

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by NEIL CHRISTIE

Spong Hill. Part IX: Chronology and Synthesis. (McDonald Institute Monographs). By Catherine Hills & Sam Lucy. 22 × 29 cm. xv + 479 pp, 166 b&w pls and figs, 70 tables. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2013. ISBN 978-1-902937-62-5 (ISSN 1363-1349). Price: £59.00 hb.

In 1982 when I joined the Norfolk Archaeological Unit, their annual excavations on Spong Hill, which had commenced ten years earlier, had just come to an end and post-excavation work was already underway. Now 30 years on, eight published volumes and numerous articles later, it reaches a conclusion in this finely produced and very substantial synthesis. Spong developed into the largest Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery to be excavated in Britain, extending over one hectare of hilltop south of the village of North Elmham in central Norfolk. Catherine Hills, director of the excavations from 1975 and the driving force behind all the subsequent post-excavation analyses, makes the point early in the text that 'Spong Hill is uniquely positioned to contribute to the key themes of research in early Anglo-Saxon England: migration, regional variation and social structure' (p 9).

Three central chapters entitled 'Artefact classification and discussion', 'Establishing a chronology' and 'The internal structuring of the cemetery and local contexts' define the core of the volume. It will be a diligent reader who reads these from beginning to end: the volume is dense with detail and presented in a concentrated form that may discourage all but the most ardent of Anglo-Saxon specialists. But no one can doubt the absolute necessity for such a synthesis. Because of its size the cremation cemetery was published periodically in four volumes, each covering around 600 burials, with a fifth devoted to the inhumation burials. The present work collates the entire artefact assemblage from nearly 2,400 cremations: 428 complete urns and 1057 incomplete ones, 120 brooches, hundreds of beads, nearly 1,200 objects of antler, bone and ivory and these only start the list. Fabric analysis, stamp and style groups, the definition of nearly 300 burial groups of two or more cremations, seriation and correspondence analysis allow the chronology of the cemetery to be charted through several phases from the first quarter of the 5th century through to the mid-6th, with inhumations appearing around AD 480. Next the structure and spatial organisation of the cemetery are considered, and its relationship to the incompletely excavated settlement on its NW side, providing overall not only a revised chronology but a sequence of development that supersedes those postulated in the earlier studies. The section concludes with an assessment by Mary Chester-Kadwell of Spong Hill's local context, seen here as the 25 km² around the site. The picture has developed considerably since the earliest days of excavation, primarily through the medium of metal-detecting.

Current thinking sees settlement and cemetery spacing of between 1–3 km, with sites restricted to valley sides and, as at Spong, sometimes on or close to an earlier, Roman settlement.

Rounding off this remarkable study, the final chapter addresses broader themes. The argument for the emergence of an early 5th-century cemetery is an explicit challenge to the traditional attribution of the earliest substantial Anglo-Saxon activity in southern and eastern England in the second half of the century. Determining the ethnic identity of the occupants through the medium of material culture is critically examined; drawing on changing burial rites across the 4th and 5th centuries and the contents of continental cemeteries, and aided by the size of the cemetery on Spong Hill, Hills and Lucy demonstrate that artefact types point to derivations from different parts of the North Sea coastal zone, that is from both Saxon and Anglian regions, while also contending that some of those buried at Spong Hill were of local British ancestry. They argue too for a core cremation area stretching from Norfolk to southern Yorkshire, indicative of immigrants arriving in sufficient numbers to cause a dramatic change in burial practice, while in those parts of England beyond the core area there was greater variation in the burial rite and a longer term process of adoption of Germanic culture which points to a lower level of immigration.

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Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming. (Medieval History and Archaeology Series). By Debbie Banham & Rosamond Faith. 18 × 25 cm. xv + 336 pp, 9 colour pls, 51 b&w pls and figs, 4 tables. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-199207-94-7. Price: £65.00 hb.

The authors of this book begin with the wise observation that its readers will probably either know about Anglo-Saxon England or about farming, but not both. The present reviewer is in the former camp. Farming was a central preoccupation for the Anglo-Saxons and this book enormously increased my understanding of their agricultural practices and in the process helped me to better understand their worldview also. There have been general surveys of the history of agriculture and detailed surveys of the Domesday agricultural economy but no adequate modern analysis of Anglo-Saxon farming, so this book fills gaps for both imagined types of reader.

The book falls into two parts: the first by Banham on farming in general; the second by Faith on farming in particular landscapes. In the first, we learn about what

was farmed, when and how. Details are given of the types of crops and ploughs, the breeding, care and use of animals and their products, and how the tools and cropping changed over the period under consideration. Chapters draw on a wide range of evidence – literary, legal, archaeological and onomastic. They are full of interesting and striking information: e.g. the number of horses in the Domesday Book (4,760) and how many piglets a sow might have in a year (15). Place-names are used with some subtlety to indicate distributions of particular types of crop. The discussion of bees might have been given some nuance by reference to place-names Bickerton (Cheshire and N Yorkshire, both in Domesday) and Bickerstaffe (Lancashire): such names suggest that bee-keepers were people of substance and recognised expertise, and not necessarily of ‘low status’ (p 105).

In the book’s second part, Faith particularises the practice of agriculture by relating it to location. Separate chapters deal with coastal and riverside farming, farming in woodland, downland, moorlands and wolds. The emphasis is on interpreting archaeology and historical geography in relation to the physical landscape and the resources it offered to farmers. Intelligent use is made of place-names, and indeed local colour and nuance are given to generic place-name elements. Some names are mangled a little in the discussion (pp 263–6), but not to the detriment of the argument. Faith illustrates well how the landscape itself determined what could be farmed, and how in turn farming shaped the landscapes in which it was practised: the disposition of the farms and settlements, the existence or not of cattle droves, the use of enclosures and the maintenance of woodland. The farms of Anglo-Saxon England, even as there was a tendency towards specialisation as the period progressed, were very different from the familiar monocultures of today. The ingenuity of the farmers in maintaining a mixed agriculture on sometimes unforgiving land is an abiding impression.

