

seventeenth century and the development of pipe making on a large scale at the north end of Southgate Street in the early eighteenth century. There is much scope here for the historian of consumerism in Bath to make use of the data obtained from the archaeological excavations in Southgate Street, ranging from ceramics, clay tobacco pipes and pipeclay wig curlers to toothbrushes and glass. The thorough and detailed reports on particular categories of finds will make this a very useful report for historical archaeologists in Britain, North America and elsewhere. Particularly noteworthy are the well-researched and excellently written reports on the medieval and post-medieval pottery and glass by Nigel Jeffries and Lyn Blackmore respectively.

This volume is number 68 in the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) monograph series. Collectively, these monographs are a remarkable record of that organisation's timely publication of archaeological excavations, not often matched elsewhere. This particular volume is dedicated to the memory of two of the contributors, Richard Bluer and Christopher Philpotts, who together with another of the contributors, Geoff Eagan, died before its completion. We can presume that all three would have been well pleased with the final report.

Reference

GERRARD, J. 2007. The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath and the end of Roman Britain. *Antiquaries Journal* 87: 148–164.

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CATHERINE HILLS & SAM LUCY. *Spong Hill IX: chronology and synthesis*. 2013. xv+479 pages, numerous b&w illustrations, and tables. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research; 978-1-902937-62-5 hardback £59.

Spong Hill, located near North Elmham, Norfolk, is the first cremation cemetery in East Anglia to have been fully excavated. By the authors' reckoning, it is also the largest cremation cemetery to have been studied in the UK, and the high standard maintained by the archaeological team under the direction of Catherine Hills and others has yielded



a wealth of data to scholars of the migration period. Digging campaigns from 1972 and 1981, which followed a trial season in 1968, brought to light a total of 2383 cremations

and 57 inhumations mostly from the fifth but also the sixth century. These figures do not include the many burials thought to have been recovered, damaged or destroyed by earlier excavations, digging and ploughing of the site. This synthetic volume, which offers an up-to-date analysis of the data and hypothesises the relative and absolute chronologies of the graves, is a welcome addition to existing publications that have inventoried the remains found at the site, explored an associated settlement and assessed some of the unique features of the cemetery.

The volume is dense reading but highly informative, and includes a wealth of detailed tables, maps and appendices for anyone interested in conducting additional analysis on the raw data. Catherine Hills and Sam Lucy should also be applauded for making good use of continental scholarship on artefact typologies central to their interest in measuring migration, spatial and social patterning, and gender- and age-associations of goods included in cremation and inhumation graves. To assist with the challenge of dealing with materials that in many cases have undergone the effects of burning on cremation pyres along with the bodies they accompanied, additional contributors intervene with analyses at various points in the volume. These supplementary essays include detailed assessments of ceramic stamps and bone and antler artefacts, in addition to the application of correspondence analysis to expand the quantity of potentially datable cremation graves at this complex cemetery. They also make it clear that Spong Hill was not as isolated a feature in the landscape as once thought: although Spong Hill appears to have been the earliest, appearing in the early fifth century, several other cemeteries were established in the vicinity while the site was still in use.

In the course of the volume, the authors convincingly demonstrate that cremation graves are not in fact all that different from contemporary inhumation graves. Families no doubt laid their dead to rest

clothed and accompanied by personal items; their burial containers displayed many of the same kinds of goods, whether they were initially arranged on a funerary pyre, bier or coffin. The primary exception to the rule seems to have been weaponry, which was found in much smaller quantities in cremations than inhumations. Contrary to expectations, the process of cremation is not entirely destructive in that it actually acts to preserve some organic matter such as antler, bone and elephant ivory. These survivals suggest what might be missing from contemporary inhumation graves deposited in the sandy soil of East Anglia. On the contrary, it is artefacts made of copper-alloy with a low melting point that are poorly preserved, reduced to formless lumps of metal when they were included in the cremation rite. Such undesirable damage to artefacts no doubt motivated families to wait until after the fire had done its work to add particularly sensitive items, such as toilet objects of copper alloy to urned and unurned burials.

Given the benefits and challenges of such a wealth of material at a single cemetery focused largely within a single century, the authors prioritise assessment of Spong Hill's chronology, context and parallels in England and on the continent. They point to the site's initial transition from settlement to cemetery, which they posit was precipitated by some kind of clearance of the Romano-British occupation in the late fourth or early fifth century that they do not attempt to explain in greater detail. They suggest that phases A and B of the cemetery's use, with some 1686 cremations, lasted approximately 70 years from *c.* 400/420–470/490. The rapid occupation of the site, and the simultaneous use of different zones in the burial ground, implies that inhabitants of as many as 25 settlements used the site for burial and that these groupings may have been motivated by kinship affiliations. Perhaps the cemetery also served as a 'central place'. Phase C, the final one at Spong Hill, spanned a period of around 60 years from *c.* 470/490 to 530/550, and included 180 cremations and 57 inhumations. These numbers point to more local use of the site and yet a more diverse set of traditions in the interment of the dead.

In drawing this innovative volume to a close, the authors fall back upon an all too familiar narrative to explain the history and use of the cemetery of Spong Hill. Although they give lip service to ethnicity as one of many mutable identities possessed by the individuals buried at this large cemetery, they downplay some of their prefatory observations

that Spong Hill retained important aspects of burial practices current in Britain at the end of the fourth century. Rather than suggesting some sort of hybrid of populations and traditions (or reflection on the well-known problems of linking ethnicity to grave artefacts), the authors favour the discovery of continental parallels in Germany for some of the material culture and burial traditions found at Spong Hill. They thus offer disappointingly ambivalent news:

It remains probable, though unquantifiable, that some of those buried in an 'Anglo-Saxon' cremation urn were in fact of local British ancestry. However, the overwhelming immediate impression is of cultural connections with contemporary [i.e. Germanic] sites on the continent, visible through similarities in artefacts, pottery styles and depositional practice. (p. 328)

Seeing Spong Hill as part of a 'core' cremation zone that suggests intensive 'Anglian' settlement, Hills and Lucy promote the identity of East Anglia in the early and middle Anglo-Saxon period as a counterweight to Bede. Their surprising last-minute distraction with this famously biased author, who makes few appearances elsewhere in the volume, overshadows conclusions that should have drawn more exclusively from the site's rich material culture. Echoing the lacunae in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, the approach leaves this reader desirous of a more accurate representation of the activities and contributions of the Romano-British inhabitants during the early centuries of the Anglo-Saxon epoch.

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IAN RUSSELL & MAURICE F. HURLEY (ed.). *Woodstown: a Viking-age settlement in Co. Waterford*. 2014. xxiii+413 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. Dublin: Four Courts; 978-1-84682-536-1 paperback £35.

This eagerly awaited volume represents the final report on the investigations of the possible Viking *longphort* site of Woodstown in County Waterford, Ireland, discovered in 2003 during developer-funded excavations in the context of the construction of the N25 Waterford City bypass. The site consists of a later ninth- to tenth-century double D-shaped riverside enclosure with clear Scandinavian affinities. Representing one of

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