

The Birth of a Borough: An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford. By Martin Carver. Boydell. 2010. xiv + 176pp. £60.00.

This latest offering from Martin Carver, Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at the University of York, is an archaeological monograph which synthesizes the results of a ten-year campaign of intensive archaeological research conducted in the midlands town of Stafford between 1975 and 1985. The book tells the story of Stafford, which was founded as a military stronghold by King Alfred's daughter Æthelflæd during the tenth century and became a thriving Late Saxon economic centre before being virtually abandoned in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. The town only rose to prominence again in the late twelfth century.

The first chapter ('Questions') introduces the structure and ethos of the book, and sets out the research questions to which the book attempts to provide answers. Specifically, these concern the development of Stafford itself and its wider context as one of the series of fortified *burhs* founded across lowland England during the Late Saxon period. This is complemented by chapter 2 ('Digging up Stafford'), which provides a history of the archaeological investigations undertaken in Stafford and discusses the rationale behind their execution. Throughout the book the author synthesizes a considerable amount of archaeological data resulting from these investigations, the vast majority of which has been made available online via the Archaeology Data Service, to which the reader is often referred. Chapter 3 ('Seven Windows on Early Stratford') provides more detailed summaries of the seven principal archaeological excavations that were undertaken within the town during the late 1970s and early 1980s. These summaries are extensively illustrated with original photographs and site plans. The chapter concludes with a brief synthetic chronology of the development of Stafford derived from the results of these archaeological excavations.

Chapter 4 ('Æthelflæd's Town') synthesizes the archaeological evidence for the Iron Age and Roman use of the site prior to the establishment of the *burh* in the tenth century, and provides a detailed analysis of the character, form and function of the *burh* itself, which the author argues was founded in the Roman image and run along Roman lines. Subjects covered include the archaeological evidence for cereal processing, the consumption of animals, the early phases of St Bertelin's church, the Stafford mint, and, especially, the Stafford-ware pottery industry, the latter being extensively illustrated. The story of Stafford continues in chapter 5 ('Aftermath'), which discusses the effect of the Norman Conquest on the Anglo-Saxon *burh*, after which a castle was founded within the town while other parts of the town were abandoned and fell into disuse. The town appears to have experienced an economic revival from the late twelfth to the fourteenth century, evidenced by extensive medieval occupation evidence and a resurgence in pottery production, among other indicators.

The final chapter ('Anglo-Saxon Stafford in Context') takes the evidence for the *burh* presented in the previous chapters and places it at the centre of a detailed and enlightening discussion of the wider origins and use of the fortified *burh* in Anglo-Saxon Mercia and Wessex. Particular regard is paid to two hypotheses about the founding of the *burhs* – that they were constructed on existing royal foundations or that they were focused on existing ecclesiastical foundations – but these sites, Carver concludes, were chosen for strategic

reasons and were deliberately modelled on Roman fortifications, their occupants even going so far as to mint coins and produce Roman-style pottery.

This book is very well produced, comprising an A4 hardback lavishly illustrated throughout with line drawings and black-and-white photographs, although the four colour plates that open the volume really only serve to draw attention to the lack of colour in the rest of the book. In general, all the illustrations are reproduced to a very high standard, although some of the labels are difficult to read due to the scale at which they are presented. While many of the archaeological plans and diagrams are reproduced directly from the original site archives, some are now showing their age and the overall presentation of the book may have benefited from their being redrawn in a consistent house style.

This book is one of several recent volumes that have effectively and successfully drawn together and synthesized a number of discrete excavations and used them to tell the story of a single town or settlement. The author is to be commended for ensuring that these important results have been brought to publication and for ensuring that the substantive complementary site archive has been made freely available online. Although arguably the contents of the book will primarily be of interest to those concerned with Stafford itself, there is a wider relevance here for those interested in the development of English urban centres in general and the concluding discussion of the origins and function of the *burhs* makes this volume of great relevance to Anglo-Saxon scholars everywhere.

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RICHARD HOGGETT

***Sanctuary and Crime in the Middle Ages, 400–1500.* By Karl Shoemaker.** Fordham University Press. 2011. xiv + 269pp. £56.50/\$65.00.