The authors must be congratulated on a book which will be useful to a wide range of scholars. They assimilate and present material from a variety of disciplines and pack an enormous amount of detail into its pages, yet it is uniformly interesting and enlightening. There are very few typographical or other errors (vowel length in Old English elements is rather randomly indicated; OE *æcer* is not ‘from Latin *ager*’, p 66; nor is *ness* in the Essex names, such as Foulness, from ON for ‘nose’, but here OE, p 175; and the quotation from *Beowulf* on the same page is garbled – but these really are minor distractions). Overall, this is a fine work, well written and illustrated, and likely to remain the standard textbook for a long time – for both those who know about Anglo-Saxon England and those who know about farming.

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Animals in Saxon & Scandinavian England. Backbones of Economy and Society. By Matilda Holmes. 18 × 26 cm. 220 pp, 70 colour and b&w figs, 80 tables. Leiden, Sidestone Press, 2014. ISBN 978-9-088902-66-6. Price: €34,95 pb.

Holmes’ work (developed from a recent PhD) presents a synthesis of over 300 animal bone assemblages recovered in England, dating from the Early Anglo-Saxon to Saxo-Norman periods. Examining a range of features, including species presence, ageing and sexing data and body-part patterns, she explores diet, animal husbandry and economy, provisioning and urban-based craft production (Chapters 3–5). The faunal record demonstrates a shift from self-sufficient Early Saxon settlements, focusing almost completely on domestic species, to increasingly complex patterns of husbandry, diet and provisioning strategies. Certain settlements, specifically elite sites, consume greater proportions of pork and wild species than other settlements, while Holmes also demonstrates the role of urban centres as net consumers of animal produce, particularly of cattle, which seem to have been preferentially exported to these site types. Throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, we see an emphasis on meat production from the main domesticates, but an increasing use of secondary products from cattle and sheep becomes evident from the Middle Saxon period, in part in response to the growing non-agricultural population. Chapter 6 moves away from food to explore evidence for spatial distinctions in animal processing and craft production within Mid-Saxon *wics* and Late Saxon towns. This is perhaps the most interesting and original part of the work.

The majority of trends identified by Holmes will be familiar to those with existing knowledge of animals in Anglo-Saxon England. Indeed, there has already been much research into the zooarchaeology of this period (including large-scale surveys), despite this work’s claim to be the ‘first systematic and critical review of an extensive corpus of animal bone data from sites throughout Saxon England’ (p 21). As such, this volume should perhaps be best seen as a useful source of reference, rather than providing new insight into the period. It would have been interesting if the work went further, perhaps considering, for example, the effects of a person’s role in food production or distribution on identity. While there are a fair few typos, and other minor quibbles, the volume overall provides a generally well written and accessible overview of the animal bone record and its implications for this important period. The data and references included will no doubt prove useful to researchers, and those unfamiliar with the subject will surely find it a useful introductory work, supported as it is by a good range of illustrations.

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Social Dynamics in Southwest England AD 350–1150: An Exploration of Maritime Oriented Identity. (British Archaeological Reports British Series 599). By Imogen Tompsett. 21 × 30 cm. ix + 279 pp, 190 b&w pls and figs. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014. ISBN 978-1-407312-90-3. Price: £42.00 pb.

This volume examines early medieval identities in Devon and Cornwall through assessing continuity and change in settlement hierarchies, material culture and society. It explicitly emphasises the role of maritime connections and acculturation in social transformations throughout the English Southwest, expanding thereby upon previous scholarship examining the Atlantic West during the prehistoric and Roman periods. Chapter 2 outlines the volume's theoretical framework, which utilises the idea of central places to frame settlement hierarchies, and adapts Braudel's theory of multiple time-scales to frame macro- and micro-analysis of material culture. Chapter 3 outlines the project's methodological approach, while Chs 4–7 are largely descriptive, assessing respectively settlement morphologies, ceramics, glass, coinage and metalwork/metalworking. Chapter 8 presents case-studies of settlements at Kelsey Head, Bantham, Trethurgy, Gwithian, Mawgan Porth and Launceston, before Ch 9 moves examination to settlement hierarchies, central places, settlement pattern, change and continuity, trade routes, production and demand. At times discussion is a bit imbalanced (e.g. prominence is given to ceramic evidence) and some methodological aspects are questionable (e.g. using sherd rather than vessel count for inter-site comparison). Nevertheless, interesting conclusions include evidence for continuities between later prehistoric, Romano-British and early medieval practices. There is perhaps an overemphasis on long-term regional trends, however, at the expense of local intra-site contexts of use and deposition, which are arguably more pertinent to the articulation of identities, whether maritime or not. A very general distinction between the periods AD 350–800, and 800–1150 moreover, lends discussion a somewhat culture-historical feel, apparent, for instance, in the use of anachronistic labels like the 'Celtic Church'. Comparisons with other areas of the Atlantic West are also surprisingly cursory for a work exploring maritime-oriented identities.

While overall this is a well written and copiously illustrated volume, figures are often incorrectly referenced in the text and sometimes are illegible (e.g. figures 169–88); and, probably due to origins as the author's PhD thesis, Chapter 3 unfortunately refers readers to a non-existent Volume 2 and digital appendix! Such quibbles aside, this is an impressive synthesis of settlement and material culture evidence for SW England, valuable and useful both for scholarship of Cornwall and Devon and for regional studies of the Atlantic West more generally.

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Anglo-Saxon England in 100 Places. By David Edmondson. 17 × 24 cm. 96 pp, 45 colour and b&w pls and figs. Stroud: Amberley, 2014. ISBN 978-1-445643-51-1. Price: £12.99 pb.

This book states clearly its audience as the general reader, though its title is not quite an accurate description of its content. With a significantly wider range of 'places' this might have been accurately titled but overall it concentrates largely on churches with Anglo-Saxon origins (images are likewise nearly all of churches or of Christian artefacts). Organised by county, entries are very variable in length and depth. Of the few non-ecclesiastical places, the still-extant late Saxon earthworks at Wallingford are omitted. The Mercian capital at Tamworth is ignored in favour of Lichfield Cathedral, a Norman structure. The *pagan* site at Yeaveering is omitted from Northumbria. Even with a non-academic readership in mind, the book would have benefitted from an index, some maps and at least a list of suggested further reading. Overall a book of this sort is a nice idea, but this was one needing much better thinking out.

