including the bronze mortars, coins, pottery, clay tobacco pipes, miscellaneous finds and the environmental evidence of the carbonised plant remains and animal bones. Chapter 4 deals with the 'Human Skeletal Remains' (24 pages).

There are some real gems in these two chapters. Park and Howard's piece on late twelfth-century architectural polychromy is one of the undoubted highlights of the monograph and the four pages of colour plates (25 plates in all) that accompany it are particularly welcome. This Glasgow assemblage of painted stonework, as they note, represents the most important discovery of late Romanesque painting in Britain since the twelfth-century wall-paintings that were uncovered in the 1960s in Winchester Cathedral. It is a pity, therefore, that the opportunity was not taken to include a reconstruction drawing or painting of what St Kentigern's Tomb and the Romanesque crypt might have looked like, with its imitation red porphyry painted shafts – however speculative this might have been.

Another highlight is Dennis Gallagher's and Katherine Forsyth's text on the bronze mortars which were recovered from the crypt. Superbly illustrated by Marion O'Neill, these objects are a tangible reminder of the kind of quality artefacts and fixtures and fittings that the cathedral lost at the time of the Reformation. Meanwhile, Sarah King's work on the human skeletal material – covering what is probably the longest excavated sequence of burial at any Scottish church – will form a useful benchmark and set of comparanda for future studies. Chapter 5 rounds off the monograph with a short 'Concluding Discussion' (4 pages).

And so to a few personal bugbears. The use of the term 'frag', for fragment, in many of the Tables (which are curiously described throughout as 'Figures' – though presumably this is a convention of the Monographs?) struck a slightly discordant note; so too did the use of unexplained acronyms (for instance, ACJ and DJD on pages 143-144) which might not be familiar to a non-archaeological (or non-medical) audience. Similarly, there appear to be inconsistencies in some of the sums in Figure (ie Table) 4.3 and again in the introductory paragraph on page 134 where there are variously twenty-two or twenty-one or skeletons of seventeenth-to-nineteenth-century date, and fifty-five or fifty-six of fourteenth-to-seventeenth-century date.

But these are minor criticisms of what is otherwise an exemplary report. Excavation in narrow trenches is not easy at the best of times and any difficulties must be multiplied many times over on a site like this where there has been intensive building and burial activity over the centuries. It is to Dr Driscoll's and his team's credit, therefore, that they have been able to pull this off so successfully. This monograph will be of interest to medievalists and church historians in general and of particular interest to finds and other specialists as a source of reference material.

Headland Archaeology CHRISTOPHER LOWE

Spynie Palace and the Bishops of Moray, History, Architecture and Archaeology.
By John Lewis and Denys Pringle. Volume editor: Anna Ritchie. Pp. xvii, 205.
ISBN 0903903210.
Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries. 2002. £25.00.

This publication is volume xxi in the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland monograph series and it is presented as the definitive report on the archaeological

work completed in and around Spynie Palace between 1986 and 1994. The book consists of five chapters with two appendices and is clearly intended to present a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject. Following a general historical introduction that tackles the see of Moray and Spynie Palace to the present day, the book then offers a short chapter on the location and physiography of the site.

The next two chapters are the meat of this book. The first covers the results of the excavations in great detail and is mainly concerned with the various phases of building and reconstruction at Spynie between the late twelfth and the seventeenth centuries. This discussion is accompanied by the usual photographs and finely detailed plans which help those with little archaeological knowledge to follow the thrust of the argument.

Chapter 4 is devoted to listing and discussing the finds made during excavation. These range from coins and jetons to pottery, and from glass to faunal remains. Many of the objects found are either drawn, reproduced or described in great detail. The results provide a tremendous insight into the day-to-day existence of the people who lived in and around the palace over a period of c.500 years.

This is followed by a final chapter consisting of a general discussion that aims to place Spynie Palace in both a local and national context by comparing it to other episcopal buildings in Moray and Scotland.

Of the two appendices that follow, the first is devoted to a series of documents that describe the contents of the palace during the first half of the seventeenth century. The second lists all of the objects that were found in a cache in the watergate passage during excavation. The inclusion of this list as an appendix seems rather odd at first, particularly as forty-five of the items have already been discussed in chapter four. All becomes clear when it is admitted that the other forty-eight items on the list were 'mislaid during conservation'. This is an astonishing confession and the reader is led to wonder just how often this occurs in conservation units. It certainly does not inspire confidence in the people who are supposed to be conserving our heritage, nor is it a particularly fitting conclusion to some of the fine archaeological work contained in the book.

