Book reviews

Les destinées de l'*Illyricum* méridional pendant le haut Moyen Âge. Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, Moyen Âge 120–2. Rome: l'École Française de Rome. 2009. 238 pp. + 50 b/w and 101 color figures. EUR 55. ISBN 978 2 7283 0870 5; ISSN 0223 9883.

This is the proceedings of a conference jointly organized by École française de Rome, Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, and the Albanian Institute of Archaeology in Lezha (Albania) in 2008. In the introduction, Etleva Nallbani explains its main objective as throwing new light on developments in the Western Balkans during the early Middle Ages, primarily on the basis of archaeological research conducted in the past two decades. The present volume witnesses not only the technological advances in archaeology, which can be seen at work in a number of contributions, but it also bears the mark of a renewed interest in rural settlements and the relative departure from political history in favour of detailed analyses of production, distribution, and exchange routes.

Rather than summarize the wealth of insights in a short space, I will focus on two major themes addressed by this volume: urban and rural life in Illyricum and patterns of production and distribution. Pascale Chevalier and Jagoda Mardešić contribute an insightful piece on urban life at Salona during the sixth–seventh centuries based on the recent excavations conducted in the episcopal complex of the town. The gradual transformation of the late Roman city is best exemplified by the 'ruralization' of public spaces, the appearance of fortified areas owing to growing insecurity in the course of the sixth century, and the presence of intramural burials. What seems atypical for many fortresses of the Balkans is the conclusion that Salona was not destroyed by barbarian invaders but was peacefully and gradually deserted towards the middle of the seventh century. Unlike the case of Salona, at Lissus the spectacular cemeteries spanning several centuries from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages are located outside the walls of the city. The preliminary conclusions drawn by Etleva Nallbani and Luc Buchet point to a high density of

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graves and a significant variety in grave architecture, which might witness the presence of a heterogeneous population at Lissus in the early Middle Ages.

The decay of urban institutions and the gradual impoverishment caused by wars and epidemics during the sixth century are discussed by Skënder Muçai in his concise overview of Albanian archaeological research concerning late antiquity. This phenomenon is exemplified by the case of Byllis, an important town from Epirus Nova. Aside from urban developments Muçai points to the gradual ruralization of the Illyrian provinces of Epirus Nova and Prevalitana, beginning with the second half of the fourth century. The transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages is covered by Jean Terrier, Miljenko Jurković and Ivan Matejčić in a very important essay furthering our understanding of rural life in the Guran region of Istria. What seems most interesting after the initial stages of the research is the existence of purely medieval settlements in this rural area, created anew and alongside agglomerations dating back to late antiquity.

The patterns of exchange in the Adriatic, Aegean, and the Mediterranean regions were drastically transformed after the geo-political changes of the seventh century. Joanita Vroom focuses on the ceramic finds from the excavations from the Triconch Palace at Butrint. Based on the pottery assemblage Vroom concludes that Butrint 'was linked politically, culturally and commercially with the Byzantine world', but also that cooking jars from Butrint have analogies on the Italian coast, especially at Otranto. Similar cultural and economic connections seem to be true also for Lissus. Sauro Gelichi and Claudio Negrelli use the same type of evidence, this time from a western Adriatic perspective, based on excavations conducted recently at Comacchio. Much like Vroom in the case of Butrint, they acknowledge a certain continuity with late antique patterns of production and exchange but also emphasize the economic regionalization. A major conclusion drawn from the development of local production and the study of widespread ceramic types, the globular amphora in particular, is the role of the north Adriatic region in the intensification of exchange with the Agaean world and the eastern Mediterranean, with Venice and Comacchio acting as *emporia*.

The ten diverse and stimulating contributions gathered in this volume will no doubt offer a new perspective on the destinies of Illyricum in the early Middle Ages. We should expect even more enlightening finds from the multinational archaeological teams working on major Albanian sites.

University of Florida ANDREI GÂNDILĂ

Early Medieval Europe 2011 **19** (3)

The Present and the Past in Medieval Irish Chronicles. By Nicholas Evans. Studies in Celtic History. Woodbridge and Rochester: The Boydell Press. 2010. xv + 289 pp. £60. ISBN 978 1 84383 549 3.

The Irish chronicles, otherwise known as the Irish annals, are considered sources of paramount importance for the history of early medieval Ireland and Scotland, and for the dating of events in both Ireland and Britain, but they survive in manuscripts from no earlier than the eleventh century. This raises the question of how much of the information is genuinely early, and what has been added or altered during the later development of the texts. Evans's study builds on previous research, and attempts some of the basic groundwork to improve our understanding of the annals by establishing their textual development, and by identifying key changes in them, both textual and chronological. To this purpose, his study is limited to the better-known and perhaps better-understood texts: the Annals of Ulster (AU) and its close relative, the Annals of Loch Cé; and the Annals of Tigernach (AT) and the *Chronicon Scotorum* (CS; both of the 'Clonmacnoise group'), with occasional reference to their close relatives, the Annals of Inisfallen and the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*.

The title (the 'Present' and 'Past') of the volume is apt. Evans's Introduction describes the manuscript sources and comments on previous scholarship (in particular and at some length on the recent controversial publications of Daniel Mc Carthy), and considers the various theories concerning the nature of the 'Chronicle of Ireland', the hypothetical common source to *c.*911 of the surviving texts. The first three chapters examine in turn the sources of the principal annals (AU, and AT and CS) for the period from 911 to 1100, and the relationship of the Clonmacnoise group to the 'Chronicle of Ireland', and with a fourth chapter examining the items shared by AU and the Clonmacnoise group for this period. Evans provides a detailed analysis of the annals' developing vocabulary, in which he detects evidence for communication between the various centres of Irish scholarly activity up to the mid-eleventh century. The remaining four chapters consider the earlier section of the annals, covering the period from 431 to 730, and evidence for the later alteration of these with the insertion of items from Mediterranean history – popes, emperors and some notable events – into the common stock of AU and the Clonmacnoise group. Following this, an attempt is made to reconstruct the chronology of the Irish chronicle at the time when these items were added, and further to reconstruct the original chronology of the annals before the addition of these items. The eighth chapter discusses evidence for the overall recasting of the Clonmacnoise-group annals for the years AD 431–730 at some time during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

This is followed by a chapter summarizing the conclusions reached in the preceding chapters and setting the chronicles in their wider geographical and social context. The ultimate conclusion of this second half of the book will no doubt be somewhat disappointing for historians of the early Middle Ages: Evans demonstrates that there are no easy solutions to the problems of the chronology of the annals for the period prior to 664, as his Appendix 1, a concordance of the annals for AD 431 to 730, makes clear. His renumbering (of necessity) of the annals of the so-called 'third fragment' of AT underlines the urgent need for a new edition of this text.