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Digging Sedgeford: A People's Archaeology. By the SHARP Team. 21 × 28 cm. xx + 236 pp, 202 colour and b&w pls and figs, 10 tables. Cromer: Poppyland Publishing, 2014. ISBN 978-1-909796-08-9. Price: £19.95 pb.

Twenty years ago a remarkable project began in a relatively ordinary part of England. Since then, the Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project (SHARP) has been investigating the archaeology of the Norfolk village of Sedgeford. This book provides a summary of the results of the first twelve years of fieldwork carried out between 1996 and 2007, together with a provisional summary of excavations carried out between 2007 and 2012. Written in a plain and highly readable style, it is fully accessible to both amateur and specialist alike.

SHARP has, since its inception, been an experiment in how to run a mass participation archaeological project, one which brings together individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds and which is entirely dependent upon the goodwill of unpaid volunteers. As the authors frankly state, to begin with the project had 'no money, no equipment, no staff and no formal research aims'. From this emerged a 'democratic archaeology' – an apparent rejection of the 'oppressive' social relations found on traditional archaeological sites. Political and ideological assertions underlie much of the book's Preface and this blurring of archaeological practice with political ideology, specifically that taken from the 'left', perhaps explains why the project team have termed their methodological approach a 'dialectical method'. In essence their method is based on inductive reasoning, whereby interpretations arise out of observations. Perhaps the term 'empirical' would be more appropriate?

Interestingly, despite an empirical approach implicitly underpinning the project's methodology, empiricism is later criticised as ultimately 'a hollow endeavour'. Theoretical and methodological muddles aside, and despite significant parts of the Preface reading more like a revolutionary manifesto than an archaeological text (a reminder if one was ever needed that archaeological endeavour is as much about the present as it is about the past), the authors make some very good points in their critique of 'top-down' approaches to community archaeology, which typically maintain a hard distinction between 'experts' and 'amateurs'. Furthermore, they make the key observation that communities 'are not pre-existing givens' and that consequently the practice of community archaeology is in fact about building new communities.

Perhaps, because of Sedgeford's 'ordinariness', much of the story outlined in the rest of the book fits well with current historical and archaeological narratives for the medieval period in lowland England. This, however, is precisely why this publication will be relevant to all those with an interest in the development of the medieval English landscape. The narrative outlined in this book goes something like this. The evidence for human activity at Sedgeford before 50 BC is limited. This all changes after 50 BC when there is extensive evidence for late Iron Age and Roman settlement and activity. As expected, Roman life appears to end abruptly in the late 4th/early 5th century, perhaps within a single generation. After that virtually nothing is known about Sedgeford until the mid-7th century. Then in the mid- to late 7th century there is a dramatic change at the Boneyard-Reeddam/Lower Chalkpit site, when a loosely ordered settlement and associated Christian-era cemetery appeared. In c. AD 800 this settlement was re-organised into individual plots enclosed by rectilinear boundaries. At some time in the first half of the 10th century, a substantial D-shaped enclosure, which may have enclosed a local lord's residence, was imposed across the site. The authors suggest that the appearance of this elite residence perhaps was a consequence of the manorialisation of the landscape, following the breakup of the large estates in the 10th century. The cemetery, village and proto-manorial complex disappeared in the late 10th or early 11th century. The reasons for this are not known. In the 11th century, however, the focus of settlement shifted a little to the north, with a manorial complex and chapel/church being established at the West Hall site, now in the village centre.

This publication is important for a number of reasons. Sedgeford is a fairly typical part of lowland England and therefore the model of landscape development outlined in this publication should be tested in other parts of England. In addition, the project team have excavated and recorded a succession of landscape changes in a region with a good post-Roman ceramic sequence, which starts with grass-tempered pottery made locally between the early Anglo-Saxon period and well into the Middle Anglo-Saxon period followed by the arrival of Ipswich Ware in the area probably around AD 720/725. Consequently, we are able to chart these developments – the appearance of nucleated settlement, the imposition of a regular planned settlement, the emergence of an elite residence and the eventual abandonment of

this settlement and the establishment of the medieval manorial centre, church and village on a new site – with a chronological precision often lacking in other parts of the country. Lastly, the results coming out of this project serve as an important reminder as to the fluidity of settlement in early medieval and medieval Britain. Large-scale landscape change occurred at Sedgeford even after settlement nucleation. This is highly important for it shows that in the case of Sedgeford, and perhaps elsewhere, settlement nucleation could be a recurrent process, with the high medieval village the final episode of this long process. Therefore, rather than looking for a 'village moment', we should perhaps be looking for successive 'village moments'; potentially each with a different set of causes but each resulting in the same result, namely nucleation.

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Woodstown. A Viking-Age Settlement in Co. Waterford.

Edited by Ian Russell & Maurice F Hurley. 21 × 30 cm. xxiii + 413 pp, 259 colour and b&w pls and figs, 32 tables. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014. ISBN 978-1-846825-36-1. Price: €40.00, £35.00 pb.

This splendid volume provides an insight into a rare category of site: the relatively good survival of a previously unknown site, lacking surface indications and apparently undocumented! The discoveries of 2003 in advance of the building of the Waterford City Bypass by the National Roads Authority (NRA) uncovered commercial and manufacturing evidence of the mid-9th–early 10th centuries, most likely to be linked to a site to be labelled as a *longphort*. Over 6,000 artefacts were recovered both in excavation and in metal-detecting of the disturbed topsoil, and this volume brings together the archaeology and the specialists studies relating to those materials. In the Preface, David Griffiths mentions the rise and fall of the Irish economy in the years between recovery of the site and the post-excavation work which this volume brings into the public domain. There are indeed issues relating to the overall inconsistency in the editing of the specialist reports and in the fact that some categories of material have been studied by more than one specialist while others are understudied. However, these aspects pale into insignificance on reading of the overall volume. This is simply an outstanding piece of work, which brings together a stunning assemblage against the backdrop of an understudied class of site. The production values of the book are strong, helpfully including throughout good colour images of both site details and artefact types. In addition, the relatively speedy production of such a large undertaking is notable.

