of writing early history: how, for example, recent male British historians have written about early England. In archaeology, as in history, it is not so much what happened at the time, but how successive generations use the surviving evidence that creates popular understandings. Catherine Hills has provided a balanced, lucid and very readable account, for which we should be most grateful.

TOM BEAUMONT JAMES

*The Celts: A History.* By Dáithí Ó Hóigáin. 17 × 24 cm. 297 pp., 18 figs. and 6 maps. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002. ISBN 0-85115-923-0. Price: £16.99, \$29.95 pb.

This book presents itself as offering a general survey of the military fortunes of the Celtic population group based on literary sources, from the Iron Age up to c. A.D. 1000. The justification for publication lies in the claim that this is an aspect of European heritage which is not widely known, although the considerable bibliography would seem to stand in obvious contradiction to this belief. What is not clearly justified at any point in the book is the equivalence made between military history and history. At times the author does broaden out into consideration of religion (not surprising, given his earlier book *The Sacred Isle*), but there is no treatment of social structure, seen as a crucial factor in any modern military history.

The most obvious absence for an archaeological audience is archaeological evidence. This is brought in only for the earliest period before classical sources can be used, in occasional snippets thereafter, and for the figures, which are not referred to in the text at all. There is a debate to be had over the value of the archaeological evidence for warfare in Iron-age Europe, but this is not the place to find it. This leaves the author dependent on a mixture of written sources, all with distinct, but different, difficulties which are not discussed here. Instead an attempt is made to produce a narrative history of conquest and defeat — hardly historical circumstances conducive to the production of the accurate records necessary to a straightforward narrative history.

Most surprising, given the Irish nationality of the author, is the complete lack of any discussion of the recent debate on the nature of Celtic identity in Britain and Ireland. The question of whether the ancient inhabitants of the islands were Celts or non-Celtic Britons is crucial in assessing the military success of Celtic groups. Significantly, although Simon

James's *Exploring the World of the Celts* is used frequently, there is no reference to his *The Atlantic Celts* or to any of the works of John Collis on the subject. This could have been assessed using the latest evidence, especially the recent programmes of DNA analysis in Ireland.

The general absence of a critical gaze in this solid narrative of 'Celtic' military achievements and setbacks makes this a significantly less valuable work than it might have been.

NICK THORPE

*Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles (Late 5th to Early 8th Centuries A.D.): Their Classification and Context.* (British Archaeological Reports, British Series 357). By Sonja Marzinzik. 21 × 30 cm. xxii + 483 pp., 22 figs., 29 maps, 159 pls. and 50 tbs. and graphs. Oxford: John and Erica Hedges and Archaeopress, 2003. ISBN 1-84171-544-1. Price: £45.00 pb.

If it was not for British Archaeological Reports the results of many important doctoral theses would not have been published. Some may quibble over the quality and the content of certain volumes, but overall the discipline would be worse off without these blue and red tomes, examples of which surely must reside on the bookshelves of most archaeologists. A good case in point is Marzinzik's research, presented here as number 357 in the British Series. Why? Because this is a much overdue study of early Anglo-Saxon buckles — one of the most common grave goods from the period.

In many ways, the work is very much a traditional study of an individual artefact, employing a thorough assessment of all major buckle-types, their typology, chronology and distribution. Rather than producing a totally new set of groups, Marzinzik takes many of the pre-existing classifications and refines and expands upon them. There is most definitely a certain Germanic thoroughness about the way it has been undertaken, resulting in the creation of a robust set of types and sub-types. An important addition is the comparisons that are made with Continental buckles: this is essential considering that many buckles enjoy a distribution that extends throughout Europe and in some cases even further a field. These 'external' parallels offer valuable typological and chronological evidence, and are often inaccessible to students from Britain.

The traditional typology is, however, followed by a more fashionable social analysis in an attempt to unravel the identities of which types were worn by whom and why. The gender- and age-associations are explored first; before the author moves on to examine social hierarchy. Some of the identified patterns are important, such as the gendered associations of several types, and this highlights the value of combining classification and social context in this manner. These two sections comprise the core of the study; other topics consider the actual belts and their associated objects, while the economic and cultural issues that buckles reflect are also considered, before the study is rounded off with some concluding remarks.

However, it is not without faults. By limiting herself to a national sample of 1,379 buckles, of which 1,270 come from grave contexts, some of the rarer buckles comprise relatively small groups and inferences based on these are always going to be at the mercy of new discoveries. This reviewer suspects that the chronological span allocated to several groups could be extended. Also there is some repetition, particularly between the chapters on typology and identity where gender-associations are repeated; although to be fair the latter does offer an overview in order to draw out the salient points. Only about 20% of the volume is taken up with the text; the remainder consists of supporting data in the form of tables and charts (perhaps better integrated with the text), illustrations (of varying quality) and a printout of all the records in the database arranged by type. Although certainly extensive, the latter is fairly user-friendly unlike some databases which accompany BARs!

But if the publisher had taken the time and effort to put this on a searchable CD the value would have increased manifold.

The author states that the main aim of this successful study was to produce 'a widely applicable classification of belt buckles', which she has done. Whether it will become the standard system of classification remains to be seen, but its publication by BAR makes this a definite possibility.

NICK STOODLEY

*Shaping Community: The Art and Archaeology of Monasticism.* (British Archaeological Reports, International Series 941). Edited by Sheila McNally. 21 × 30 cm viii + 189 pp., many figs., maps, plans and tbs. Oxford: John and Erica Hedges and Archaeopress, 2001. ISBN 1-84171-233-7. Price: £32.00 pb.