Although highly technical and densely argued, with extensive footnotes, *The Present and the Past* is written in a lucid and readable style, with the often complex evidence presented in an exceptionally clear and orderly manner. Maps are provided for places and geographical features, and for territories and peoples mentioned in the text, and there are numerous figures in the text tabulating the chronological questions under discussion. Most of the chapters conclude with a summary of their findings and with suggestions for further research. The edition by Boydell is of the very high standard we have come to expect from this publisher, and both publisher and author are to be congratulated on a volume that should be a model and inspiration for future scholars working on the early medieval insular chronicles where, as Evans observes more than once, there is still so much to be done.

Independent scholar HENRY GOUGH-COOPER

The Divorce of Lothar II: Christian Marriage and Political Power in the Carolingian World. By Karl Heidecker. Translated by Tanis M. Guest. Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 2010. xi +227 pp. £29.50, $45. ISBN 978 0 8014 3929 2.

The attempts of the Carolingian king Lothar II to divorce his wife Theutberga have long had a central place in the history of western marriage and of Carolingian politics. Yet many aspects of this case have been under- or unexamined. In this translated and revised version of his *Kerk, huwelijk en politieke macht: de zaak Lotharius II (855–869)* (Amsterdam, 1997), Karl Heidecker provides an accessible, lucid, and well-researched account of this notorious affair. For greater detail on certain points, particularly sources and evidence, scholars will want to consult the original Dutch book, but the English version is the more straightforward read.

Heidecker opens with a concise summary of changes in marriage regulations from the time of Pippin the Short to the grandsons of Charlemagne, demonstrating the gradual development of some new ideas. By the mid-ninth century churchmen tried to insist that marriages be blessed by priests and to Christianize formerly secular elements of marriage. Heidecker's ensuing discussion of sources recognizes the hostility of the authors of many surviving texts from the time of the scandal; quite a few were composed after Lothar's death. The sources are therefore generally negative toward Lothar, and Heidecker rightly emphasizes that we cannot assume these texts reflect widespread opinion during Lothar's lifetime.

Heidecker presents Lothar's attempts to divorce Theutberga in six acts. In clear explanations of complex familial and political relations, the first two acts demonstrate why Lothar found it expedient to marry Theutberga in 855 and why he first tried to divorce her in 857. In 855, alliance with Theutberga's brother Hucbert was advantageous, but by 857, Lothar wished to sever this bond. An accusation of sodomy and incest against Theutberga and Hucbert gave Lothar a chance of remarriage, which was crucial because Lothar wished to formalize a union with Waldrada, his companion prior to marrying Theutberga and the mother of his son Hugo. The third act analyzes Hincmar of Rheims' *De divortio*, one of the most important surviving sources. Heidecker tracks political changes over the time Hincmar wrote it and compares his opinions on Lothar's divorce with those on other contemporary cases. Hincmar did not remain consistent in his views but rather moulded his responses to fit political expediency.

Acts 4 and 5 further explore Lothar's supporters and detractors. Heidecker offers a cogent explanation, especially for non-specialists, of the reasons bishops and kinsmen backed Lothar, or in some cases did not, when he lived openly with Waldrada while Theutberga proclaimed her innocence and appealed to Pope Nicholas I for reconsideration of her case (860–2). Significantly in Act 4, Heidecker consigns to 'the dustbin' the idea of *Friedelehe*, marriage between two consensual partners without parental consent. By employing manuscript evidence and picking apart illogical interpretations of texts, Heidecker shows that partnerships between men and women should be examined contextually and individually. Act 5 measures the degree to which Pope Nicholas I (858–67) exerted authority over the divorce case. When kings wanted something from the pope or he was able to play them off one another, he could succeed in imposing his will far from Rome. In 865, Lothar had to take Theutberga back as queen because Nicholas excommunicated him, putting his kingdom in peril from his uncles Louis the German and Charles the Bald. Yet shortly thereafter Nicholas could not enforce his

removal of bishops nor his excommunication of Waldrada when those in power north of the Alps passively ignored his orders. Lothar's case here stands as an example of the limits on the power and will of an early medieval pope.

Lothar's efforts to divorce were cut short by his death in 869. Many immediately saw his end as a judgement upon the king, and this negative view of Lothar has endured. Heidecker calls for a new interpretation and convincingly demonstrates the political nature of these matters while acknowledging their considerable social and religious ramifications. Lothar's case helped spur increasing clerical definition of legal marriage and the emergence of two key characteristics of lawful marriage in the west: mutual consent of both partners and lasting monogamy.

Now that Heidecker's valuable contribution to the history of politics, marriage, and law in the Carolingian world is available in English, it should gain the wider audience it deserves. The inclusion of some relatively long source selections, with original Latin passages in footnotes, makes the book ideal for graduate seminars. The book's genealogical charts are indispensible for understanding the text, especially for anyone not well versed in this period of Carolingian history. A map and list of kings' reigns are also included.

Northern Illinois University VALERIE L. GARVER

Byzantine Art: Recent Studies. Essays in Honor of Lois Drewer. Edited by Colum Hourihane. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 378. Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 33. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2009. xx + 197 pp. $60, €45. ISBN 978 0 86698 426 3.

The nine essays in this volume were presented as papers at a one-day conference held at the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, in 2008, to coincide with the annual Byzantine Studies Conference held that year in nearby Rutgers University. They focus on Byzantine iconography, and are dedicated to Lois Drewer, who developed the Byzantine resources in the Index over the course of her long and fruitful career. Three of the essays deal with themes relevant to the chronological span of this journal, and they will be the focus of this review.