The report is subdivided into 12 chapters: Chapters 1 to 3 focussing on the Project Background (Hurley and Russell), Historical Context (Harrison) and Physical Environment (Hegarty, Bonsall and Russell). Chapter 4 provides the excavation detail (Russell) and Chapter 5 details the pagan Viking burial found at the north-east entrance (Harrison). The material culture is considered

by material type and within that some specific elements of the assemblage are drawn out, spanning Chapters 6 to 11 (with over 28 different specialist contributors). The final discussion by Hurley is in Chapter 12. It is invidious to make specific mention of individual contributions to the artefact discussions, but the significance of the silver (Sheehan) and the weights (Wallace) are notable, as is the discussion of the metallurgical activity (Johnson, Bayley, Scully, Bill and Ó Floinn) which provides comparanda for other contemporary sites. The hack silver fragments, some 42 in total, are prominent as an assemblage scattered across the site and are indicative of economic activity rather than simply a disturbed hoard; Sheehan duly stresses that this is the 'first find of a significant number of individual silver items from a Scandinavian settlement in Ireland'. The study of the weights by Wallace is of considerable importance here and includes a discussion of the weight standard in comparison with the Dublin assemblage; strikingly, Wallace identifies at least 180 weights from Dublin whereas 217 come from Woodstown. Many other weights in the collection include settings of applied metalwork and a single polyhedral scale weight, with an origin in the Islamic world and relatively common finds in Scandinavia. These are important for a discussion of the insular versus international role of trade at the site.

The identification of an early Viking-age centre for manufacture as well as trading activity, defined by enclosing ditches and located on a navigable river, is a once-in-a-generation discovery. It is entirely appropriate that this volume should be dedicated to the memory of the first Head of Archaeology at NRA, Dáire O'Rourke (1965–2010) who was instrumental in securing the future preservation of the site for future generations.

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The Open Fields of England. (Medieval History and Archaeology). By David Hall. 18 × 25 cm. xiv + 381 pp, 16 colour pls and figs, 22 b&w figs, 22 tables. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-198702-95-5. Price: £85.00 hb.

The Open Fields of England – the result of 50 years of research into open fields – is an impressive collection of descriptive detail structured within the overall framework of a national classification of medieval field systems. The book is divided into two parts, comprising a discussion of different field systems across the country, their organisation and origins, followed by a 130-page gazetteer of relevant data organised by (historic) county. The gazetteer is especially useful for its concise characterisations of landscape and field systems in different parts of the country, each followed by a short bibliography. As much of the information feeding into this nationwide characterisation has never before been synthesised into a single volume, this part in particular renders the book a useful work of reference and a starting point for anyone seeking to place more localised studies into a broader context.

The book's first part is divided into six chapters. A structuring element, introduced in the Introduction (fig. 0.1), is the well-known divide between a central region characterised by regular two- and three-field systems, and flanking eastern and western regions with different agricultural regimes. Chapter 1, focusing on townships and land-use, highlights a high degree of variability in land-use within townships, looking especially at the management of meadowland to create adequate fodder for animals – a concern in the Central Region especially. Chapter 2 explores the Central Region itself, identifying three broad types of field system that occur here, including the regular 'Midland' type and variations in East Yorkshire and the southern chalklands. Chapter 3 moves on to the Eastern and Western Regions, with specific attention for the regionally idiosyncratic 'systems' of Kent, East Anglia and the Wash Fenlands, followed by discussions of townships with one-field systems, infield and outfield systems (most clearly identifiable in Cumberland), and systems involving convertible husbandry. Chapter 4 then scrutinises open-field structure and management, particularly at the spatial distribution of demesne and tenurial holdings, and medieval field orders from manorial court rolls.

The descriptive detail in the first four chapters touches on many intriguing issues. The existence of the Central Region is in itself highly interesting, precisely because – as Hall admits – it has been identified before, notably in Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000) *Atlas of Rural Settlement in England*, albeit with slightly different boundaries. Even more interesting, however, is the regional variety that exists *within* these broad zones and the implications for our understanding of socio-economic organisation in different parts of the countryside. The long, narrow field strips in East Yorkshire, for example, are suggestive of the lay-out of communally worked field systems on a large scale and under a centralised authority, whereas the Kentish 'yokes' indicate an underlying system of partible inheritance leading to early piecemeal enclosure.

One of Hall's aims is to ascertain why regional distinctions exist, a question that really begins to be addressed in the final two chapters. In Chapter 5, Hall draws in a range of analytical techniques including archaeological investigation (including ceramic and palaeoenvironmental data) and pre-Conquest charters to assess the age of the various fields being discussed. Chapter 6, finally, entitled 'open-field beginnings', includes a detailed and useful literature review summarising earlier theories, and concludes that the field systems of the Eastern and Western Regions are older than those of the Central Region, with elements predating the Anglo-Saxon period. The distinctive character of the Central Zone was caused by the large-scale conversion of permanent pasture into arable as a result of changing agricultural regimes. No single great cause or moment in time can be identified for this process (p 211 suggests it occurred between the 8th to 11th centuries), and, as Hall states in his concluding paragraphs, much more work on a more localised scale is required before the last word on the subject has been said.

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The Archaeology of Hill Farming on Exmoor. By Cain Hegarty with Rob Wilson-North. 22 × 28 cm. x + 137 pp, 125 colour and b&w pls and figs. Swindon: English Heritage, 2014. ISBN 978-1-848020-82-5. Price: £20.00 pb.

Traditionally, Exmoor has been the poor relation of its larger neighbour, Dartmoor. Softer in its landscape appearance, less well known to the traveller, and decidedly less impressive in its archaeology, it has not been particularly well-served by past commentators. However, the moorlands of Devon and adjacent west Somerset have come under the scrutiny of English Heritage in recent years with the publication of syntheses on the field archaeology and landscapes of Exmoor (2001), the Quantocks (2006) and Dartmoor (2011). This volume, different in both the conception and its broad theme, is presented in the same attractive format as its predecessors. Its genesis lies in the national mapping programme which assessed thousands of aerial photographs and reportedly led to the recognition of 2000 new archaeological features, the majority relating to the agrarian exploitation of the Exmoor uplands from the medieval era onwards.