The study of monasticism is often very fragmented; the work of particular orders or sections of Christendom are studied in their own isolation and their connections rarely considered. This volume is an attempt to provide a more holistic study of monasticism through the study of three areas — Egypt and the Near East, Greece and Western Europe. The papers emerged from a conference held at the University of Minnesota in March 2000, which accompanied three linked exhibitions in Minnesota.

The volume has fifteen papers (plus a few abstracts of papers that were never actually written!) covering a variety of topics. The main linking theme is archaeological and artistic evidence for the nature of monastic communities, although often the contributions are fairly eclectic and the real connection between each remains unclear. Jodi Magness's account of the Essenes, a pre-Christian proto-monastic community (who we know much about, through both excavation and the Dead Sea Scrolls), is of particular interest for the light it sheds on early monastic communities. However these ideas are never really developed, and later papers are largely descriptive. There are papers on the Kellia in Egypt's Western Desert, Coptic wall paintings, three papers on religious women, one paper on Bordesley Abbey, and three on Greek and Balkan monasteries. A final paper by an architect, Garth Rockcastle, is short on examples, but long on rhetoric, of which a brief quotation will suffice; 'a threshold is an important condition in a wall or implied boundary because it marks the experiential moment of change or difference in a spatial sequence or relationship' (p. 181). Quite so.

While it is useful to have this material gathered in one place, very little is original research or has not been published elsewhere. Nor do the publishers really help by their sub-standard production of photographs and the placing of figures at the end of each chapter with their captions listed separately on another page. Most of the plans (and many of the photographs) are lifted from other publications; those made for the volume include some curious maps and plans generated by computer. There is no index, and each article has its own bibliography, with admitted inconsistencies.

I am sure that the delegates had a very jolly and interesting conference, and saw some nice exhibitions. But alas not all conferences translate into volumes worth publishing, whatever the pressures from the organisers to do so, and I fear that this volume is among them.

MARK HORTON

*Castles in Medieval Society: Fortresses in England, France, and Ireland in the Central Middle Ages.* By Charles Coulson. 16 × 24 cm. xi + 441 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN 0-19-820824-3. Price: £65.00 hb.

Scholars in castle studies have been waiting for this book for a long time. Taken together with a second forthcoming volume, it represents the summation of many of the

arguments Coulson has developed in a string of articles over the last 25 years. As such, it embodies a scholarly project of the very first importance in castle studies.

*Castles in Medieval Society* sets out to redress what Coulson terms ‘the crushing imbalance’ between military and social/aesthetic/cultural aspects of castles (p. 1). Coulson does this by compiling, reviewing and synthesising an array of contemporary documents and their references to castles and their owners. The scholarship is therefore almost exclusively documentary in nature — beyond the famous view of Lusignan from the *Tres Riches Heures* on the dust-jacket, the book is devoid of illustrations of any kind. Coulson examines early scholarship on castles; castle definitions; contemporary values surrounding castles; the relationship between castle and community; issues of lordship and lords; and in the final section, female castellans. The overall argument is difficult to summarise, beyond saying that Coulson draws attention to the diversity of practices involving castles, and takes a stand against simple definitions of military or other varieties.

It has to be said that *Castles in Medieval Society* is a very difficult read. Part of the reason for this is that Coulson’s subject, and his arguments, are necessarily complex and multifaceted — I don’t know how any writer could trace a path through the details of feudal tenure and castle imagery in a clear, direct and unambiguous manner without doing great violence to the material. However, grammar and syntax are tortuous, and the line of argument often quite involved; I select a passage at random: ‘Comparisons which have some relevance concern warfare, which falls outside the present subject; but how seignorial society was repaired after breakdown, and the use of fortress-customs to contain conflict, lie within it’ (p. 215).

It is best, therefore, to dip in to this book from time to time rather than attempt to read it from cover to cover at one sitting. Such an approach will yield two benefits. First, it brings out the value of example after previously ignored example that Coulson has found and given due prominence, each example one to be pondered and learnt from. In most cases, the original documents are inaccessible to those of us, particularly archaeologists, who lack the necessary skills in palaeography and/or languages. Second, many valuable insights that make one think in a fresh way about castles can be retrieved in this way from being buried in a footnote or the middle of a paragraph. If read in this manner, *Castles in Medieval Society* will prove to be a classic, a book of depth and detail that establishes definitively just how complex castles really are.

MATTHEW JOHNSON

*Monastic Landscapes*. By James Bond. 25 × 17 cm. 384 pp., 115 figs. and b&w pls., 33 colour pls. Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2004. ISBN 0-7524-1440-2. Price: £25.00 pb.

James Bond has spent much of his working life studying monastic landscapes, and this monumental book is a distillation of his many discoveries and ideas. It represents a new departure for Tempus Publishing, whose previous books have often been a little on the thin side; here we have a true work of scholarship that leaves few by-ways of the monastic landscape untravelled; an instant reference to a world of fisheries, rabbit warrens, barns and monastic gardens. The author has gathered together the key examples, provided excellent illustrative materials, a long bibliography and decent index.

The key question raised by this book is whether ‘monastic landscapes’ are a valid unit of study. Certainly some of the remains in the landscape are characteristically monastic — the precincts themselves, the great monastic barns and the massive reclamation of wetlands undertaken by the great Benedictine abbeys such as Glastonbury. But when we get to topics such as urban planning, arable farming or woodland management, were the monasteries any different to the activities of either the other ecclesiastical or indeed secular authorities? I very much doubt that we can tell whether a rabbit warren was monastic or

secular from the field remains alone; its monastic origins are derived from the documents which inform us that it was on a monastic estate. So this tends to be a study driven by the documentary evidence, and at times we lose the wider archaeological perspective of how the monasteries fitted into medieval society as a whole.

