

that can be effected, for example, in relation to open-cast coal-mining. The moral conveyed by this booklet is that the price of an archaeological heritage is eternal – and effective – lobbying!

Geoffrey Stell

R.R. Davis: The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415. OUP, 1991 530pp., paperback, £7.95.

Robin Frame: The Political Development of the British Isles: 1100-1400. OUP, 1990. 256pp., paperback, £6.95.

It is a pleasure to welcome Rhys Davies' Age of Conquest in paperback. It first appeared in hardback in 1987, under the title Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales 1063-1415, and was at once recognised as a masterpiece, the definitive modern account of Wales in the Middle Ages. Professor Davies has a gift for narrative, and scholarly, well-balanced judgements are set out in attractive readable prose.

The period covered ranges from the death of Gruffudd ap Llywellyn in 1063 to that of Owain Glyn Dŵr in 1415. The first hundred years saw the advent and eventual containment of the Normans and the establishment of Marcher society. Davies labels the years 1172-1277 'The Age of Consolidation' and considers the governance of Wales under three of its greatest princes: Rhys ap Gruffudd of Deheubarth, and Llywellyn ap Iorwerth and Llywellyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd. Then came the Edwardian conquest and settlement, followed by a century of comparative stability and the last native Welsh revolt under Owain Glyn Dŵr.

But this is more than a political history. Set apart from the main political narrative are three illuminating chapters on the changing face of Welsh society between 1100 and 1350, which consider in turn the bonds of society, the transformation of economic life, and the church and religion. The discussion of the first of these themes, the bonds of society, is of particular interest. Welsh society in the Middle Ages, like Scottish society, was predominantly kin-based, and many parallels spring to mind, not least as regards obligations of clientship, and the blood feud and its consequences.

The book is indispensable reading for anyone interested in the history of Wales or, indeed, in the medieval history of the British Isles. It is a pleasure to read, and remarkable value at the price.

As Robin Frame notes in his preface, although 'British' history has been much in vogue recently, there is not a great deal of it in print. His pioneering Political Development of the British Isles: 1100-1400 aims to remedy the defect. It must be accounted a considerable success. Like Rhys Davies' Age of Conquest it is well informed, well judged and well written. Author and subject have come together at just the right time, and Dr. Frame has been able to draw on much recent research. It is one of the strengths of the book that although he is particularly expert on the Anglo-Norman aristocracy and their far reaching international connections, including their impact on the kingdom of the Scots, Dr. Frame gives full consideration also to the native lords of Wales and the Gaelic lords of Scotland and Ireland. The Scandinavian rulers of Orkney and Dublin, of Man and the Isles, also find a place.

The book does not aim to supercede more traditional historiography for the four nations concerned, but seeks rather to provide an alternative perspective, and in so doing to set new questions and suggest relevant comparisons. There are no separate chapters for individual countries. Rather each chapter considers a topic in the wider British context. Headings include The Aristocratic Nexus, The Expansion of Royal Government, Kings and Princes, Jurisdiction and Conquest: The Reign of Edward I, and Political Communities. The chapter on Kings and Princes begins memorably 'In 1100 the British Isles contained many and varied kings; by 1270 the rulers who had a colourable claim to royal rank had declined sharply in number, and the definition of what made a king had narrowed decisively.' The chapter on Jurisdiction and Conquest allows the Scottish reader to set Edward I's aspirations and objectives in Scotland beside his dealings with the Irish and the Welsh, and also his own subordinate relationship, as lord of Gascony, with Philip the Fair of France. However, whether greater insight leads to a more sympathetic view of Edward is another question.

Dr. Frame is too modest when he suggests that the book can be read as a series of essays. It is a carefully planned, well integrated whole which skilfully explores the two main organising themes set out in the introduction: the impact on the British Isles of the dominant power within them, at first the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, and then the English state; and second, the comparisons and contrasts to be drawn by studying the various component elements and their fate.

Both books here reviewed contain the additional bonus of maps and genealogies attractively set out and a detailed bibliography. They can be thoroughly recommended.

W.D.H. Sellar

***The Mackie Monographs: Scotland and Scandinavia 800-1800*, Grant Simpson ed., John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh, 1990. 154pp. (Price £20.00).**

Dr James R.M. Mackie of Glenmillan graduated from Aberdeen University in 1932. He pursued a career as a consultant psychiatrist in England but returned to Aberdeenshire on his retirement in 1971 and, when he died in 1982, he left a bequest to the University of Aberdeen for the establishment of the Mackie Symposia for the study of 'Scotland's contacts with other lands and Scotland's history set in a wide international context', as noted in the Introduction to the volume. *Scotland and Scandinavia 800-1800* is the first of the Mackie Monographs and we can look forward to further explorations of Scotland's links with other countries.

The editor, Grant Simpson, opens with a disarming admission that no attempt has been made to produce comprehensive coverage and one can sympathise with the impossibility of being comprehensive in such a limited space while regretting the necessity of selectivity. The volume contains several extremely interesting articles but one has the impression that cohesion is externally imposed by the heavy chronological hand of the editor.

Contacts between Scotland and Scandinavia during the 'Viking' period are dealt with in the two opening chapters and reference is made in the Introduction to the fact that this particular period of contact is reasonably well-researched elsewhere and has, therefore, been given less than its due prominence in the present volume. The biased reviewer does, however, regret the