Avonmouth in the west, where it joins the Severn, upstream to Bath or more specifically the mini-gorge at Limpley Stoke, is different from that of the upper reaches of the same river as its line curves east from Bradford on Avon and then wiggles somewhat inconspicuously north towards Malmesbury. Though passing through an area that was often a border zone during the period under review, this eastern stretch of the river was seldom recognised as a formal frontier and is not one today. Contrast that with the western Avon, which can be convincingly argued to have been a frontier in late prehistoric times through, on and off, to the present.

Though much of the detail of the charter-based evidence used here is new to this reviewer, the basic hypothesis is not. Nor is the idea of a hill-fort-based 'sub-kingdom' of some sort in north Somerset in the fifth to sixth centuries (therefore implying a frontier along the western Avon). But, while declaring an interest, my main reason for raising this particular matter is that the idea and its implications are very much based on the excavation of Cadbury-Congresbury *c* 1970, a key site for the Whittock hypothesis; yet it is mentioned but once (p 40) and then only with secondary references. No reference at all is made to the substantial final excavation report masterminded by our late Fellow Philip Rahtz (Rahtz *et al* 1992). No wonder the Whittock discussion shows no awareness of the nature or context of, for example, the 720 excavated sherds of Mediterranean pottery, and plumps so incautiously for only one of the range of interpretative options. Just search 'Cadbury-Congresbury' online for several more authoritative summaries.

Throughout the book, indeed, the authors convey an impression of awkwardness in handling archaeological evidence: it does not 'speak' to them as do charters. But, in contrast and very much using charters, a credible case is made, for example, for the careful deployment of ecclesiastical centres such as minsters and monasteries along the whole river as tactical expressions of 'frontiermanship' when new Anglo-Saxon territories were jostling for space both before and after the Viking wars (Chapters Five and Six).

On practical matters, the book cries out for maps: not everyone is as familiar as are the authors with their region's topography, and some good local detailed maps could have clarified description as well as shortened text. The single map, placed (arguably upside down) before the title page, is not listed or referenced. The unlisted, unnumbered photographs, clumped together between pp 96 and 97, are not referred to anywhere either. The referencing system is a sort of 'hybrid Harvard': references are by in-text numbers *supra* to 'Notes' (pp 123–34), where bibliographical detail is mixed up with explanatory notes, in some cases quite long ones. The bibliographical references in the 'Notes' are often in a form suitable for in-text referencing but are just as likely to be of the '*op cit* / ibid' variety. The bibliography itself (pp 135–42) is interestingly eclectic, but, unforgivably, no index is provided.

A book that should have been meat and drink to this reviewer, an ex-resident and ex-student of the Bath area, has proved unenjoyable both to read and to review. While academic in nature and honest in intent, and with merit in some respects, it is not a scholarly or authoritative publication, because too much of it is unoriginal or derivative, and simply as a book it requires better design and editing to carry off its complexities as a detailed local study and, even more fundamentally, more thought about for whom it is written.

Rahtz, P A ***et al*** 1992. *Cadbury-Congresbury 1968–73: a late / post-Roman hilltop settlement in Somerset*, BAR Brit Ser 223, BAR, Oxford

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doi:10.1017/S0003581516000391

Glastonbury Abbey: archaeological investigations 1904–79. By ROBERTA GILCHRIST and CHERYL GREEN. 305mm. Pp 494, col and b&w ills. The Society of Antiquaries of London, London, 2015. ISBN 9780854313006. £45 (hbk).

Glastonbury Abbey is a numinous place, which has been a centre of attraction to antiquaries and archaeologists as well as those absorbed in the legends of King Arthur since the twelfth century. It is thus hardly surprising that it has accumulated a vast body of record and comment. Roberta Gilchrist and Cheryl Green, with a distinguished team of thirty-one specialists, therefore took on a huge task in trying to reassess and reinterpret all known archaeological investigations from 1904 to 1979. This publication, as well as the digital archive, is the fruit of their project (Glastonbury Abbey Archaeological Archive Project) in which the Trustees of Glastonbury Abbey and the University of Reading collaborated, and it represents a notable achievement.

