to decide upon the level of resolution needed to record the spatial patterning in the artefacts and how to infer from this information the spatial patterning of activities.

The final paper by Chris Gaffney, Helen Gaffney and Martin Tingloe reports on the Middle Farm Project, centred on a small Romano-British settlement complex. It is principally concerned with the interpretation of the settlement as a functioning unit linked inextricably to its surrounding farmland. The main themes are a critique of the assumptions of site catchment analysis in general and Wilkinson's (1982) discussion of the material correlates of manuring activity in particular.

The case studies in this volume have several similarities which bind them into a diverse, yet coherent, collection. Following Foley's lead (1981) interest, much is made of the idea of 'off-site archaeology' with the central recognition that the landscape is considerably more complex than traditional distribution maps or the spatial approaches of the 1970s implied. As archaeologists, we are dealing with a data base consisting of a very largely continuous artefactual spread. Hence, fieldwalking is given extra prominence, not merely as a means of putting dots on maps but as a vital tool in the reconstruction of extinct settlement systems and activities in the landscape. However, as all the contributors emphasise, it is only by means of associated excavation that the plausibility of interpretations of unstratified material can be demonstrated.

References


Reviewed by Mike Parker Pearson

This attractively bound and well illustrated journal (which has produced three volumes to date) publishes short articles summarising the results of recent archaeological research in Denmark. Its content is generally academic and specialised, and we may assume that it is aimed at English-speaking practitioners and students of archaeology and anthropology, particularly in Britain and North America. It might be seen as taking up where New Directions in Scandinavian Archaeology (which never went beyond a single volume) left off, and is a further indication that Danish archaeologists are looking less to the German-speaking world and increasingly towards Britain and America for debate and recognition.

Each volume contains 16-17 articles of 5-10 pages average length, summarising the results of excavations, archaeological experiments, field surveys and artefact studies. Over the last three years there has been a change of emphasis from excavation reports to papers concerned with issues of methodology. A new feature of the third volume is a debate section, which presents opportunities for discussion of a more theoretical nature.

It is not possible to do justice in a review to all the articles, book reviews and lists of new discoveries in these three volumes. A few articles are perhaps worthy of mention because they demonstrate the potential of the Danish archaeological resources or the value of techniques in use: excavation reports on Voldtofte Bronze Age settlement, Trappenklit Bronze Age barrow and Vorbasse Iron Age and Viking settlement; regional studies of cultural variation in the Mesolithic, prehistoric field boundaries in eastern Denmark, Bronze Age landscapes at Lindebjerg and Holje Være and new developments in pollen analysis; artefact studies such as limestone trade and production of textiles; and 'state of the art' papers on Bronze Age research strategies, rescue archaeology and archaeology in the 80's.

The JDA is one of many Danish archaeological journals. It is more similar to the smaller regional journals such as Kumi than the more sober Acta Archaeologica and Arbogater. In Britain it has no parallel, although in America the Journal of Anthropological Archaeology might be hailed as a more boring version. The Danes have always done well with their archaeological publications, as exemplified by the popularity of the magazine Skalk with its wide distribution throughout Denmark. It would be interesting to know the JDA's sales and its market success outside Denmark. Whilst attractively well illustrated and interesting, it will appeal mainly to specialists and, the few of us who are interested in European prehistory and archaeology. Hopefully this is a pessimistic view, and the series should attract the browser whose interest in Danish archaeology might be stimulated and encouraged. The JDA certainly shows up the British archaeological journals as boring, poorly illustrated and old-fashioned collections of over-detailed excavation reports and baggages of unstructured and idiosyncratic research papers.

The JDA highlights a few lessons as well as problems. The publication problem (backlogs of unpublished excavations; expensive reports with little or no wider synthesis and crammed with irrelevant detail), bugged by the fluid of specialists with the rest moulder in warehouses, is at least expensive probably affects every country in Europe and America. The excavation reports in the JDA are not all full reports nor intermediates, but short summaries of results: I do not know whether each excavation is intended for full publication elsewhere -- I suspect so, but I hope not. Archival reports are available for consultation by the specialist at the local museum and the local museum (and maybe one day these archives will be computerised for international specialist consumption). A journal such as this offers a new opportunity to escape the blind eye of detailed excavation publications (down to the last posthole) with their limited readership and lack of appeal to the non-specialist. The JDA is a very
satisfactory way of disseminating concise, well-presented information to an international audience, whilst avoiding the considerable costs of full publication.