The methodology of each section reflects this documentary emphasis. First sources are cited that refer to landscape operations by the monasteries (such as farming, woodland management, reclamation, keeping of fish or birds), but it is the author's great contribution that he has then gone out into the field to look at what remains on the ground; the wood banks, the fisheries, the dovecots and the granges. It is this approach that has distinguished landscape archaeology from landscape history or historical geography and gives this study a real sense of place and context.

There are of course quibbles about the volume. The bibliographical referencing is by theme, so there is no direct linking with the text through footnotes or citations which can make the location of particular documentary references difficult to find. The important surveys of the former RCHM(E), now English Heritage, of key monastic sites such as Jervaulx and Stanley which show the sheer landscape complexity of monastic precincts are not included, and it would have been useful to have them more widely available in secondary literature. Despite having the Welsh Tintern Abbey on the cover, many of the examples are drawn from English abbeys, few from Wales, and none from Scotland or Ireland.

This is an important book and a compendium of information about monastic landscapes. It lays down the challenge to us all to look beyond the bare ruined choirs into the landscape, as the monastic communities themselves did, and to see medieval monasticism as an economic force as much as a spiritual presence. It should be on every medieval archaeologist's bookshelf.

MARK HORTON

*Perth: The Archaeology and Development of a Scottish Burgh* (Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee Monograph 3). By David P. Bowler. 21 × 30 cm. vi + 158 pp. + CD. 56 figs., maps and plans. Perth: Historic Scotland, 2004. ISSN 1360-5550. Price: £10.00 + £1.50 p + p pb.

Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee under the editorial leadership of Lisbeth Thoms has produced a third monograph in their series, on this occasion consisting of a survey and a project design for the future of archaeology in Perth. It is dedicated to the memory of Nicholas Bogdan who led major excavations there in the 1970s, but who suddenly died in 2002. This reviewer was Bogdan's Deputy Director in those freezing winter days on site in 1970s, and directed on site as well as contributing a history of Perth to that project. The harbinger of future reports reviewed here is therefore long awaited and much to be welcomed. The Preface and Foreword by David Breeze and Archie Duncan respectively remind the reader of the importance of the archaeological record at Perth: the stress on the survival of organic evidence in the waterlogged deposits emphasises the potential for learning from the site reports and analyses of the city with the greatest medieval archaeological potential in Scotland. The importance of the River Tay as a force in Perth's history is patent: it connected the burgh to the outside world, but also frequently flooded — the phrase 'swept away' is used both for the castle in 1209 (never replaced) and for various bridges (penultimately in 1621, not replaced for 150 years).

But this is not the publication of the archaeological backlog, the million words or more which Bogdan prepared in the quarter-century which separated his excavations from his untimely death, excavations which have been succeeded by dozens of further digs, watching briefs and boreholes. It heralds the future publication of the archaeology which

promises so much: archaeological data are cited in an enticing peep-show, but this book provides no clues as to when such publications might appear. Here is a first step towards placing in the public domain the enormous amount of material, much of it from the 12th and 13th centuries, which has accrued in 30 years and more of excavation in the burgh. Its objectives are modest: 'to understand the relation between natural topography and urban development'; 'to map the location of known and conjectured natural features underlying the town'; 'to map the depth, extent and nature of man-made deposits'; 'to assess the likely impact of modern development and the effect of foundation types'; 'to identify future avenues of research'. The concluding section listing future questions is excellent, providing a clear and overarching project design for the future of archaeology in Perth. An unlabelled CD (problematic in the modern flurry of disks) inside the back cover contains a text of the book and additional appendices (extending the printed work by almost 100%) listing sites, buildings etc. The culmination of Archie Duncan's Foreword, 'If you would know more about the thrifty 12th-century townfolk and the life they and their descendants led — read on', is not realised in this text, but our appetite is whetted for the very substantial reports which will follow, under the auspices of Olwen Owen and Historic Scotland. However, the appearance of this small book must not become an excuse for delay or lack of publication of the massive and unique backlog of Perth's medieval archaeology.

TOM BEAUMONT JAMES

*Barra and the Bishop's Isles: Living on the Margin.* By Keith Branigan and Patrick Foster. 18 × 25 cm. 160 pp.; 74 figs. and b&w pls.; 36 colour pls. Stroud: Tempus, 2002. ISBN 0-7524-1947-1. Price: £16.99 pb.

This compact but very well-illustrated volume reviews the archaeological survey data from a long-term Sheffield University project on the group of ten islands at the south end of the Outer Hebrides. Some of these are uninhabited spaces, exposed and treeless, and yet displaying a surprisingly rich and diverse archaeology, stretching back to Neolithic and Bronze-age social and ritual landscapes.

While the book's emphasis is very much on the prehistoric periods — extending to early first millennium A.D. brochs and wheelhouses — combined with a very interesting discussion on the early modern fortunes and demise of the islands' economies and populations (notably the quest for new lives in North America), there is a discussion on the tantalisingly scattered and rather fleeting archaeology of c. A.D. 500–1500 in the suitably titled chapter 5, 'Lost landscapes'. Pictish cellular houses, stones and material culture, plus Nordic pottery, shielings and placenames reveal a level of secular, religious and economic activity often overlain over many centuries. Strangely, apart from the picturesque island-like Kisimul castle, stronghold of Macneil of Barra (whose structure and evolution is unfortunately only briefly touched upon), the medieval population are all but invisible. The book is extremely well written, fluent and informative, and a very worthy addition to the Tempus series.