This focused theme permits an unusual approach to the study of hill farming across one specific upland block, one that has seen significant variety in its progress over the last few hundred years. Summed up neatly if diagrammatically on a late 17th-century map of the moor, it is an upland of three zones, with at its heart a royal forest that was not officially disafforested until the mid-17th century. Around the forest lay a significant number of commons, some of which survive to the present day, and beyond these were enclosed hill lands with their farms. The forest is considered to have originated in the late Saxon period on the basis of a solitary reference in Domesday Book to three foresters. Successive sections in the volume examine the boundary perambulations, the forest courts, income generation through the pasturing of stock and the decline of the forest in the 17th century. The first farm, at Simonsbath, was constructed after the sale of the forest in 1651, but it was only after John Knight acquired the forest in 1819 that it was enclosed – by a wall 29 miles long. The Knight family's ownership of Exmoor is evidenced by accounts of enclosure, drainage, peat cutting, the introduction of sheep stells as one of the few tangible elements of the 19th-century sheep rearing economy, a curious feature known as the Pinkery Canal whose function is still debated, and subsoiling by steam plough.

A second study of the volume looks at the origins of the commons that ring the forest, the nature of common rights, the processes of peat cutting, the role of manorial courts, the stocking and regulation of the commons, and their ultimate enclosure, with a final section on potato gardens, small but significant in the exploitation of the moor.

Finally, a review of the enclosed hill lands takes settlement back into the medieval era, with the distinction drawn between those that were wholly abandoned (five examples only) and others where there was contraction or a shift in settlement location. This section makes it difficult to appreciate the scale of deserted settlement on the moor which would facilitate comparison with

the granite of Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor. Relict strip field systems on the moor are well described, but later field systems are not really accorded comparable treatment. The section closes with a lengthy discourse on catch meadows, a form of water meadow, of which over 800 new examples were recorded in the mapping programme.

Detailed research by earlier historians of Exmoor, particularly E. T. MacDermot and C. S. Orwin, both of whom published in the earlier years of the 20th century, and much more recently by Mary Siraut for the VCH, have provided the authors of this study with a detailed framework for the recent history of Exmoor. What is new here is the recording of the particulars of the landscape – the drains, banks and turbaries. Individually these might not amount to much, but collectively they reveal the geography, scale and innovation of the works on the moor, and focus attention on those who promoted the works. This information has been woven in with the documented history to produce a readable and illuminating study of how Exmoor was exploited from medieval times onwards.

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Rural Settlement in England. Analysing Environmental Factors and Regional Variation in Historic Rural Settlement Organisation using Regression and Clustering Techniques. Research Report Series no. 72-2014. By Andrew Lowerre. 21 × 30 cm. viii + 143 pp, 39 colour figs, 52 tables. Portsmouth: English Heritage, 2015. ISSN 2046-9799 (print pb) (online: 2046-9802).

Densely technical and exceedingly thorough, the research presented by Lowerre in this book essentially forms a test using the dataset compiled by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000) of Williamson's (e.g. 2013) ideas around the importance of environmental affordances (i.e. opportunities provided by the land) in structuring the degree of nucleation of settlements in medieval England. Unlike previous, more qualitative methods, Lowerre's project concentrated on an explicitly quantitative approach to assessing the influence of soils, precipitation, temperature, insolation (sunlight exposure of the ground surface), elevation and terrain ruggedness on the measures of settlement nucleation and dispersal derived by Roberts and Wrathmell. As Lowerre correctly states, eyeballing maps is an unreliable science, and thus his spatial statistical approach affords the potential for more robust testing of Williamson's arguments.

Although arguably somewhat limited by the rather arcane data structures of the Roberts and Wrathmell material and by the necessity to use modern environmental data due to their greater spatial detail over existing models of past climate, nevertheless the results of Lowerre's regression analyses convincingly argue that various environmental factors tested did have a significant effect on the degree of nucleation of medieval settlement. However, this effect was not as strong as the effect of factors which he did not include

in his models, which are implicitly taken to be cultural. Furthermore, the particular soil types identified as positive affordances for nucleation by Williamson do not come out as strongly influential elements in Lowerre's models. As a result, I would argue that the results suggest that, although the past environment offered a series of opportunities for particular ways of life and settlement structure, cultural conditions and human agency remain the more important structuring influences. This is not to argue that environment should be ignored, but that it was a notable but *lesser* factor than culture in structuring medieval life.

In the second half of the book, Lowerre goes on to use his models to automate the creation of settlement zones using spatial data classification and clustering techniques designed to group areas of space of similar character. Superficially, the maps produced have similarities to the three large provinces defined manually by Roberts and Wrathmell, but they diverge substantially in detail. Spatial variation in human behaviour is not smooth and cannot be easily and crisply cut up into contiguous zones on anything other than the coarsest level. As such, Lowerre's more complex and fuzzier description of space is more believable (and reproducible), albeit less convenient for those given to making sweeping arguments. Exploratory and intensely statistical, this book provides useful foundations for further research.

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Crop Protection in Medieval Agriculture. Studies in Pre-modern Organic Agriculture. By Jan C Zadoks. 18 × 26 cm. 333 pp, 37 colour and b&w pls and figs, 21 'boxes' and 2 tables. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2013. ISBN 978-9-088901-87-4. Price: €39,95 pb.

Professor Zadoks, an eminent Dutch plant pathologist with a specialism in plant disease and epidemiology, has produced a compilation of knowledge and advice on crop protection before AD 1600. Most chapters are a compendium of knowledge in short, numbered sub-sections on a range of subjects: the contributions to agricultural knowledge of authors from a wide geographical area across an equally wide timeframe – that is, from Greece and Rome to Nabatea, Spain and England, and from the 8th century BC to the early 17th century AD; a wide range of crops, their selection and management; the kinds of threats to crops and beasts that farmers across those periods and places had to contend with; and crop protection methods and lore from spells to treatments, traps and baits. There is an extensive bibliography. But this is a difficult book to review. The author's scholarship, energy and breadth of research are undeniable; and the volume itself is useful

in providing outline information on various topics and issues and where further details may be found. Its flaw, for archaeologists and historians whose specialism is intensely focused on change over both time and space, is that it takes little account of either in relation to agriculture, which was/is an occupation influenced by period, social relations and geography, often over relatively small distances.

