

tance and technique of warping, as well as the changes that have taken place to the soils over the last two millennia. John Flenley's chapter on vegetational history is concise and brings together the latest research on the prehistoric environment. The section concludes with the reminder of the importance of the estuary itself, its size and its continued post-glacial development.

The second section, Early Wetland Exploitation, starts with a charming and under-stated review of the discovery and importance of the Ferriby Boats by E.V. Wright; for the archaeological historian this important piece is complemented by a summary of known Early Boat Finds in the Humber Basin (S. McGrail) and a reconstruction of the environment in which the Ferriby Boats were abandoned (Buckland, Beal & Heal). Gilbertson summarizes his work on the Holderness Meres and reminds any reader just how important and under-valued this rich group of wet sites is, whilst John Dent underlines the importance of the disappearing wet sites of the Hull Valley. Stith provides an analysis of the evidence for the role of the Faxfleet sites as a port (?) and this, combined with the reassessment of the Redcliff site (Crowther, Willis & Creighton), provides interesting information on the importance of the estuary in the later Iron Age and early Roman period. Creighton goes on to suggest in a later chapter that Redcliff represents an early 1st-

century AD trading centre on the Humber frontier, and also examines the impact on the region of the Roman conquest. The section concludes with an analysis of later Iron Age and Roman exploitation of the low-lying areas around Hull by Didsbury; it summarizes very recent research on the use made of areas subject to flooding in both the Iron Age and Roman periods.

The third section of the volume is devoted to urban origins and development of towns in Humberside; plenty of meat here for the post-Medieval archaeologist. The chapters on Beverley by Evans and Neave can be contrasted with those on the origins of Goole in the early 19th century and Scunthorpe in the early 20th. The final section of the book is devoted to the Emerging Region; Millett calls for a re-evaluation of Iron Age society and Roman activity in the region, whilst Knowles points to the emerging medieval settlement pattern and a large number of areas in which research in economic archaeology is required.

The volume contains a vast range of contributions which are of a high standard and form a basis for the understanding of the Humber area from the post-glacial to the present day. The papers provide a quarry for new directions and approaches of one of England's least understood estuarine regions.

TIM SCHADLA-HALL

Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service

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