Slobodan Ćurčić's 'Representations of Towers in Byzantine Art: The Question of Meaning' (pp. 1–37) surveys – as the title indicates – images of towers in early Byzantine art, with particular attention to the corpus of sixth- to eighth-century floor mosaics in (modern) Syria and Jordan, and to the Khludov Psalter in Moscow (Historical Museum, cod. gr. 129),

normally dated to the mid-ninth century. Ćurčić persuasively argues that towers have a distinctive iconographic and symbolic role in Byzantine art, essentially as symbols of Heavenly Jerusalem. Unfortunately, he appears to be unaware of an article which anticipates his own discussion of the mosaics (my own 'The Conquest of Space', in Ruth Macrides (ed.), *Travel in the Byzantine World*, 2002), and the major book on the Khludov Psalter, which deals explicitly with the miniatures he considers (Kathleen Corrigan's *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters*, 1992). As a result, the chapter is stimulating but not definitive; we await Ćurčić's promised monograph on the theme for a deeper treatment of the material.

Henry Maguire's 'Moslems, Christians, and Iconoclasm: Erasures from Church Floor Mosaics during the Early Islamic Period' (pp. 111–19) provides a provocative rethinking of why animal and human figures in the floor mosaics of certain churches in Syria and Jordan were carefully picked out and replaced with foliate motifs or scrambled mosaic cubes. The Christian congregations of the churches concerned were apparently responsible, and it is widely believed that peer pressure from their Islamic neighbours spurred this 'iconophobic' activity. Maguire focuses on the Church of the Virgin at Madaba, where in 767 a sixth-century mosaic was removed and replaced with a mosaic inscription that begins 'Looking on Mary the Virgin mother of God and on Christ whom she bore . . .' We do not know what the inscription replaced, but Maguire suggests that it may refer to an image of the Virgin in the apse. If so, Christian iconophobia in Syria and Jordan was not directed against sacred portraits; and indeed the mutilated subjects on church floors are normally personifications, people, and animals, often still just discernable. Basing his arguments on the acts of the second Council of Nicaea of 787, which temporarily restored image veneration, Maguire notes that animals and nature personifications were associated with pagan gods and idols. He concludes that, rather than bowing to Muslim peer pressure, the Christians who defaced mosaics in the churches of Syria and Jordan were enthusiastic Orthodox worshippers, familiar with the theological debates about images centred in Constantinople, who were attempting to distinguish themselves from idolators in the long-running image debates that began in the seventh century.

Finally, Eunice Dauterman Maguire's 'Muslims, Christians, and Iconoclasm: A Case Study of Images and Erasure on Lamps in the Johns Hopkins University Archaeological Collection' (pp. 121–52) – a pendant of sorts to the previous chapter – looks at defaced clay oil lamps. This is a virtually untouched topic, and Dauterman Maguire presents examples of lamps with ornament removed before firing and ornament chipped away after removal from the kiln. She asks why images on lamps were sufficiently important to warrant this treatment, and concludes with an

examination of the amuletic function of lamps before noting that these small oil lamps made of clay are important barometers of the changes that mark the transformation from late antiquity to the Middle Ages.

University of Birmingham LESLIE BRUBAKER

Europe's Barbarians AD 200–600. By Edward James. The Medieval World. Harlow: Pearson. 2009. xii + 344 pp. ISBN 978 0 582 77296 0.

Assessing the overall significance of the role played by Europe's barbarians in the early medieval period has never been completely straightforward. Whether the rise to prominence of Goths, Franks, and others was cause or effect of the collapse of Roman dominance has long been debated, but it used to be agreed that the appearance of these entities marked a new historical era, and that some of them could be seen as ancestral to the states of early modern and modern Europe. Most of us are now pretty familiar with one of the major intellectual developments which has further complicated barbarian history. Since no one – a few ultra-nationalists aside – now believes that national communities, rigidly defined by descent and culture, have provided the prime means of organizing larger groups of human beings since time immemorial, how – given the inadequate descriptions provided by Roman sources – are we to conceive of the agglomerations of humanity operating under such labels as Visigoth and Frank? Moreover, as Edward James rightly points out, two other historiographical developments have further muddied the waters. First, the rise of a North American 'school' of late antique studies – with little interest in matters non-religious and in the increasingly former Roman west post-400 AD – has implicitly (and in part deliberately) suggested that the barbarians' rise to prominence was not a major historical phenomenon. Second, much of the output of the extensive European Science Foundation project on the Transformation of the Roman World focused on concepts such as 'continuity', 'transformation', and 'assimilation'. These again tend to imply that nothing very revolutionary was afoot in the passage from Roman to post-Roman Europe.

The appearance of James's new synthesis is thus timely, and, as you would expect from a scholar of his calibre, the work brings huge clarity to these troubled waters. Well designed, the study comprises an analytical introduction to the methodological problems – in both sources and historiography – involved in studying barbarians, followed by three narrative chapters, which serve a largely introductory role to the seven thematic ones which follow. These focus unerringly on the key issues in barbarian studies and provide the real meat of the work. A brief

conclusion rounds off the study. Throughout the writing is crystal clear and the touch light, the substantive sections being punctuated by enlightening asides. My favourite is a note that the site of Tara has been destroyed by people hunting the Ark of the Covenant.

The key thematic chapters display many virtues. The geographical range could not be bettered. James's study focuses not just on the traditional Goths and others, but introduces Slavs where appropriate (given his date limits), and – more consistently – deploys less well-known material from Ireland, Britain and Scandinavia to explore themes such as the longer-term effects of engagement with the Roman empire, religious conversion and the development of state structures. The result is a range of more interestingly complex arguments with a greater appreciation of the variety of possible particular outcomes within broader, overarching patterns of change. There are far too many to list, but I'm sure he's quite right, for instance, to emphasize in Chapter 10 both that so-called Arian Christians were convinced of the correctness of their position, and the variety of actual religious outcomes that emerged even in just those societies which converted to what was becoming Christian orthodoxy. I also particularly enjoyed the Scandinavian material in Chapter 11. For the most part, too, the full range of scholarly opinion is at least mentioned in all of these chapters and properly referenced allowing further exploration.