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Hierarchies in Rural Settlement. Ruralia IX. 26th September – 2nd October 2011, Götzis, Austria. Edited by Jan Klápště. 21 × 30 cm. viii + 462 pp, 20 colour pls, 297 b&w pls and figs, 13 tables. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013. ISBN 978-2-503545-17-2. Price: €90,00 pb.

With the appearance of Volume 9, the proceedings of the Ruralia conferences, each focusing on different aspects of rural medieval society, have become a well-established fixture of European settlement research. This latest volume, publishing papers presented at a conference in Austria in 2011, looks at hierarchies in rural settlements in the period c. AD 500–1700. The various contributions, comprising 30 individual chapters covering 15 countries, illustrate well the intentions of the Ruralia organisation to 'strengthen the exchange of knowledge in, and the development of, archaeologically comparable studies' (www.ruralia.cz). The result is a collection of papers that bears witness to the maturity of the subject. Many new data are presented in overview, but – rather than taking a purely descriptive approach – they are presented in the context of a series of theoretically well-informed and up-to-date frameworks for discussion. A recurring thread is the complexity of identifying evidence for social stratification from the archaeological record.

The geographical scope is impressive, covering most of Europe from Greenland (Høegsberg) to Al-Andalus (Eiora Rodríguez), and from Scandinavia via Russia to Hungary and the Czech Republic. Certain regions, most notably Germany and the Low Countries, are better represented than others: France, for example, is the subject of only one of the papers (Peytremann) – the only contribution written in French, one of the three official conference languages, together with German and English. This trilingual set-up was intended to facilitate international debate, and each chapter title is duly translated in all three languages; most contributions furthermore add summary paragraphs in the other two, although regrettably this is not consistently applied. Despite this multi-lingual set-up, the growing dominance of English in academic research is clearly reflected in this collection of papers: out of 30 papers, 22 were written in English, while seven are in German. The adoption of a common language to pursue common research interests has clear advantages, but in the spirit of broader knowledge transfer the importance of multi-lingual dissemination is also beyond doubt: a more consistent approach to the article summaries would therefore improve the volume's impact.

In terms of contents, the wide geographical coverage and the provision of many high-quality illustrations often means that contributions are short, sometimes almost leaning towards a ‘show-and-tell’ approach. This is in itself useful: a recent increase in data relevant to medieval rural settlement research is highlighted throughout, either as a result of the 1992 Valetta Treaty and subsequent changes in archaeological practice, or as a result of changing research paradigms and a still-growing scholarly interest in the countryside. Nonetheless, many contributions provide (concisely summarised) theoretical and/or interpretative discussion. Three excellent examples of this are Felgenhauer-Schmiedt’s consideration of the visibility of the *Dorfadel* (village nobility) in medieval Austria, Quirós Castillo’s discussion of archaeological markers of social inequality in three northern Spanish and Basque villages, and Håkansson’s analysis of the social structure of medieval Halland (Sweden), although there are many more. The theoretical aspects of the various contributions would have benefitted from a different ordering of the chapters, according to theme rather than ordered geographically, while a concluding discussant-type chapter would have helped to state more clearly the direction into which rural settlement research is, or should be, headed next.

Reading the various contributions together, it seems clear that exciting times in medieval settlement research lie ahead. Throughout, authors acknowledge the complexity of constructing and maintaining social, economic and political hierarchies, and emphasise the need to draw on as wide a range of possible sources as possible as well in reconstructing these various pasts. These include archaeological criteria such as settlement lay-out, architecture, landscape context, burial practices and portable material culture, but also the full range of historical and visual sources, whose relevance is illustrated particularly well by Zimmermann’s discussion of depictions of high-status farmhouses in late medieval/early Renaissance Dutch and Flemish art. Many contributions also acknowledge the multi-vocality and constantly evolving nature of past society. The importance of conducting multi-scalar analysis is most clearly stated in Iversen’s nuanced explanation of changes in settlement structure in southern Norway during the Migration period, while the importance of change over time was clearly acknowledged by – among many others – Takács’s discussion of changing markers of lordship in Hungary across three chronological stages. Klír’s obvious but important acknowledgement – in the context of a study of villages in Bohemia and Moravia – that the subsequent development of planned settlements is on the whole more organic than their initial planning also deserves mention, as it refocuses attention from village origins towards village experience, a topic that deserves further consideration.

In summary, *Ruralia IX: Hierarchies in Rural Settlement* lives up to the expectations created by the preceding eight volumes. Although a greater sense of coherence and scholarly direction could have been created by a different editorial approach, especially in the ordering of the contributions, many points of contact, both in approaches and interpretations, can be detected between the individual chapters, bearing

witness to the success of these conferences – 20 years after their inception – in developing archaeologically comparative dialogues across Europe. More information about future publications and conferences can be found on the Ruralia website: <http://www.ruralia.cz>

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Pottery and Social Life in Medieval England. Towards a Relational Approach. By Ben Jervis. 18 × 25 cm. vi + 178 pp, 24 colour and b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014. ISBN 978-1-782976-59-2. Price: £45.00 hb.

Medieval archaeology, and particularly the study of the ceramics of the period, is still, arguably, a relatively young discipline, and much previous work on the material has been largely concerned with functional and chronological themes rather than attempting to ‘explain’ medieval pottery from a theoretical perspective, despite the fact that, as the study of ceramics in other periods has shown, such an approach can greatly enhance our understanding of the objects and the people and also the world in which they were used. This book represents an attempt to embark along this theoretical road.

Jervis deals with some very deeply theoretical concepts, but a combination of his lucid writing style and his ability to lead the reader by the hand pretty much from first principles means that there is little cause for being intimidated by the jargon.