For the first time it is possible to say that the surviving records of all the archaeological interventions on the site have been perused and evaluated, which was only possible after the archive of the late Ralegh Radford became available in the public domain. This lack of crucial evidence clearly affected the work of other scholars such as Philip Rahtz, who previously (in 1993 and 2003) tried to make sense of the earlier excavations. Radford, who worked on the site from 1951 to 1964, always intended, up to the time of his death in 1998, to write the definitive narrative himself. As an independent scholar, without the institutional backing that is the norm for archaeologists today, this was an almost impossible task. In the event, this new work considers the evidence for the site and surviving buildings of the abbey in much more depth, both literally and metaphorically, than would have been attempted in the 1980s, when he published an interim account of the early phases of the site (Radford 1981). Chapter Two, which provides the evidence for the recent geophysical surveys, is a case in point. This book has not only brought together for the first time the archaeological evidence for the whole history of the site, but in doing so has produced a primary evaluation of the nature of the medieval monastery and its buildings.

This is a handsome publication, lavishly illustrated with new colour and black-and-white figures as well as fascinating historical photographs, but it is not a book for the faint-hearted or those seeking a quick overview. It is indeed useful to digest the Summary and the phasing and figure conventions before plunging into the first chapter because then the piecemeal nature of the evidence can be fully appreciated, and the format of the plans understood. Throughout the book there has been a scrupulous regard for whether evidence is firmly supported or still uncertain, and this is reflected in the colour coding of the plans, which on the whole works well, but sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the light and dark colours in a site with so many interventions to record.

Most attention in the past has been focused on the early history of the site and the events and people, both real and imagined, associated with such an important religious location. The documentary evidence for the legends (including those relating to King Arthur's burial) and the more solid medieval history is clearly set out in Chapter Three as a prelude to the discussion of the current knowledge of the standing buildings. There follow Chapters Four to Six in which the site is dissected through time and by area: the Cemetery and the Church, the Cloister, and the Inner Court and Precinct. Each of these major sections is preceded by a summary in which the evidence and the current interpretation is set out and briefly commented upon, noting what has been added as new evidence by the reinvestigation. The component parts of each item are then phased and evaluated with colour-coded plans and sections. To provide one example, the cemetery is divided into: the lay cemetery; the monks' cemetery with discussions of the cemetery boundaries and cemetery platform; and then a separate treatment for a burial chamber, cist graves and other graves. The evidence is then pulled together in the Chronological Summary in Chapter Ten and put into a wider context in the Conclusions in Chapter Eleven.

Sometimes the gap between the statement of the evidence and the methods used to re-evaluate it and provide a new chronology can be frustrating, and, for this author, that applied to the important evidence for the Saxon glass furnaces. These, because of their rarity and the differing dates that have been assigned to them, are justifiably given a chapter of their own (Chapter Seven). Glass-making furnaces were discovered at Glastonbury between 1955 and 1957 but were not fully published, although they have formed part of any discussion of Anglo-Saxon glass production ever since. For the first time now these furnaces have been securely located, and the evidence presented in new plans and sections with an analysis of the stratigraphy that enables a reinterpretation of the dating and nature of the glass making. A new catalogue of all locatable finds has been made and these include for the first time evidence of the production waste. For the clinching evidence, provided by modern scientific methods, for the date of the manufacture, however, one has to wait for Chapter Ten. The seventh- to eighth-century date for this evidence of glass working fits well with that for very similar window glass excavated at Wearmouth and Jarrow, and the position of the manufacturing so close to the church can be compared with San Vincenzo al Volturno, so that one can deduce that this episode took place as part of the construction and enhancement of a phase of church building, rather than that it was a repetitive process in a workshop. In the Glastonbury context, the construction of the stone church in the reign of King Ine seems to fit the context for the window-glass manufacture and the authors suggest that 'no other pre-Dunstan stone structure has been identified' (p 104).