Subject matter is limited to either single excavations or advances and developments in techniques; theoretical approaches hardly figure in this empiricist-dominated journal. It is curious that the many fine excavation reports are little more than bare descriptions with little analytical or interpretive discussion of the sites' social dimensions. Articles on regional studies tend to go no further than pattern recognition and throughout there is little consideration of mechanisms of social change. The papers are more concerned with 'showing than with 'telling' — indeed the shortness of the articles does not help to promote social explanation over site description.

Finally, the discussions of current archaeological practice — on rescue and gas pipeline archaeology, fieldwalking and research strategies — reveal only one face of Danish archaeology in action. Preservation of ancient monuments and landscapes, their legal protection and the strategies for securing their better management and presentation are issues which are hardly mentioned. Archaeology in Denmark offers an important model, if not a blueprint, for the treatment of archaeological sites, the strengths of heritage legislation and the preservation philosophy behind it.

In summary, the good points outnumber the bad; this is a journal which should be read as a lesson in conciseness, layout and content (although a little heavy on empiricalism and light on theory). Probably the best journal in the world...Well, I know of no better archaeological journals.


Reviewed by Matthew Johnson

"Medieval archaeology," writes Dr. Clarke in the last line of this excellent book, "has at last come of age and can be regarded as an independent discipline". The appearance of such a volume as this can be taken as a sign of this coming of age: it presents a highly competent and worthy to dub concise, synthesis of the mass of excavated evidence for life in medieval England amassed over the last thirty years. The text is obviously based on thorough research and a lifetime's experience in this field, and retains a depth and profusion of detail within the necessarily summary nature of its discussion. It should prove popular as an introductory basal text at the undergraduate level for many years.

Clarke's treatment of the vast amount of evidence available to her is a thematic one. After a brief introduction, we start with the countryside, subdividing into sections on villages and moated sites. The subjects of churches, monasteries and castles get a chapter each, and are followed by a consideration of craft and industry. The final chapter is devoted to towns and trade.

In each case the potential contribution of excavated evidence to the historical study of the particular theme is considered, and the development of past work and current technologies reviewed. Many instances of recommendations for future work are given, argued largely along lines of common sense. This is particularly true for the chapter on towns; the British organisation of urban archaeology, or perhaps rather the lack of it, is favourably compared with the situation in Scandinavian countries, and a national policy for urban excavation in England is advocated (p. 173).

Indeed, the problem of the lack of a national policy for any aspect of medieval archaeology is a recurrent theme. Clarke questions the subdivision of fields of study, each with their own research group supporting specific areas of study, and on the possible analogies of the sites, pointing out that "life in medieval England does not seem to have run along such well organised lines!" (p. 62). Although it is difficult to see how a more integrated strategy of research could be implemented in practice, this is more of a comment on the way British archaeology is organised at present than on the intrinsic merit of her suggestions.

As a synthesis of available evidence, therefore, this book succeeds admirably. What is less clear is how far it successfully demonstrates that archaeology is more than simply a "very expensive demonstration of the obvious" (Sawyer 1983, 44) in an historical period. Can it ever provide more than merely illustrative marginalia for histories based on documentary sources?

Clarke perhaps handicaps herself unnecessarily in this task by largely confining her attention to excavated remains, thus underemphasising those aspects of material culture such as domestic architecture which can be described as archaeological despite never having been buried in the ground. Why, for example, is it implicitly assumed that 'archaeology' and 'vernacular architecture' are mutually exclusive categories (p. 142)? The number and range of differences which may be drawn from medieval material culture as a whole is thus reduced and the potential and actual contribution of archaeology underplayed.

The other major class of evidence excluded from Clarke's discussion is that of documentary evidence. A comparison with another recent synthesis (Platt 1978) is useful here. Platt offered a synthesis of medieval written records, divided temporally rather than thematically. This produced a clear view of changes through time. The archaeological evidence, however, was (perhaps inevitably?) relegated to a secondary role, being presented as little more than illustrative to the historical text in both a literal and figurative sense.

Clarke eschews this approach, preferring only to discuss documents "as a necessary background" (p. 9). It could be argued, however, that she falls into the opposite trap of merely presenting and synthesising the archaeological evidence without integrating it fully into the total picture. Issues such as Platt's interesting correlation between Late Medieval social changes and 'conspicuous consumption' are thus lost to view.

This problem is one that is compounded by Clarke's thematic