The first chapter looks at the history of medieval pottery studies from the days of Pitt-Rivers to the present and, in parallel, the development of the relevant aspects of theory from the processual works of the late 1960s onwards, and medieval archaeology’s attempts to free itself from the shackles of history-based research with the first stirrings of a medieval theoretical archaeology in the 1990s. Chapter 2 lays out the philosophical basis of what is to follow with a series of short but wide-ranging considerations of the various theoretical strands which entwine to form a ‘Relational Archaeology’, which can perhaps be explained (over-) simply as ‘classes of artefact should not be studied in isolation’. This perhaps could be seen as a statement of the obvious, but is one that does not appear that obvious to many modern archaeological practitioners, and there is certainly more to this book than simply that.

The next four chapters are effectively a series of essays looking at different aspects of the relationship between pottery and a host of other archaeological areas such as documentary sources, pottery decoration, metal vessels, social identity, cooking practices, landscapes, waste disposal and buildings. While perhaps not every shot hits the intended target, there is much which is stimulating and thought-provoking.

The work in some ways ends as it begins, with final summary including a plea for medieval ceramics to be given a more central role in the understanding of the period, rather than just a chronological and functional prop for the study of documents, buildings or landscapes.

My only gripe with this book is the quality of the proof-reading, which in places looks like it has been carried out with a spell-checker rather than properly read through, with a certain randomness of punctuation here and there, and the occasional substitution of the wrong word ('cannon' rather than 'canon' being perhaps the most glaring example). This minor irritation aside, I enjoyed this book immensely, and I would advise anyone who is working with medieval ceramics and, indeed, anyone in the field of medieval archaeology generally, to read it, as there is plenty of food for thought in its pages, and it certainly feels as if the author's aim of it as being 'a stage in the evolutionary process in the development of medieval archaeology' has been achieved.

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Landscapes and Artefacts: Studies in East Anglian Archaeology Presented to Andrew Rogerson. (Archaeopress Archaeology). Edited by Steven Ashley & Adrian Marsden. 21 x 30 cm. xiii + 250 pp, 160 colour and b&w pls and figs, 18 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014. ISBN 978-1-905739-75-2. Price: £40.00 pb.

This impressive edited volume has been published in honour of Andrew Rogerson, one of the founder members of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit, and the 21 papers reflect Andrew's diverse interests. Many contributions discuss small finds, which reflects Andrew's long history of recording artefacts reported from metal detecting (which has a long and honourable tradition in Norfolk). The majority of papers, however, consider different aspects of the medieval landscape – its Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, and later medieval rural settlements, churches and towns. Norfolk is the focus, but with some forays into Suffolk and further afield.

For the pre-medieval period there are papers on two Late Bronze Age hoards from Bunwell and Feltwell (by Andrew Lawson and Alan West), an exploration of the iconography of Iron Age Icenian coins and other artefacts (John Davies), a discussion of how Romano-British brooches may reflect local community identities across East Anglia (Jude Plouviez), and a study of Romano-British zoomorphic artefacts from Norfolk and what they might tell about religious belief (Adrian Marsden). The Early Anglo-Saxon period is represented by four papers that once again cover both material culture and the landscape. Stanley West considers the significance of Icklingham in the Lark Valley, an area that is clearly of long term importance towards the SW corner of the Icenian *civitas* and East Anglian kingdom. Catherine Hills discusses 'Spong man', a cremation urn lid in the form of a seated male figure which may have been 'created within the framework of ideas brought from north Germany in the early fifth century' (p 86). Kenneth Penn revisits the Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Morning Thorpe, in Norfolk, focussing his discussion on the previously neglected topic of gender-neutral 'pot-only' burials and unfurnished graves. Helen Geake examines 6th- and 7th-century Anglo-Saxon artefacts

that include representations of fish, suggesting that many depict the powerful, aggressive and predatory pike, which goes against the hypothesis that these may be Christian symbols; instead they may represent mascots or talismans associated with rise of social elites. Edward Martin's short paper identifies the location of the important Wickham Skeith Late Saxon coin hoard. This latter is an example of the very flexible approach towards the lengths of the papers in this volume which allows both lengthy research papers and short notes to be accommodated; there is even a nice two verse poem 'Digging a Saxon cemetery' by Anthony Thwaite at the volume's outset. Brian Ayers then provides a discussion of landscape of Norwich before the urban settlement emerged, showing how the natural topography, and in particular a series of wetlands, shaped the layout of the later city.

In one of the most substantial papers Tim Pestell provides the fullest published account yet of the fieldwork carried out at the Bawsey 'production site', including the work undertaken in 1998 by *Time Team*. Although best known for its large number of Middle Saxon sceattas, this low wetland-edge promontory saw a long history of occupation that included the deposition of a large number of Iron Age torcs. In the Middle Saxon period it is not just the large amount of coinage that is unusual, but also other aspects of the material culture including seven styli and a probable æstel (pointer) that all suggest a high degree of literacy amongst the community living there. Two burials provide evidence for there having been a church on the site at that time, although the extant stone structure is Early Norman (whose axial tower is unusual, and supports the theory that this was an episcopal manor). Pestell shows how this one site was part of a wider landscape with its Middle Saxon economic function as a trading place being taken over by Bishop's Lynn. Tom Williamson's paper is the most explicitly focussed upon medieval rural settlement. He argues that across wide areas there are certain common themes in the evolution of rural landscapes, for example in the way that settlement drifted over time towards greens and commons, leaving their churches standing in splendid isolation. Although perhaps best known in Norfolk, Williamson demonstrates how this process is also evident in Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire.

The final papers concern various East Anglian churches (Stephen Heywood on the Elmhams, T A Heslop on Great Dunham, and Elizabeth Rutledge on Norwich's chapel of St Ann), crusader sword and dagger pommels (Steven Ashley and Martin Biddle), the 18th-century topographer Thomas Badeslade (Bob Silvester) and the early years of the Norfolk Archaeological Trust (Peter Wade-Martins).

Overall, this is fascinating collection of papers that reflect the many interests of Andrew Rogerson and is a great tribute to an outstanding archaeologist.

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Haughmond Abbey. Excavation of a 12th-Century Cloister in its Historical and Landscape Context. By Jeffrey J West & Nicholas Palmer. 21 × 30 cm. xii + 414 pp, 254 b&w pls and figs, including 5 fold-outs, 49 tables. Swindon: English Heritage, 2014. ISBN 978-1-848020-62-7. Price: £100.00 pb.