Being an interested party, I do have some reservations but most are pretty small. James doesn't come clean, for instance, that supposing the Gothic Tervingi to have been split before they were assaulted by the Huns involves using the mid-fifth-century Socrates, who demonstrably knew little about non-religious history, to correct Ammianus' detailed contemporary account: the chances that this is a methodologically correct move are very small. I am genuinely surprised, likewise, that he thinks that the majority of scholarly opinion follows Goffart's view that incoming barbarians were rewarded with tax allocations rather than real estate. I am myself confident that the contrary is true. In addition, many scholars (and they are numerous even if tending to make less noise in print than their opponents) are not so convinced as Chapter 5 appears to be that the modern insights into how larger-group identities change require us to discount our ancient source material's insistence that they nonetheless sometimes played such an important role in the action. But these are relatively small points, and my only major reservation is in fact with Chapter 8 on migration. This is a controversial topic and James is of course entitled to his own view, but I do think he spends too much time here on all the nonsense about Scandinavia. No one really believes this any more, and it does seem to me that he uses its unnecessarily detailed refutation to imply that all possible instances of large-group movement in the period are pretty much equally ridiculous. But the Tervingi and

Greuthungi of 376 or Theoderic's Ostrogoths in 480s – to take but two examples – are by contrast described as large mixed and coherent groups of humanity on the move in not obviously nonsensical contemporary accounts. Whatever its conclusions, the chapter would have been more helpful, I think, had it focused on these kinds of instance.

At least as important as these chapter level arguments, however, are the overarching perspectives James brings to his work. Above all, James argues – in my view correctly – both that the end of the empire marked a major change in the unfolding patterns of European history, and that the Roman empire did not voluntarily will itself into non-existence. In the face of some of the contrary assertions made in self-proclaimed revisionist writing, it is another major contribution of this book to re-emphasize these important points. If anything, they might even have been made more strongly. James notes rightly that the Vandal and Anglo-Saxon successor states were established by conquest, setting distinct limits on 'voluntarist' visions of the end of Roman power. In doing so, however, he draws a contrast with other instances where 'treaties' (Lat. *foedera*) are mentioned. It's worth remembering, though, that, as at Versailles in 1919, treaties often follow major bouts of conflict, their main points actually dictated by the outcome of that violence. On closer examination, most of the major Roman–barbarian treaties of the fifth century (with Alaric, Euric and Theoderic for instance) all follow this pattern. And what might also have been mentioned is the debilitating effect of each loss of territory on the tax revenues of the central Roman state and its capacity to maintain armies (all well documented in contemporary sources), so that each enforced loss of territory made it more likely that others would have to follow.

King's College London PETER HEATHER

Charters of Peterborough Abbey. Edited by Susan Kelly. Anglo-Saxon Charters 14. The British Academy: Oxford University Press. 2009. xxviii + 404 pp. + 3 maps. ISBN 978 0 19 726438 6.

This edition of Peterborough charters is the fourteenth in the British Academy series 'Anglo-Saxon Charters' and the ninth by Dr Kelly herself. After a very detailed introduction of 119 pages, Kelly presents edited texts and associated commentaries for thirty-one charters (she also edits four further documents as appendices). This edition marks a significant departure from previous volumes in the series, since for the first time it is concerned with a religious house situated in territory that, after the mid-ninth century, experienced considerable Scandinavian intrusion. To an extent, this historical situation is represented in the range and type of

document preserved at Peterborough abbey, some of which are very different to those in more standard West Saxon archives.

Peterborough abbey was founded originally in the late seventh century by Seaxwulf, who was also the abbey's first abbot; at this moment it was known as *Medeshamstede* (a name which Peterborough traditions suggest was inspired by a nearby pool in Nene called *Medeswæl* or *Medeswelle*; see p. 4). Kelly expounds the early history of the abbey, suggesting that it would have had close links with the nearby minster of Castor and warning that the twelfth-century Peterborough sources which purport to convey a detailed description of the early foundation of the abbey are best approached with a good deal of scepticism. Kelly documents the importance of Peterborough as a Mercian religious house in the late eighth and early ninth century and she once more questions the twelfth-century Peterborough tradition that *Medeshamstede* was wholly destroyed in the mid-ninth century.

There has been much scholarly debate recently about the impact of Scandinavian settlement on religious establishments in the area known as the Danelaw. Kelly emphasizes that the Peterborough archive can help significantly in this debate, in particular the composite memorandum numbered **30** (S 1448a) which provides much information about the reality of Anglo-Danish integration. She discusses the possible fate of *Medeshamstede*'s endowment, suggesting that there would have been profound changes in landholding in the century 870–970, with various estates passing into the hands of Scandinavian lords (pp. 30–3).

In the remainder of her historical introduction, Kelly explains the change in name from *Medeshamstede* to *Burh* and in so doing considers that the use of the latter name, traditionally thought to have been adopted in the late tenth century, could possibly have had its roots in the pre-Viking period (pp. 39–40). She continues by explaining the crucial role that Bishop Æthelwold played in the so-called refoundation of the abbey in the late tenth century and puts this into the wider context of Æthelwold's actions in the other Fenland abbeys of Ely and Thorney. From 984 historical material is more plentiful concerning *Burh* and Kelly charts its evolution up until the Conquest and even beyond; it seems to have been from the year 1052, and the accession of Abbot Leofric, that *Burh* enjoyed one of its most prosperous periods. But any advance seems to have been checked by the Norman Conquest and a 1070 assault on Peterborough itself.