NEIL CHRISTIE

*Scottish Medieval Churches: Architecture and Furnishings.* By Richard Fawcett. 17 × 25 cm. 384 pp., 367 figs. Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0-7524-2527-7. Price: £17.99, \$29.99 pb.

This is not a book for the faint-hearted; it is a serious and detailed survey of architectural details. Richard Fawcett has presented a comprehensive outline of the

architectural features and internal furnishings found in Scottish churches. Every component that goes to make up a church — plans, windows, doorways, ceilings, mouldings, and so on — is given separate treatment. Different forms are described and compared using a vast number of photos and analytical drawings. Not only has Fawcett set out to present the full range of possibilities for each type of feature, which in many cases makes comparison possible for the first time, but he has sought to put the chronology on firmer footing. One chapter is concerned exclusively with the historical book documentation pertaining to the key sites. It is a comprehensive, authoritative work, which draws upon decades of professional engagement with the subject as an Inspector of Ancient Monuments. I doubt that there is a significant church in Scotland that Fawcett does not know well.

As he himself recognises, this study follows an old-fashioned agenda, which he justifies because churches in Scotland missed out on the analytical studies that were undertaken of most national churches in the 19th century. The reasons for this are bound up with the experience of the Reformation in Scotland, which was harder on the medieval fabric than in England and generated a reformed liturgy that inspired new architectural forms. More recently, the legacy of the Scottish Reformation has been a deep-seated antipathy towards Catholicism, which contributed to the neglect and decay of medieval churches, and discouraged scholarship. The only previous systematic attempt to survey this material in detail was undertaken by the architects MacGibbon and Ross who produced a three volume site-by-site catalogue, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland* (1896–7). Their account is more descriptive than analytical and if it has stood the test of time this is largely because there has been no serious rival.

The format of the book does not allow for extended consideration of architectural developments, but there is a strong chronological structure to it which allows Fawcett to explore an important theme: the divergence in style between Scotland and England that took place in the 14th century. It seems that as a consequence of the Wars of Independence Scottish architects turned their gaze away from England and towards France and the Netherlands. They also sought inspiration in their own Romanesque and Gothic past. This complex development could not be fully appreciated prior to the production of this volume.

Fawcett writes that he was motivated to undertake this project in order to make Scottish churches better understood and more appreciated. It certainly provides a convenient and authoritative resource for any serious student of the medieval Scottish church, but, although it is remarkably good value for money, this book is really for the committed visitor and professional scholar rather than the casual tourist. It is a kind of grammar for Scottish churches, which allows us to interpret the complete range of ecclesiastical architecture. It is now up to us to translate the expressions embedded in these stone texts.

STEPHEN T. DRISCOLL

*Les couvents des ordres mendiants et leur environnement à la fin du Moyen Âge.* By Panayota Volti. 17 × 25 cm. 307 pp., 73 colour pls. Paris: CNRS Editions, 2003. ISBN 2-271-06163-6. Price: €39.00 pb.

This is a volume about the mendicant orders of the Late Middle Ages in northern France and in parts of Belgium and the Netherlands. The friars derived from a variety of different orders (Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, and Augustinians) but had in common the notion that they held no property in common and were not bound to a single community, but were free to wander the land, preaching and gaining a living largely from charity. The study also includes two female orders — the Poor Clares and Dominican nuns, who spent a more sedentary and contemplative life.

Whilst these mendicant orders professed poverty, their actual establishments were quite extensive in terms of actual conventual buildings. However, with many located in towns where their main preaching mission was concentrated, these remains have fared less well, and many buildings have been demolished since the 17th century. This volume is an attempt at an 'archaeology' of these sites, without recourse to dealing with the actual archaeologists and their findings. Much use is made of documentary evidence and ground plans from the 18th and 19th centuries to reconstruct as much as can be done. Bold attempts are made to locate the various elements of the friaries, their relationship within the urban topography and within the broader context of late medieval art.

This study represents a useful first stage in placing the orders more centrally in the life and culture of the Late Middle Ages. But it comes from a strongly art-historical and historical perspective, and little mention is made of the results of any recent excavations on these sites. This reviewer suspects that there is more archaeological evidence out there than finds its way into this book.

MARK HORTON

*Saint-Jean-Des-Vignes in Soissons: Approaches to its Architecture, Archaeology and History.* (Bibliotheca Victorina 15). Edited by Sheila Bonds and Clark Maines. 17 × 25 cm. 568 pp., 5 charts, 85 pls. and 2 tbs. Turnhout: Brepols, 2003. ISBN 2-503-51421-9. Price: €120.00 hb.

This volume sets one of the longest running monastic archaeological projects in Europe into a wider context. Excavations have taken place at Saint-Jean-des-Vignes in the centre of Soissons since 1982, as a joint project of Brown and Wesleyan Universities. This important Augustinian house was founded around 1076, and continued into the 18th century as a Commendatory abbey. The great Gothic church survived into the early 19th century, when much was pulled down; but its West Front still stands today with its remarkable two spires. The west and south sides of the cloister escaped demolition, with the Abbot's lodgings and a remarkable two-storeyed refectory and undercroft located very unusually in the west range of the Abbey. The destruction of the Abbey has left scope for much archaeological excavation. Areas of the Abbey church, the cloister, chapter house, Abbot's lodgings and monks' latrines have all been looked at during the last 20 years.