A right of sanctuary attached to Christian churches, which protected any wrongdoer or suspected wrongdoer who had managed to enter a church or the consecrated land surrounding it from being forcibly removed and provided him or her with effective immunity from capital or corporal punishment, is first clearly visible in the late fourth century in Roman imperial edicts which restricted some claims to sanctuary but implicitly recognized others. Thereafter, the right seems to have been generally accepted in both secular and ecclesiastical law throughout western Europe for over a millennium. Its end came relatively quickly during the century after 1500, with the effective withdrawal of its legal recognition in both Protestant England and Catholic France during the first half of the century, and what amounted in practice to a papal abolition of the entitlement under canon law in 1597.

Although there have been a number of recent and not so recent papers and a number of unpublished doctoral theses on aspects of sanctuary law, it has been over a century since the last general monograph on the subject appeared in English. This was Norman Trenholme's *The Right of Sanctuary in England: A Study in Institutional History*, which appeared in 1903 and whose main focus was on the history of sanctuary in England. So Karl Shoemaker's monograph deserves a welcome from historians as a brave attempt at providing a modern account of this phenomenon and all within the relatively brief space of under 200 pages, plus just over fifty pages of endnotes.

@inproceedings{Hoggett2012TheBO, title={The Birth of a Borough: An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford} By Martin Carver}, author={Richard Hoggett}, year={2012} }. Richard Hoggett. Published 2012. History. View via Publisher. Save to Library. Create Alert. The English are 'one third' Anglo-Saxon: Study reveals for the first time how immigrants mixed with British population. Anglo-Saxon immigrants genetically similar to modern Dutch and Danish. Contributed 38% of the DNA of modern people from East England. The great work is not only the first known book to treat the English as then divided among several different kingdoms as a single unified group, but it also pioneered the practice of counting dates from the birth of Christ, as we still do today. Bede later known as 'the Venerable' died shortly after reciting an Old English poem, and his grave is now in Durham Cathedral. Papers placing Anglo-Saxon England in its international context, including contemporary themes from neighbouring countries, will receive as warm a welcome as papers on England itself. Papers submitted to ASSAH must be accurate and readable without detailed specialist knowledge. They must now also conform to the new house style which has been... The excavation of a Saxon farmstead and cemetery was undertaken by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust in 1997. The site comprised c . 3.92 hectares of arable land immediately south of Station Road, Gamlingay, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 2430 5190), (Fig.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is usually believed to have been started during the reign of King Alfred who ruled in Wessex from 871 to 899. Copies were kept in various monasteries, and to some extent expanded and brought up to date. This article mostly restricts itself to discussing the Chronicle entries relating to the Arthurian period. The Anglo-Saxon manuscript survives in four main different recensions, plus other less important recensions. The case of Stafford has prompted a new review of the origins of county towns as a whole, and the composition of a new model for the birth of the Anglo-Saxon borough on which the local administration of England has ever since been based. Martin Carver is Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at the University of York. [show more](#). [Product details](#). [Format Hardback](#) | 194 pages. Anglo-Saxon farming has traditionally been seen as the wellspring of English agriculture, setting the pattern for 1000 years to come – but it was more important than that. A rich harvest of archaeological data is now revealing the untold story of agricultural innovation, the beginnings of a revolution, in the age of Bede. *Farming Transformed* is the first book to draw together the variegated evidence of pollen, sediments, charred seeds, animal bones, watermills, corn-drying ovens, granaries and stockyards on an extensive, regional scale. Anglo-Saxon mercenaries had for many years fought in the Roman army in Britain, so they were not total strangers to the island. Their invasions were slow and piecemeal, and began even before the Roman legions departed. This burial of an East Anglian king provides a rich case study from which we can draw inferences about kingship, religion, warfare, trade, craftsmanship. An Anglo-Saxon teenage girl appears to have had her nose and lips cut off – and possibly her head scalped as well – analysis of an old skull has revealed. Unearthed in Oakridge, Hampshire, the remains have been radiocarbon dated to 776–899 AD – predating written accounts of this gruesome form of punishment. An archaeological dig of the area took place after metal detectorists discovered two bronze bowls. Dr Gabor Thomas said the find provided "new insights" into life after the collapse of Roman Britain. The specialist in early medieval archaeology at the University of Reading said the burial suggested "people living in this region may have been more important than historians previously suspected".