One of the reasons that the Peterborough archive is particularly interesting is that it contains documentary evidence that does not directly concern Peterborough itself but in fact comes from Breedon-on-the-Hill, Hoo in Kent, and Woking and Bermondsey in Surrey. Stenton, basing his arguments partly on this material, suggested that the early community at

Medeshamstede had been the head of a monastic federation, whose archive naturally contained documents which belonged originally to its daughter houses. In a separate and important section (pp. 67–78), Kelly expresses doubt about this idea of a monastic federation and suggests that the composite character of the Peterborough archive is reflective not so much of a federation but rather of displacement and disruption of minsters in the Danelaw, which resulted in the concentration of documents in one single archive (p. 78).

Kelly's 'History of the Archive' (pp. 78–85) contains essential background information to the charters themselves and of the *Liber Niger*, the earliest extant cartulary from Peterborough (dating to the second quarter of the twelfth century); but also an illuminating discussion both of oral procedures in the Danelaw and of the diverse character of the Peterborough archive. Her 'Authenticity of the Charters' (pp. 97–102) provides a very useful overview of the authenticity or otherwise of each document preserved in the Peterborough archive. Of particular interest here is her examination of those documents which purport to be from the seventh century (pp. 97–8), one of which seems to be a memorandum of a lost diploma (**3**, S 1806) and another of which seems to be a composite document compiled with information from a series of genuine seventh-century texts (**4**, S 1803–5). Kelly's discussion of the relationship between a set of twelfth-century forgeries in the archive and the Peterborough version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is similarly engaging (pp. 99–100; also pp. 65–6).

There is much that is of interest in this book and much that goes against established scholarly opinion; and it is of course of fundamental importance that the Peterborough charters are here presented and made accessible in a modern scholarly edition. It seems a shame, then, that it is let down by constant typographical errors and omissions of words.

Robinson College, Cambridge D.A. WOODMAN

Anglo-Saxons and the North: Essays Reflecting the Theme of the 10th Meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists in Helsinki, August 2001. Edited by Matti Kilpiö, Leena Kahlas-Tarkka, Jane Roberts and Olga Timofeeva. Essays in Anglo-Saxon Studies 1. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 364. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. 2009. [viii] + 191 pp. £ 32. ISBN 978 0 86698 412 6.

The first volume in this new series of Essays in Anglo-Saxon Studies from Arizona combines an interest in all matters Anglo-Saxon with closely

related areas in Northern European studies. Most of the contributions were first read at the Helsinki conference of ISAS, which focused on the theme of 'Anglo-Saxons and the North', one befitting the hitherto northernmost ISAS conference ever held. With nine essays on literature, language, codicology, history and archaeology, the book offers a broad spectrum of subjects, which will be of interest to both Anglo-Saxonists and scholars of Old Norse studies.

The book opens with Joseph Harris's discussion of the Rök stone inscription. On this well-known rune stone from Östergötland, a long inscription by Varin in memory of his son Vamoð features elements familiar to an Anglo-Saxonist, such as Theodoric, the prince of the Mærings, who died among the Hreiðgoths, an echo of the Old English poem *Deor*. Following literary interpretations of this much-discussed inscription, Harris argues that two-thirds of its content derives ultimately from West Germanic oral sources, and postulates possible ties between Scandinavia and continental centres such as the Frisian trade post of Dorestad and Charlemagne's capital of Aachen. Harris's article demonstrates the importance of a thorough knowledge of Germanic philology, which is also the subject of Katrin Thier's contribution on terms for ships and shipping parts in England and Scandinavia. By tracing the etymologies of such terms and by distinguishing borrowing from other developments, Thier shows a word field that was very much alive in the early Middle Ages and which reflects frequent contacts between England and Scandinavia.

Two of the contributions to *Anglo-Saxons and the North* focus on metrics. Geoffrey Russom points out that the assessment of Norse Eddic poetry has suffered from the uncritical application of Sievers's method of scansion and the comparison with Old English verse. By applying his word-foot theory, Russom explains that the development of three distinct metres in Eddic poetry is a natural reaction to the changing syllable structure of Old Norse. Jonathan Roper compares Old English verse with Baltic–Finnic alliterative verse which flourished in Finland, Estonia and adjacent regions until well into the nineteenth century. Having discovered as many parallels as there are differences in these widely divergent traditions, Roper argues for the much better-documented Finnish tradition of alliterative verse to be used by Anglo-Saxonists in their search for answers to the many questions about Old English verse that still remain unanswered.

History and archaeology are a fruitful mixture in the contributions by Debby Banham and Frank Battaglia. Debby Banham looks critically at the evidence for Scandinavian influence on Anglo-Saxon agriculture, in particular at the possibility that open field farming was introduced by the Vikings, and argues for caution. The archaeological and historical

evidence suggests continuity rather than revolution. Frank Battaglia takes to heart Rosemary Cramp's advice that archaeologists should consider literature, while literary critics should also pay attention to material evidence (p. 67). With ample reference to archaeological discoveries, Battaglia investigates the transition of bogs to halls as centres of religious practice in early medieval Denmark. This transition symbolized a change from the veneration of chthonic deities by means of offerings, to the worship of a later generation of gods through celebration. Battaglia finishes his paper with the question of what this may mean for the interpretation of *Beowulf*, where Grendel's *morhop* stands in opposition to Hrothgar's *Heorot*.

The most famous Anglo-Saxon object in Northern Europe today is perhaps the St Petersburg Bede manuscript, which is the subject of George Hardin Brown's contribution. Brown offers a very well-informed overview of past and present scholarship and provides a justification for the prominence of the St Petersburg manuscript in the most recent editions of Bede's *Historia*.

Two papers in *Anglo-Saxons and the North* deal with the modern perception of Anglo-Saxon and Norse history and literature. Jonathan Wilcox discusses the Russian critic Mikhail Ivanovich Steblin-Kamenskij (1903–81), whose critical appraisal of Old Norse literature may serve as a 'potentially liberating' (p. 115) force for Anglo-Saxonists and as 'an antidote to the painstaking but under-theorized work that generally prevails in Anglo-Saxon studies today' (p. 120). Barbara Yorke takes us back to the Victorian age, and shows how the history of King Alfred and the Vikings was used to justify Britain's imperial wars in India and South Africa. As Alfred fought just wars against the Vikings, but in the end pacified and converted these savages, so British forces in India and South Africa fought comparable enemies with a similarly noble purpose. The Vikings were therefore both enemies and examples to historically minded Victorians.