But this is not an excavation report. It is aimed at a much wider academic audience. Detailed plans of the site are missing, and replaced by interpretative diagrams, making it impossible to work out in any detail where excavations have taken place. There is not a single drawn section, nor indeed any finds beyond a single fragment of wall painting, shown in the only colour illustration. Floor tiles for example are referred to as 'a variety of figural, floral, architectural and geometric motives typical of the later 13th century' (p. 268) but no study is available as to what they actually looked like or indeed evidence to back up this dating. We have to take completely on trust the assertions of what was discovered without any scope for re-interpretation or seeking out corroborative evidence. This would be satisfactory if there was an accompanying source to study the excavations — but the authors admit that only the chapter house has a final report, and that many of the conclusions have been made from unpublished work. The cloister, where excavations continued for ten years, is hardly mentioned and will apparently form a separate study in the future.

One section of the book is an attempt to give a theoretical perspective on monastic archaeology. Chapters are entitled 'Towards an Archaeology of Ritual' or 'Monastic Struggle and Ritual Resolution', and attempt to link some of the conclusions into a wider archaeological debate. The chapter house and the refectory have been chosen for this analysis, and the idea is explored that the two-storeyed refectories act as representations

of the *coenaculum* in Jerusalem, where Jesus took the Last Supper with his disciples. The analysis of these ritual spaces forms an interesting part of the book.

This is a huge study of a single site, and is likely to be widely read by historians and medievalists in general. It shows that archaeological approaches can contribute in new and interesting ways within a multi-disciplinary world. But, because the actual archaeological evidence is often very thin, much of the discussion relies on documentary evidence to make its points. The right balance between historical discussion and archaeological evidence has not been struck, and one can only hope that the promised volume on the cloister will give us more information to work with.

MARK HORTON

*Vernacular Buildings of Shropshire*. By Madge Moran. 20 × 26 cm. xvi + 576 pp., many elevations, figs., maps, plans and pls. Logaston: The Logaston Press, 2003. ISBN 1-873827-93-8. Price: £25.00 pb.

Madge Moran has written a book that is a milestone in the study of vernacular architecture in Shropshire. Between the covers of this weighty book — almost 600 pages — lies an astonishing amount of detail on hundreds of Shropshire houses. It is quite clearly the product of many decades of careful and meticulous scholarship, and tremendous and sustained effort in the field.

Moran structures her book using both thematic and chronological divides. Chapters on ‘defensive houses’ and ‘stone houses’ are followed by three chapters on different aspects of timber framing. Two chapters each are allotted to Ludlow and Shrewsbury, while Stokesay Castle, Ludford House and the town (not village, we are reminded) of Much Wenlock get separate chapters. The text is rounded off with chapters on the ‘transitional house’, on painted decorations and on dendrochronology. The volume concludes with a 150-page gazetteer covering selected houses, a list of cruck buildings, and a discussion of the Shropshire Dendrochronology project by Daniel Miles.

It has to be said that the logic behind this structure, and an overall argument about the pattern of Shropshire vernacular building and its relevance to the wider world, is not always apparent. The medieval origins of Shropshire houses are well covered, but the volume ‘fades out’ before there is any discussion of the end of the vernacular tradition. It is unclear why we get two discussions of dendrochronology rather than one. Perhaps most seriously, both polite and vernacular buildings are discussed without reflection on what the divide means. The difficulties of drawing a dividing line between polite and vernacular are all too familiar, and Moran is clearly aware of these difficulties. However, she simply goes on to ignore this problem rather than discuss it analytically. As a result, discussions of buildings at the dividing line (the most obvious example being Stokesay gatehouse) tend to flounder a little and others (cf. Ludlow and Shrewsbury Castles) are arguably irrelevant. The prefatory quotations from Socrates and Johnny Nash (‘the more that I find out the less I know’) suggest that the structuring of all this material so carefully gathered is not a task that Moran views as feasible.

It is, however, inappropriate to castigate the book for analytical infelicities. Its primary purpose is to record and set out examples of vernacular building, and as such it is packed with fascinating material. I learnt a lot from its account of decorative details, vernacular sculpture, and wall-painting in particular. As one would expect, there is a detailed discussion of the different cruck forms to be found in this county so exceptionally rich in the form that will satisfy even the most avid cruck enthusiast.

The late Eric Mercer’s thoughts on Shropshire buildings are eagerly awaited; they should be an ideal complement to this volume. Madge Moran and her colleagues are to

be congratulated on *Vernacular Buildings in Shropshire* and the scholarly work that lies behind it.

MATTHEW JOHNSON

*Charter Quay, The Spirit of Change: The Archaeology of Kingston's Riverside.* By Phil Andrews, Jon Lowe, Karen Nichols, Christopher Phillpotts and Andrew Powell. 22 × 27 cm. iv + 62 pp., 112 figs. Salisbury: The Trust for Wessex Archaeology Ltd. ISBN 1-874350-38-8. Price: £4.95.

This is an attractively produced report on the archaeological work required for the redevelopment of a large site in the historic town of Kingston, Surrey, around the mouth of the Hogsmill, a tributary of the Thames. Indeed it is deceptively attractive, not in that there is a huge discrepancy between the quality of production and that of the contents, but rather in that the vacuous head title and colourful picture of the expensive new flats on the front make it look dangerously like a glossy time-share sales brochure. In fact this is an informative overview of the results of excavations in an important location. Kingston housed a later Anglo-Saxon minster and royal vill; it became a High-medieval borough; opposite Hampton Court it also developed to be the post-medieval county town of Surrey and by the late 19th century was an affluent London suburb.