The finds, from prehistoric to early modern, are brought together in Chapter Eight and include important new analysis and interpretation of the post-Roman pottery, much of which was selectively discarded during earlier excavations, including Radford's, as I saw for myself on visiting the site during excavation. What remains is, however, a very important body of material. Some categories of finds, such as the Anglo-Saxon sculptures, are not discussed, having been published elsewhere, but the much richer assemblage of medieval worked stone has not before been fully considered and there is an important chapter in which this material is analysed in its petrological groups. In fact, it is the greater understanding of the medieval buildings, their uses and their position within the architectural history of western Europe, which is perhaps the outstanding achievement of this book.

In summary, it is now possible for the first time to consider the entire sequence of activity on this site and to know with some certainty where the gaps in our knowledge lie. The site has produced evidence for some prehistoric activity in the area, if not directly on the site, and possibly two wells in the abbey complex may have had Roman or earlier origins. There must have been substantial Roman buildings in the vicinity of the site, which were robbed to provide building materials for parts of the Anglo-Saxon monastery. The nature of this evidence and of the Roman pottery and small finds are a close parallel to the evidence at other Anglo-Saxon monastic sites, such as Jarrow, where there is attested robbing from nearby Roman sites. The gap between the Roman and early medieval periods has, however, been filled at Glastonbury by new evidence in the shape of late Roman imported pottery associated with floors and traces of timber structures within the cemetery area which confirms a sixth-century occupation on the site, but whether of a secular or religious community is uncertain.

Some questions about the form of the mid- and late Saxon monastery cannot yet be conclusively answered. It has been suggested that the massive ditch and bank, which has appeared in most earlier publications as a potential monastic enclosure (a *vallum monasterii*), may well be an earlier defensive feature, pre-dating the monastery. Indeed, if monasteries elsewhere are any guide, a greater area would have been enveloped in the outer enclosure, and such a '*vallum*' would not have been so near to the church. A number of other ditches have been excavated in separate areas around the site, which, if joined to form a square enclosure, could vary in size from 4 to 14ha. Without further excavation these discrepancies can hardly be resolved, and indeed if one compares the evidence from other monasteries such as Hartlepool or Beverley, subdivisions of the sites can be marked by subsidiary ditches.

The three building phases of the pre-Conquest churches have been clarified, and comparisons can now be made with the plans of other monastic churches of the seventh to tenth centuries, while the detached burial chamber to the east of the main church is comparable with a similar chamber to the east of the early church at Whithorn.

There is no evidence for a conventional cloister at Glastonbury before the rebuilding by Henry of Blois in the mid-twelfth century, but the freestanding buildings to the south of the cemetery are confirmed and have been compared with the range of two large buildings to the south of the churches and cemetery at Jarrow. Mention might have been made of a similar range of two large rooms at the sister and earlier monastery of Wearmouth, which were linked to the church by a covered way or proto-cloister walk.

A much more complete picture of the twelfth-century church and cloister is available, although even here some of the evidence is tantalisingly vestigial. Whether the remains in the south-east corner could have been of a *lavatorium* or the fragments of walling in the north west the foundations of a conduit house continue to be a matter of debate. The evidence for the rebuilt cloister and east range after the 1184 fire is much more firmly founded and the complex evidence for the fourteenth-century abbot's range is presented clearly for the first time, with a substantial hall, chapel, service range with the great kitchen, and a rectangular walled garden. The abbot's complex of buildings well illustrates the palatial nature of the lifestyle of the later abbots of Glastonbury.

In Chapter Eleven, section three, 'Concluding remarks', stresses quite rightly that new excavations are needed to 'establish the character, form and extent of the Saxon monastery' and suggestions are made as to where these could be most valuable. The priority given to investigation to the north of the churches is particularly relevant since in so many of the sites comparable in date, such as Wearmouth, Jarrow and Canterbury, investigation has concentrated on the south sides of the churches, and only at Whitby is there a hint that it is to the north of the churches that one might find the more subsidiary and domestic buildings.

One must agree with the concluding statement in this useful and innovative book that 'new understanding has been brought to the abbey's archaeology and a series of questions have been posed for future research'.