Although the variety of subjects addressed by the different contributions is substantial, this does not undermine the cohesion suggested by the title – something occasionally seen in publications of conference proceedings. The articles are scholarly and informative, and, without, exception, provide food for further thought.

University of Groningen KEES DEKKER

Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700. Edited by Richard Price and Mary Whitby. Translated Texts for Historians, Contexts 1. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 2009. vii + 205 pp. £65. ISBN 978 1 84631 177 2.

The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553 with related texts on the Three Chapters Controversy. Translated with an introduction and notes by Richard Price. Translated Texts for Historians 51. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 2009. xiv + 717 pp. £120. ISBN 978 1 84631 178 9.

The welcome debt historians owe to Richard Price and his collaborators continues to grow. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* (2006), which he prepared with Michael Gaddis, disappeared quickly from conference book displays and was reissued again in paperback. Its three volumes include, not only a clear and reliable translation of the acts with commentary, but an excellent introduction, supporting documents, and useful maps, glossary, and indices. Now scholars may add a complete translation of *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553* to their personal libraries. Once again Price's extra labour in supplying detailed indices and an up-to-date bibliography makes this volume a valuable aid to research as well as an accessible introduction to the doctrinal and political issues surrounding the Fifth Ecumenical Council. Roughly a third of its contents consists of translations of important documents that helped to set the stage for the council, including letters from western clergy in reaction to Justinian's 544/5 edict against the so-called Three Chapters and the emperor's own follow-up edict *On the Orthodox Faith* from 551, and the two *Constituta* issued by the unfortunate Pope Vigilius, the first rejecting and the second accepting the emperor's position. The lengthy introduction situates the acts in their historical context 'on the road from Chalcedon'. Here Price also probes deeply into the politics constraining the bishops' deliberations and especially into the evolution of Justinian's strategy across the 540s and 550s: from first attempting to win over the eastern opponents to Chalcedon, the emperor shifted to muscling through a consensus among all its supporters in the east and west. Ironically, it would be the 'losers', those who refused to join the consensus, whose pejorative narrative would dominate the legacy of Constantinople. Price encourages historians to return to the documents themselves, which preserve voices on both sides of the contest. Doing so requires sensitivity to both their historical context and their 'literary character'. The acts, in particular, 'remain a credible record of a council whose proceedings, choreographed in advance, were more akin to liturgy than to a modern parliamentary debate'. Scholars and students could not have a better entry into those proceedings than this volume.

Yet Price offers more. Many of the literary and textual issues he raises in the translations of Chalcedon and Constantinople are explored at length by the essays collected in *Chalcedon in Context*, which Price edited

together with Mary Whitby. It is the first volume in a new companion series to Translated Texts for Historians, called Contexts. The purpose of the new series is to situate translation volumes 'in the framework of the latest scholarly debate with edited papers by leading researchers who have met to discuss problems and prospects'. The essays indeed provide an informative context that also serves as an introduction to key issues for the historical interpretation of church councils and their records. Several authors are drawing on their own previously published or forthcoming work, including a translation of the Lateran Council of 649 by Price and Catherine Cubitt. Most focus to varying degrees on ancient editorial practices, the importance of translation, and the influence of both ecclesiastical and secular politics on council proceedings. Together they give a good sense of the dynamic state of the field and point to numerous areas of ongoing investigation.

The first essay is by David Gwynn on 'the definition of Christian tradition' between the Council of Nicaea (325) and the issue of the Henotikon (482). No one before 451 seems to have known of any 'Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed' as such but that did not stop the bishops at Chalcedon from taking it up as an authoritative complement to the Nicene Creed. Along with approving some of Cyril of Alexandria's writings and Leo the Great's Tome, they expanded Christian authoritative tradition to include more than Scripture alone. Focusing on the Council of Ephesus (431), Thomas Graumann addresses two related challenges that other essays also will tackle. First, it is often important but difficult to tell when texts were read aloud in the council and to what effect; the most consequential instance of this is Cyril's third letter to Nestorius. Second, editors made interventions in the record, not only for the sake of concision and clarity, but to shape the appearance of the proceedings, with the emperor not least envisioned among their audience. Fergus Millar picks up on the problem of editorial activity and even more on issues of language and translation in his detailed study of a Syriac translation of the acts of the second Council at Ephesus (449) from a manuscript dated to 535. With the aid of chronological tables of texts and events, he demonstrates how this translation fits into a moment of imperial goodwill toward non-Chalcedonian theology and into the early rise of a Christian Syriac literary culture. Andrew Louth returns to the Syrian perspective when he asks why, if Chalcedon was the culmination of conflict between Alexandrian and Antiochene schools of doctrine, did Syrian bishops come to reject Chalcedon along with the Egyptians? Louth argues that Cyril represented not an Alexandrian school but 'the broad consensus', which he went outside of his philosophical comfort zone to defend against Nestorius in the Twelve Chapters. One effect was to rouse the anger of Syrian bishops, who themselves had never

constituted a school and whom the Henotikon later helped push to decisive renunciation by affirming the Twelve Chapters but not Chalcedon.

Chalcedon is centre stage in two essays by Price. The first is a narrative that highlights, among other things, the presiding role of the imperial representative who, 'it is clear, thoroughly enjoyed his work', and how dynamics changed over successive sessions. In what might be read as a variation of Gwynn's argument, he characterizes the reception of Chalcedon's acts as a 'new conciliar fundamentalism', whereby the 'honest disclosure of tensions and agreements' became fodder for future disagreements. In the next chapter, Price goes on to test the honesty of those acts under three rubrics: truth, omission and fiction. Variations between the two extant versions of the acts, as well as close attention to subscription lists, are shown to reveal some cases of omission or fiction. Although unanimity was required of verdicts, the record of some disagreement might have been intended to validate the proceedings to non-participants or future generations (Graumann made a similar point in his essay).