Archaeological evidence of major Anglo-Saxon activity remains elusive, however, and frustratingly little is said here about Early Anglo-Saxon pottery and settlement traces found recently at sites just outside the excavated area. Such is also the case with the probably 11th-century fabric of the now demolished St Mary's church. In the 12th century a planned market town is in evidence here, with initially wide burgage plots. A particularly informative set of finds are the timbers from a framed building with a wall-plate re-used in one of a series of revetments defining and strengthening the river bank. Later revetments include re-used boat timbers. It is noted that the rebuilding of revetments and advancing of the waterfront appears to have been undertaken piecemeal, plot by plot. The floral and faunal evidence for diet in this phase also proves to be substantial and comprehensive.

The Late- and post-medieval periods saw a pressure on space that brought the subdivision of plots, and some acts of building over adjacent plots, whose boundaries might nonetheless be respected in aspects of layout. The changing economic and social functions of the town are nicely represented by the successive importance of productive activities, followed by inns, and a 19th-century department store on the site. However, as this process advances the reliance on historical and archaeological evidence in explaining the site becomes confused, to the point that it is not clear what role archaeology really has left to play. An answer is glimpsed in the detailed analysis of actual consumption here in the form of food waste and high-quality glassware; one hopes that had the site been more residential in character (as it now is) this line would have been pursued more vigorously. At the end of the volume a list of specialist reports accessible on the Wessex Archaeology web-site is given. Altogether, this inexpensive report can be recommended to the attention of all with an interest in medieval Surrey, and/or the High- and Late-medieval town.

JOHN HINES

*I Mulini nell'Europa Medievale.* (Atti del Convegno di San Quirino d'Orcia, 21-3 Sett. 2000; Biblioteca di storia agraria medievale 21). Edited by Paola Galetti and Pierre Racine. 15 × 22 cm. x + 374 pp., 61 figs. Bologna: CLUEB, 2003. ISBN 88-491-2046. Price: €29.00 pb.

Deriving from an international conference held to coincide with the official opening of a 'Park of the Mills' (a set of restored water mills and systems at one of the main medieval

milling centres for Siena — briefly discussed by Balestracci and Comi), this collection of eighteen papers focuses chiefly on the technological aspects of water- and windmill construction and evolution across western Europe. Whilst the range extends from Portugal to Poland (but with various of the French spoken papers not published here), there are eight specifically Italian contributions, and Spain/Portugal is well served with three essays. Chronologically, the papers concentrate on the period c. A.D. 1250–1600, although a valuable lead-in is offered by Galetti who examines evidence (primarily charters) for Early-medieval water mills in the Po region and the emergence of elite (lay and monastic) ownership. The archaeology is largely lacking pre-1100, but the short descriptive comments allow for some comparison with medieval mills. In general even for the Middle Ages, there is still a heavy reliance on imagery and textual data (one can note in this context the detailed manuscript of c. A.D. 1425 by a German mill engineer who worked in early 15th-century Italy. Comet offers an informed overview of mills ‘entre technique et idéologie’ and the sources at hand, whilst van Dam concisely outlines the significant ecological perspective of windmill evolution in medieval Holland.

Two papers were of particular interest to this reviewer: the first is Berthier’s discussion (albeit rather short) of the complex of boat- and bridge mills in medieval Paris. With examples attested from the mid-9th century, these were principally gathered on the north branch of the Seine, with the branch south of the Île de Cité used for boat traffic; these mills were long in royal, Episcopal and monastic ownership, and with diverse owners often side-by-side along the ‘bridges’. Bazzana, meanwhile, provides a fascinating review of data for Muslim Spain (10th–15th centuries A.D.) and the use of the horizontal water-wheel; here Arab texts reveal more rural community-based mechanisms. The contrast lies with the period following the Christian Reconquest when there is a progressive increase in mill structures and particularly a ‘takeover’ of vertical types (these not unknown, however, in the Islamic epoch) and seigneurial control.

In sum, this is an informative collection. The papers are generally well presented, although, arguably, the volume as a whole features restricted illustrative support, and, in a few cases, the quality of the images is very poor (especially maps made illegible through scanning or crudely hand-drawn). What we gain, however, is a series of tidy introductions to the study of technology and role of mills across key zones of medieval Europe.

NEIL CHRISTIE

*Royal Tombs of Medieval England.* By Mark Duffy. 17 × 25 cm. 320 pp., 111 figs. and 18 colour pls. Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2003. ISBN 0-7524-2579-X. Price: £17.99, \$24.99 pb.

This is a book which had been waiting to be written. Mark Duffy is to be congratulated on gathering up a large collection of data from documents and integrating a wide range of antiquarian drawings and prints (rather grey), supplemented by some excellent colour photographs. The book is divided into three parts: 1066–1307, 1307–1400 and 1400–1509, each introduced by a series of very short essays on matters such as location, ritual, tomb design and production. The text is well produced and can be read at two levels. The material is summed up in the precursor chapters in each part, providing a summary level, and if the reader wants more it is then expanded with a mass of detail on individual tombs. This extensive material is not well served by a lightweight index, which lacks, for example, any reference to the outstanding tomb of Edward III’s brother, John of Eltham (although his tomb is well served in the text).

The approach is essentially historical with little archaeological input, tracing in detail the fortunes of the much-battered tombs which have survived and recording what is known of those which have not. He manages the complexities of royal lineage on the whole very

well, and the texts on the individual tombs are carefully constructed. There is a useful discussion of the origins of the ideas for royal tombs erected by the royal houses of medieval England and there are references to many ecclesiastical parallels. There is therefore much to be grateful for in this book.