Radford, C A R 1981. 'Glastonbury Abbey before 1184: interim report on the excavations 1908–64', in N Coldstream and P Draper (eds), *Medieval Art and Architecture at Wells and Glastonbury*, Brit Archaeol Ass Conference Trans IV, 110–34, London and Leeds

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doi:10.1017/S0003581516000603

Representing Beasts in Early Medieval England and Scandinavia. Edited by MICHAEL D J BINTLEY and THOMAS J T WILLIAMS. 234mm. Pp xii + 312, 39 ills, 4 tables. Boydell & Brewer, London, 2015. ISBN 9781783270088. £60 (hbk).

Animal–human relationships in the early medieval period, particularly in Anglo-Saxon England, have been a staple of archaeological research since the late 1980s, particularly through zooarchaeological remains from cemeteries and settlements (eg Bond 1993, 1996; Bond and Worley 2006; Cherryson 2001; Crabtree 1989, 1994, 1995, 1996; Fern 2007; Pluskowski 2005, 2006, 2007), animals (real and imagined) on metalwork and occasional ceramics (eg Dickinson 2005; Hicks 1986, 1993; Jennbert 2004, 2007) and the ongoing *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, which catalogues numerous animal motifs. This volume provides a welcome addition to these evolving discourses by harnessing a commendably wide compendium of evidence, within and across the papers, encompassing metalwork, figurines, iconography, poetry, histories, landscapes, place names and wills, and charters from archaeologists, linguistic scholars and historians. Several of the papers (eg Brunning, Osborn, Lacey) also make crucial use of animal behaviour studies. It is truly a multidisciplinary volume and the only obvious topic lacking is zooarchaeology. This self-contained publication seeks to spark further discussion, and undoubtedly will. However, it feels disconnected from the large body of existing literature since the introduction misses a prime opportunity to engage fully with the past three decades of archaeological research cited above. Without this context it is difficult to identify where this volume sees itself contributing to current debates in early medieval animal studies.

This should not, however, overshadow the rich array of papers. The first four studies (Adams, Brunning, Symons, Osborn) focus on animals in material culture regarding belief and transmission of shared cultural heritage. The remaining seven centre on written sources dealing with animals associated with hidden knowledge (Lacey, Chardonnens), humans identifying with animals (North) and the conceptual links humans have made between animals and landscapes (Williams, Bintley, Baker, Hooke). The editors argue that this structure offers a juxtaposition of evidence types, although it may inadvertently continue to underpin the segregation of material-culture-based versus text-based studies.

Adams contextualises early Anglo-Saxon animal art of predators and prey on metalwork within Roman, 'Celtic' and Arabic iconography of the Hunt, arguing against 'Germanic paganism' attributed to Style I and II animal art, and favouring a degree of continuity from, and reinvention of, Roman models of hunt imagery. The conclusion states: 'the outcome of the chase, the food preparation and washing, were household activities in charge of women, who therefore had a vested interest in successful hunting' (p 50). That women only encountered wild animals in their role as cooks and did not capture animals, or that men did not perform 'household activities', is an unqualified assertion.

Brunning provides a richly considered exploration of swords and serpents in kennings and material culture, whose ambiguity as creative and destructive metaphors allowed them to transcend Christian conversion processes in the period AD 750–1050. Equally compelling is Symons' fruitful comparison of runes and serpents in *Beowulf* and Old Norse literature, arguing that they were 'conceptually opposing forces' (p 88). Their juxtaposition on Scandinavian carved memorials is interpreted as an ironic visual pun, the runes revealing positive circulation of wealth between generations, and the serpents concealing, hoarding wealth. Osborn examines the Lejre seated figurine, rightfully querying its superficial attribution to Odin and his ravens and suggests a non-deified female identity instead. The interpretation is brave, exciting and worthy of further discussion but the conclusion sadly lacks confidence. Lacey provides an accessible deep-reading of the long-standing dispute over a 'blithe-hearted' raven in *Beowulf* which seems to contradict the more common description of ravens as mortuary emblems.