Three essays focus on later councils and their relationship to the 451 council. Chalcedon's authoritative status was made certain only in Justinian's reign, when first the emperor and then the second Council of Constantinople 'rewrote history with a will', trying to dispel ambiguity and resolve contradiction. According to Price, this 'reshaping of the historical record' was 'more the fruit of wishful thinking than deceit'. Catherine Cubitt's essay on the Lateran Council of 649 addresses key themes in this volume, especially the contest between imperial and episcopal authority, the use of acts from earlier councils as proof texts, and the importance of language – the Lateran acts were issued in both Latin and Greek. If there is a big jump from Chalcedon to Constantinople to Rome, Judith Herrin demonstrates the immediacy of issues raised at Chalcedon for bishops assembled during 692 in what was called the Council in Trullo as well as the Quinisext Council. Herrin first traces the legacy of Chalcedon's canon 28, on the ecclesiastical status of Constantinople, in the context of canon lists and other collections circulating in the Greek east and Latin west. She then looks more closely at the form and function of such lists as the background to comparing the canons of Chalcedon and the Quinisext Council.

The final two essays by Charlotte Roueché and Price return to scrutinizing the acts of Chalcedon in order to address two important subjects: the role as well as the recording of acclamations during council proceedings; and the degree to which those proceedings allowed room for 'bishops behaving badly'. Naturally, there is much overlap between these essays. The editors might have imposed more consistency and provided a fuller introduction or conclusion, one which highlights the common

themes running through the volume. The maps and glossaries found in Price's translation volumes are missed and some considerable knowledge on the part of readers is occasionally taken for granted. Those who forget their Three Chapters may have trouble figuring out why Ibas of Edessa and Theodore of Mopsuestia are mentioned so often. Some may wonder why one contributor denounces the term miaphysite as a 'barbarity', when all other contributors prefer it to monophysite. In summary, more volumes in the Contexts series are most welcome. But they would be more broadly useful and long-lasting if they enjoyed the same editorial care that goes into the Translated Texts. For now, Price and his colleagues have supplied a wealth of ideas and resources for investigating the history of church councils.

Ohio University KEVIN UHALDE

The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005. Edited by John Sheehan and Donnchadh Ó Corráin. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2010. xxviii + 569 pp. + 147 b/w figures and 22 colour plates. £45. ISBN 978 1 84682 101 1.

This lengthy and profusely illustrated record of the fifteenth Viking Congress is produced in the instantly recognizable clear, crisp style of the Four Courts Press. Some fifty papers, each with its own bibliography, fit into the main themes of the Congress: Viking-Age Ireland, Development of Urbanism, Scandinavia and the Continent and Weapons and Warfare. Congresses have been held at roughly four-year intervals since the first at Lerwick in 1950. Congress proceedings have certainly increased in length (and weight) since then – a nightmare for editors – but it is rather unfortunate that the sixteenth conference, in Iceland in August 2009, was held before the volume under review was published. Indeed the Icelandic volume is also promised for the end of this year or early in 2011. Nevertheless we can sympathize with the editors and their assistant Shannon Lewis-Simpson and applaud the high quality and accuracy of their work. Congress proceedings are always eagerly anticipated by everyone with an interest in the Viking Age and they are an undoubted stimulus to further study and research.

About half the regionally based papers are on Ireland with significant contributions on Scandinavia, Iceland, Faroes, Scotland and England. The Sagas, runic and other inscriptions and emporia also feature. Identifying the earliest phases of Viking activity preoccupy a number of authors. Maurice Hurley, for example, exploring Viking elements in Irish towns, points out that despite uneven archaeological

investigation Dublin's urban development still appears to contrast with that in other Hiberno-Norse towns. Large-scale excavation in Waterford city centre has revealed nothing earlier than the early to middle eleventh century despite mention in the annals of Viking settlement there a hundred years earlier. Vikings in Cork are mentioned first in the mid-ninth century, but the earliest settlement evidence is late eleventh. However Waterford, at least, appears to have been a relocated settlement since excavations begun in the year preceding this Congress had already started to show earlier settlement of the ninth and tenth centuries at Woodstown, six kilometres upstream from the town centre. Hurley was only able to give brief details, but subsequent work has revealed a large earthwork enclosure with evidence of metal-working and commerce. It is currently interpreted as a *longphuirt*, but other suggestions include a trading settlement.

Linzi Simpson draws together evidence emerging from the area of the Black Pool on the River Poddle, which gives Duib-linn its name. Here, if the RC dates are correct, ninth-century burials of young Scandinavian warriors, hearths, post-holes and clench nails have been found in an area which was already settled. The early Christian cemetery dating *c.*700–1200 close to the church of St Michael le Pole may suggest that it was the site of Dublin's monastery. Eamonn Kelly reports on the work done in Connemara by Erin Gibbons and himself. He believes that Vikings in this area quickly assessed its settlement potential and that coastal areas came under their control quite quickly, perhaps as early as the second decade of the ninth century. Areas of machair grassland plus rich marine resources were inviting. The Eyrephort warrior burial close to the beach is reinterpreted as that of a settler rather than an isolated transient burial. Place names, burials and artefacts all indicate substantial Viking coastal settlement in Connemara and work on the Atlantic west coast of Ireland might reveal a similar situation there. Kevin Edwards and Douglas Borthwick suggest that RC dates from Toftanes, Faroe Islands and increasing environmental evidence appear to agree with the historical date for Norse arrival about AD 800.

Julian Richards and John Naylor report on the work of VASLE (Viking and Anglo-Saxon Landscape and Economy Project) set up in 2004 and designed to use and interpret finds made under the Portable Antiquities Scheme in England. Accompanying maps move from illustrating the varying densities of finds of all periods from which deductions can be made about constraints on data collection, to period-specific maps where the distribution of artefacts such as lead weights and bridle, stirrup and harness fittings are shown. This is an exciting venture with real potential to change our view of the Scandinavian impact on England. Important also is Alan Lane's updating of his work on pottery in the Hebrides,

where a sequence from *c.*500 AD to *c.*1400 is now identifiable. Publication of the vital Udal site might clarify questions about the date of the new Viking style.