On the debit side the organisation of the text — summaries followed by expanded sections — leads to much repetition of information, of phrases and of sentences. This is where an apparently inexperienced author would have been helped by proper editorial support to work up his wealth of material into a properly rounded book without the repetition and with a proper concluding analysis. In many of the debates, for example about whether the 'Rufus' tomb at Winchester ever contained the remains of William Rufus, Duffy produces the evidence but does not offer an opinion of his own. The text appears to have arisen from a detailed database of information, and at times reads like one, becoming somewhat breathless. Occasionally the text goes off the rails, for example in the discussion of Robert of Normandy (pp. 47–50), who starts off on page 47 as Robert, but becomes Richard on page 48 with two illustrations labelled 'Richard'. There is plenty of scope for a reworked second edition of this work, but if Tempus wants to be considered a serious academic publisher it must produce fewer books more carefully and support its authors better.

TOM BEAUMONT JAMES

*Decorated Medieval Floor Tiles of Somerset.* By Barbara J. Lowe. 21 × 30 cm. vi + 160 pp., 17 figs., maps and plans, and 598 catalogue illus. Taunton: Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society and Somerset County Museums Service. ISBN 086-183-366-X. Price: £pb.

This is a welcome addition to the growing corpus of county and regional works on medieval floor tiles which has flourished under the impetus of the Census of Medieval Tiles in Britain, and is evidenced by the number of recent reviews in this journal. Such studies also reveal an increasing shift in floor tile literature from an art-historical to an archaeological perspective, with medieval tiles meriting their own Shire book in 2000.<sup>1</sup>

*Decorated Medieval Floor Tiles of Somerset* is an illustration of just how recent modern archaeological approaches to floor tiles are (Elizabeth Eames's groundbreaking work aside), and some will be disappointed by the author's admission that it 'does not contain a detailed study of fabrics, or of possible places of manufacture'. Such work must await systematic petrological study, and Lowe also points to the comparative lack of documentary evidence in Somerset, which might have provided firmer clues as to the tiles' provenance. However, the author's intention is that the catalogue should act as a reference source for archaeologists, museum staff, art historians and design students — in that order. Because of this, the catalogue is set out thematically rather than by site or by date, and this is one of its strengths. The researcher, faced with what they know to be part of a lion's leg or a wing from a pair of addorsed birds, can turn quickly to the relevant page and place the design in its archaeological and historical context. Writing as one who has struggled through the far-flung designs illustrated in other catalogues, I can only welcome the format.

There are refreshing departures from the norm in Lowe's introduction. In particular the brief discussion of exactly where floor tiles were laid in monastic settings ('entire floors of chapels, the great hall, the chapter house . . . the refectory, and . . . normally . . . in front

<sup>1</sup> E.g. J. M. Lewis, *The Medieval Tiles of Wales* (Cardiff, 1999), Ian M. Betts, *Medieval 'Westminster' Floor Tiles* (London, 2002), and Hans van Lemmen, *Medieval Tiles* (Princes Risborough, 2000). Reviewed in volumes 45 and 47 of this journal (2001 and 2003).

of and around the various altars in the church' [p. 3]) looks forward to the type of spatial studies that have been called for in this journal. The author also discusses the fate of Somerset pavements after the Dissolution and points out that 'available tiles were . . . [re-]used around family tombs' (ibid.) — it is not often that floor tiles are considered as part of the 'protestantisation' of ecclesiastical space! In addition, there is a rare historiography of medieval tile studies under the heading 'Eighteenth to Twentieth Century', before Lowe embarks on a more traditional, but necessary, run-through of 'Types and Manufacture', and 'Design Groups and Schools'. All in all, *Decorated Medieval Floor Tiles of Somerset* is a useful and thought-provoking addition to the genre.

AMANDA RICHARDSON

The following publications were also received:

*The Celts: A Very Short Introduction*. By Barry Cunliffe. 11 × 18 cm. x + 161 pp., 18 figs., maps and tbs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN 0-19-280418-9. Price: £6.99 pb.

A masterly little book which provides a scholarly and contemporary view of the Celts, their past and present, and discusses ways in which they have been presented.

*The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology, c. 400-1200*. (Publications of the Philological Society 37). By Patrick Sims-Williams. 15 × 23 cm. xii + 464 pp., 2 figs. and 17 tbs. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. ISBN 1-4051-0903-3. Price: £22.99 pb.

A comprehensive linguistic study and a new chronology of inscriptions found in Western Britain and Brittany in Roman and Irish ogam alphabets facilitates re-interpretation of past evaluations.

*Roman, Runes and Ogham: Medieval Inscriptions in the Insular World and on the Continent*. Edited by John Higgitt, Katherine Forsyth and David N. Parsons. 16 × 24 cm. xix + 222 pp., 52 figs., 6 tbs., 69 pls. Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2001. ISBN 1-900289-44-X. Price: £35.00 hb.

Twenty-one papers range very widely in subject matter through archaeology and methodology to gender and prayer and across Britain, Continental Europe and Scandinavia.

*Geschichte des Bistums le Mans von der Spätantike bis zur Karolingerzeit: Actus Pontificum Cenomannis in Urbe Degentium und Gesta Aldrici*. (3 vols., Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Monograph 56/1-3). By Margarete Weidemann. 21 × 30 cm. 39 maps, 1 fold-out plan. Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseums, 2003. ISBN 3-88467-077-8, ISSN 0076-275X. Price: not stated hb.

Extensive collection of edited historical documents and appropriate maps relating to the bishopric of Le Mans from late antiquity to the Carolingian era.