However, having to admit to the 'misplacement' of some of the finds from Spynie is just part of the general malaise that surrounds this book. For example, it is clear that the 'historical' introduction was not written by a historian. It is largely based on very dated secondary literature and makes some stunningly wild assumptions about Moray, particularly during the early-medieval period. This is the first, and hopefully the last, occasion on which a mormaer will ever be defined as a "Celto-Pictish magnate", whatever that might mean. The Society of Antiquaries may wish to consider employing someone familiar with recent Scottish historiography to do this type of work if any of the future volumes in this series require similar introductions. This comment also applies to Appendix I. The first transcription is extremely inaccurate and it must be presumed that it was either done by someone who is not a trained palaeographer or by someone whose skills are very rusty. This does not inspire confidence in the reliability of the remaining seven transcriptions.

More importantly perhaps, Historic Scotland were clearly very specific about where they allowed the archaeologists to dig. A cynic might suggest that the excavation program was driven by the need for Historic Scotland to consolidate the surviving masonry, rather than a more considered approach that targeted areas of specific interest, such as the central courtyard, or the ditch, or even an attempt to locate the toun of Spynie.

Disappointingly, a large number of important questions that should have been tackled in a multi-disciplinary study are not asked in this book. The reader might have expected basic enquiries like: how did the site fit into the post-Pictish, pre-parochial landscape? Why did the bishop need two fortified palaces in close proximity to each other? Exactly how many fortified palaces did the bishops of Moray maintain at any one time? Where were the mensal lands of the bishopric? Where were the mensal lands that supported Spynie Palace? How did the palace fit into the surrounding medieval landscape? How did the palace fit into the overall landscape of the bishopric? This list of unanswered questions is long and leaves the reader with a strong sense of unfinished business.

This volume contains some excellent archaeological information surrounded by indifferent and imprecise material. If it was intended to present a multi-disciplinary approach to a specific topic for different audiences, it fails quite spectacularly.

University of Aberdeen ALASDAIR ROSS

Mary of Guise in Scotland, 1548-1560: A Political Career.
By Pamela E. Ritchie. Pp. xiv, 306.
ISBN 1-86232-184-1.
East Linton: Tuckwell Press. 2002. £20.00.

This book commands attention for the importance of its subject. We have books on most periods of sixteenth-century politics, most recently Marcus Merriman's study of Queen Mary's early minority. The present book takes the story on to the Reformation, filling or at least tackling one of the largest remaining gaps. It begins with the Treaty of Haddington (1548) by which the Scots handed their queen to the French in order to save themselves from English conquest, and ends with the collapse of the French regime and the regent's own death in 1560.

As with many converted Ph.D. theses there is a straining after originality: Dr Ritchie does not realise that she is at her best when building on, confirming and expanding previous interpretations. The scholar she usually has in her sights is Gordon Donaldson, whose textbook *Scotland: James V-James VII* provides what is still probably the best political narrative of the period, and who also wrote influentially on the Reformation and on political allegiance. Dr Ritchie is uninterested in the latter issue – her 'Scottish political community/élite' (as it appears in the index) is mainly an undifferentiated mass; but she does want to reassess Mary of Guise's own role, which she attempts in a series of thematic chapters.

For this crucial period of the 'auld alliance', French policy has to be properly understood, and the book makes welcome use of French state papers. There is a good deal more in France for future scholars– financial accounts, as well as Dr Ritchie's diplomatic correspondence. Doubt is cast on whether she has made the most of her material by the poor quality of some of her translations. Is it really likely that a Frenchman would write: 'In this country, we often have money in a more possible manner and with more difficulties than we think of' (109)? Almost as worrying is a persistent tendency to improve and add to her originals. 'Vous et les vostres' is obviously 'you and yours', but she translates it as 'you and your men', not realising that the writer probably meant 'you and your successors' (96). Still, it is helpful to have a wide-ranging study of diplomacy. The two chapters on French attempts to drag Scotland into the Habsburg-Valois wars