There is much to absorb and stimulate in these fifty papers. Once again a Viking Congress report does not disappoint and moreover is reasonably priced given today's standard.

University of Exeter DEREK GORE

Slaves and Warriors in Medieval Britain and Ireland, 800–1200. By David Wyatt. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 2009. xix + 455 pp. + 4 b/w ills. € 152.00. ISBN 978 90 04 175334.

This book starts with a most provocative sentence: 'Modern preconceptions and sensibilities have profoundly affected historical interpretations of the medieval institution of slavery' (p. 1) and it ends with the similar accusatory statement: 'Many historians have chosen, either consciously or unconsciously, to sweep such unsavoury social undercurrents [such as illicit slave trades and human trafficking] belying the progress of western "civilisation" under the historical carpet. There has been a distinct tendency amongst both historians and archaeologists to de-emphasize or ignore such practice' (p. 402).

In between, there is an engaging and reasonable argument, written by a sometimes frustrated author. His frustration and energetic discussion are, in my opinion, well founded: our understanding of the medieval world is indeed problematic and biased, owing to the nature of our written sources. However, during his own 'clean-up operation', the author falls into several traps, especially when taking comparative examples from outside the British Isles, to make his points.

Nevertheless, in this important book, David Wyatt takes a new and fruitful approach to British–Irish medieval slavery, which is a welcome complement to works by David Pelteret. Wyatt does this in a somewhat unorthodox way, in that he looks upon medieval slavery as having a background not so much in economic conditions, as in cultural ones. The former have provided the normal framework for explanation of the background to slavery, especially during the extensive Marxist-coloured research of the 1970s. According to Marxist historical theory, slavery was a means of production which was found in early stages of civilization, but became obsolete in a capitalist system. By looking instead upon slavery as a cultural phenomenon, this book makes it obvious that slavery continued well after the Middle Ages and in fact still exists, even in Western societies. In his analysis, Wyatt is forced to bring up that most sensitive

subject, sexuality, which for a long time was absent from historical analyses of the Middle Ages. He is able to show, beyond question, that to fully understand the qualities of medieval slavery, we must bring masculinity, sexual dominance, honour, power, gender and virilization into the discussion. An important nexus in all this concerns the young, unmarried men, and the warrior fraternities, which were so vital in early (pre-)historical periods, but remain so little known and discussed. In my opinion, this combination of slavery and young men, warrior fraternities and masculinity (macho societies), discussed by Wyatt is most important, and a key for understanding early slavery not only in Britain, but also, for example, in Scandinavia. Here, Wyatt has opened up a new research field, which will, no doubt, be important in the future.

In his attempt to argue for a much more widespread usage of slavery in Anglo-Saxon England than has previously been recognized, Wyatt makes use of citations from colleagues, and comparisons with Scandinavia. The arguments here presented are, however, sometimes vague, and sometimes not even valid. For medieval Britain, citing Alex Woolf, who claims that 'most rural households *probably* included some slaves', leads Wyatt to conclude that such a statement 'is significant because *if* peasant farmers also owned slaves . . .', ending in the bold verdict: 'As a consequence, it seems *likely* that the slave numbers recorded within Domesday have been grossly underestimated' (p. 35, my italics). It is, of course, impossible to build a case on non-evidenced arguments like this, surrounded by 'ifs' and 'probablys'. Wyatt is obviously aware of this, so he turns to Scandinavia for evidence. Referring to Ruth Mazo Karras, who based her discussion of Scandinavian slavery partly on the evidence of the Icelandic sagas, he states that 'slave ownership was prolific among farming households and many slaves existed and worked alongside their peasant masters' (p. 35). Such a bold statement, founded upon saga stories, is really on shaky ground. Slave descriptions in the sagas are exceptionally stereotyped, and cannot be recommended as unsupported (non-) historical sources. Wyatt continues (perhaps) therefore to refer to some Scandinavian scholars who contributed to the book *Trälar* (ed. Myrdal and Lindkvist, 2003; including myself), and states that suggestions of a low percentage of slaves in society, and of a high proportion of free peasants in Scandinavia, influencing a decline in slavery in the Danelaw, 'are directly contradicted by the weight of the primary evidence and secondary evidence illustrating the slave-owning nature of Scandinavian society' (p. 35). This is, to use Wyatt's own wording, to 'grossly' misinterpret the contributions in the book *Trälar*. To my knowledge, we in principle lack this kind of evidence for Scandinavia. One of the kinds of 'primary evidence' upon which Tore Iversen built much of the hypothesis he presented in his most influential and excellent thesis *Trelledommen*

(1997), regarding a high percentage of slavery in early Scandinavia, is highly questionable: that is, the place-name evidence. By contrast, what is characteristic of the opinions of scholars represented in *Trälar* is their differing interpretations of the number of slaves in society, and their generally cautious approach to Scandinavian slavery, owing to the lack of sources. It is therefore impossible to use the Scandinavian evidence to argue for wide usage of slaves in Anglo-Saxon society. This hypothesis might be correct, but it is not possible to validate it with (non-existent) Scandinavian evidence.

The best argument for a larger slave population is – I assume – that only male slaves used for agriculture were numbered in Domesday, but that there must also have existed unnumbered slave women and children, which would have made the total count of slaves in England higher than that suggested by this source.

There are some other flaws, which could be changed in a new edition, such as: Helle Vandkille (not Vandekilde) is a she, not a he (p. 63 ff.); J.P. Schjødt (not Schjødr, p. 94 n. 158); Fagrskinna is not a saga (p. 95), but a manuscript, a catalogue of Norwegian kings, their histories, intermixed with short stories (*thættir*); and *Landnámabók* (p. 120) is not the 'earliest Icelandic source we have'.

But these are minor criticisms (from my Scandinavian perspective). Instead, David Wyatt is to be praised for focusing on, and giving us plenty of arguments for, the significant cultural aspect of medieval slavery. It is a shame that the publisher has chosen to charge €152/US$ 216 for this important and thought-provoking book: the targets are obviously the major university libraries, rather than individual students. This work should be on the bookshelf of every student interested in early slavery in Europe.

University of Aberdeen STEFAN BRINK

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