*Death Ritual and Germanic Social Structure (c. AD 200–600)*. (British Archaeological Reports, International Series 1164). By Mads Ravn. 21 × 30 cm. iii + 151 pp., many figs., maps, plans and tbs. Oxford: John and Erica Hedges and Archaeopress, 2003. ISBN 1-84171-532-8. Price: £29.00 pb.

A contribution to the debate about 'Germania Libera' which ranges broadly from the Ukraine and Romania to Poland, Scandinavia and Britain, with a special focus on 'Gothic' cemeteries and social structure.

*Burial Practice in Early England*. By Alison Taylor. 17 × 24 cm. 192 pp., 100 figs. Stroud: Tempus, 2001. ISBN 0-7524-1487-9. Price: £17.99, \$29.99 pb.

A well-illustrated sketch of burial practice covering the Neolithic to A.D. 1066, with many examples drawn from Cambridgeshire. Some inaccuracies, but a useful volume.

*Anglo-Saxon Styles*. Edited by Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown. 15 × 23 cm. viii + 320 pp., many figs., maps, plans and tbs. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003. ISBN 0-7914-5870-9. Price: \$23.95 pb.

A useful collection of cross-cultural papers which explore art, literature and sculpture and challenge the notion of the imposition of unitary forms on the culture of half a millennium.

*The Sandbach Crosses: Sign and Significance in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture*. By Jane Hawkes. 19 × 25 cm. 192 pp., 109 figs. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003. ISBN 1-85182-659-9. Price: £30.00, €45.00 hb.

A beautifully produced art-historical account of this outstanding group of 9th-century crosses in Cheshire.

*Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary and Archaeological Perspectives*. Edited by Patricia Skinner. 16 × 24 cm. x + 175 pp. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003. ISBN 0-85115-931-1. Price: £45.00, \$75.00 hb.

David Hinton contributed an archaeological perspective to a conference in 2000 at Southampton. Mainly new papers, one reprinted.

*War at Sea in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Edited by John B. Hattendorf and Richard W. Unger. 16 × 25 cm. xiv + 276 pp., 11 figs. and 6 maps. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003. ISBN 0-85115-903-6. Price: £50.00, \$85.00 hb.

Sixteen largely historical papers on aspects of naval warfare from the Viking Age to the Renaissance by select specialists from all over Europe.

*Medieval Towns: The Archaeology of British Towns in their European Setting* (2nd ed.). By John Schofield and Alan Vince. 17 × 25 cm. xii + 335 pp., 129 figs. London: Continuum, 2003. ISBN 0-8264-6130-1. Price: £25.00 pb.

A considerably revised and expanded second edition of the book published as *Medieval Towns* in 1994, with more recent data from British towns and, as the new subtitle implies, greater attention to archaeological studies of medieval towns in Continental Europe.

*Medieval Dublin III*. Edited by Seán Duffy. 16 × 24 cm. 240 pp., 88 figs., pls. and tbs. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002. ISBN 1-85182-649-1. Price: €19.95, £14.95 pb.

*Medieval Dublin IV: Proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium 2002*. Edited by Seán Duffy. 16 × 23 cm. 368 pp., many figs., maps, plans and tbs. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003. ISBN 1-85182-744-7. Price: €24.95, £19.95 pb.

Two additional volumes of papers from the medieval symposium on Dublin contain important archaeological papers on Viking-period and medieval Dublin and reassessments of historical documents.

*Glasfunde des 11. bis 17. Jahrhunderts aus Schleswig* (Ausgrabungen in Schleswig, Berichte und Studien 16). By Peter Steppuhn. 18 × 25 cm. 135 pp., many figs., maps and tbs. Neumünster: Wachholtz, 2002. ISBN 3-529-01466-4. Price: €38.86 pb.

The 16th volume in the series of specialist reports on finds from medieval Schleswig reviews the finds of glass in the form of vessels, window glass, beads, rings and buttons, and miscellaneous craft-related forms including linen-smoothers. Chronological tendencies, economic implications, and external contacts are all considered on this basis.

*The Medieval Castle in Ireland and Wales: Essays in Honour of Jeremy Knight*. By John R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Connor. 16 × 24 cm. 262 pp., 97 figs., maps, plans and pls. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003. ISBN 1-85182-726-9. Price: £45.00, €55.00 hb.

Castle experts offer up-to-date papers on the castles of Wales and Ireland derived from the Castle Studies Group's Maynooth conference. Wales (which takes precedence due to the dedication to Jeremy Knight) and Ireland shared much cultural heritage in the Middle Ages.

*The Black Death 1346-1353: The Complete History*. By Ole J. Benedictow. 16 × 24 cm. xvi + 433 pp., 3 figs., 11 maps and 38 tbs. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004. ISBN 0-85115-943-5. Price: £30.00 hb.

An excellent and full historical account of the Black Death in Europe by a historical demographer. Discusses archaeological evidence for rats. Confidently argues for the traditional rat-and-flea-borne bubonic plague.

*Sealed by Time: The Loss and Recovery of the Mary Rose (The Archaeology of the Mary Rose 1)*. By Peter Marsden. 22 × 30 cm. xiv + 194 pp., 22 colour pls. and 130 figs., maps and plans. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003. ISBN 0-9544029-0-1. Price: £19.95 hb.

The first of five proposed volumes on the archaeology from the Mary Rose and, surprisingly, the first to be published by the Mary Rose Trust. A good price, and plenty of data supported by useful line drawings and, inevitably, many murky and foggy pictures of the epic task of securing and raising the wreck.