Haughmond Abbey, overlooking the plain of the River Severn, was established in the first half of the 12th century about four miles north-east of Shrewsbury in the Welsh borderlands. A prosperous Augustinian house, it counted both local magnates and Welsh princes among its patrons. After the Dissolution some of its buildings were converted to a private residence, but in the later 18th century the abbey ruins were incorporated into a landscape park associated with a new gentry residence, Sundorne House. Finally, in 1931, the ruins were taken into guardianship.

The excavations forming the nominal focus of this volume were conducted by the lead authors between 1975 and 1979 over a part of the cloister range and the southern side of the abbey church, in succession to earlier excavations in 1906–07 and 1958, the latter unpublished until now. Other work has been incorporated into the final report – analysis of the fabric of the buildings surviving around the cloisters and, from 2002, a survey of the surrounding earthworks. Many of the component reports, it seems, have been available in draft since 2003, but it has taken another decade for the final product to appear.

The writers acknowledge in their introduction that the original objectives of the 1970s excavations were limited and that since that time the emphasis has shifted to a wider appreciation of the abbey in its setting, permitting an examination of both its historical and topographical context, and the detailed recording of some of its surviving architecture. As a consequence the volume reveals a mixed collection of subject reports, creating a rather unbalanced appearance. The excavation report including the overview of earlier excavations occupies 66 pp; the finds take up 160 pp; the standing buildings are detailed in 39 pp; 31 pp each are devoted to the earthwork survey and to the historical background; and it culminates in 66 pp of discussion. Omitted are full accounts on the complete history of the abbey and an analysis of the late 13th-century monastic buildings, the former because this has been published elsewhere, notably in the *Victoria County History*, the latter because it lay outside the remit of the project as envisaged in 1975.

The introductory chapter on the historical background usefully assesses the pre-Conquest landscape and its exploitation into the 12th–13th centuries, the abbey's properties and benefactors, its granges, the buildings on the site and post-medieval events. The chapter on the ground survey is a revelation for, on all sides, the standing remains of the abbey are encompassed by earthworks in pasture or woodland; it emphasises what can be achieved in terms of record and interpretation through field survey alone, including the precinct boundary, the gatehouse, water management features, a post-medieval formal garden complex, and the abbey's integration into the landscape park.

However, with many different contributors and a prolonged period of gestation, it was perhaps inevitable

that there would not be total harmony in interpretation, and this surfaces rather clearly in several places, as the reader is forewarned in the volume's Introduction. The final discussion compiled jointly by the two lead authors together with John Blair is a detailed and disparate collection of pieces, which allows consideration of some aspects not covered in the body of the report. Ranging widely over the landscape and the abbey, it also tests the links between Haughmond and a 13th-century book of spiritual guidance for women recluses, considers the 15th-century poet John Audelay, discusses the 16th-century house built within the ruins and assesses Haughmond as a 19th-century tourist attraction.

Heterogeneous the volume may be, but there is plenty of interest here.

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Norfolk Churches from the Air. Photography by Mike Page; text by Pauline Young. 18 × 25 cm. 184 pp, 179 colour pls. Cromer: Poppyland Publishing, 2014. ISBN 978-1-909796-09-6. Price: £12.95 pb.

Here is an attractively produced package of low-level oblique air photographs – one per page plus an atmospheric detail of Reedham as cover image – portraying more than 179 of Norfolk's many churches, extant and ruined. Nicely taken at various seasons of the year and well-chosen from a large archive, they deliberately concentrate mostly on medieval buildings. By framing on the churchyard, however, most deny any opportunity to understand relationships between church and settlement or landscape in ways that might stimulate MSRSG members. Captions vary in length; but, while containing many snippets of information about furniture, fittings and local traditions, these make little reference to this issue. Nor (disappointingly) do they comment systematically on the plan-form and development of the churches, which are the obvious variables legible in the images.

It is the images that matter, however. And, for the churches it covers, this book both forms a nice adjunct to an architectural guide such as the Pevsner volumes, and will hopefully deliver its avowed purpose of prompting visits.

PAUL EVERSON

Nantwich

Northwest Europe in the Early Middle Ages, c. AD 600–1150. A Comparative Archaeology. By Chris Loveluck. 18 × 25 cm. xxiii + 466 pp, 44 b&w pls and figs. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-1-107037-63-2. Price: £75.00 hb.

This, the author admits, was a book long in gestation, reaching back to 1997, but one benefitting between times from extensive discussions, research and exchanges with colleagues, archaeologists and historians in the

UK, the US, France, Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany. This was certainly no easy task to undertake on one's own, and the networks of contacts created can be counted as one of the many desired outputs of this volume: to open a dialogue, to share data, to generate ideas, and to draw out comparisons and contrasts across an often interconnected swathe of north-west Europe in the Early Middle Ages. This swathe is perhaps less extensive than some might anticipate from the book's title, since the focus is Britain, France, Belgium and the western Netherlands, but with name checks beyond (into southern Scandinavia, Spain and Italy, for example). Loveluck's emphasis is firmly on the material record, seeking to exploit a growing archaeological record in terms of settlement archaeology (towns, villages, manors, etc.), domestic culture, traded goods, churches and fortifications, burials; at the same time, he sensibly draws in and questions theoretical approaches and inputs, avoiding simplistic 'macro-level' narratives, but also avoiding reliance on 'micro-level' perspectives. Furthermore, he seeks to avoid letting the archaeology talk more of big people and of high status activities (p 13). Overall, the aim is 'to arrive at an appreciation and understanding of the complexities of the social transformation of northwest Europe between AD 600 and 1150, allowing for the dynamic of the material culture evidence in its own right, informed by complementary textual evidence but not a slave to it' (5).

A short review cannot hope to give more than a flavour of the whole. In brief, the volume works, and works well, and should certainly widen horizons for many a scholar through the links it forges. It perhaps does not meet all the aims noted above, such as avoiding too much emphasis on big and high status players, since too often the archaeology – of churches, monasteries, castles, manors, towns and public buildings – has (inevitably?) been drawn to these; and, after all, we do need to understand these in order to locate and then understand the 'ordinary'. Structurally, the volume has two main parts (following the introductory Part I: *Context*): Part II is a little misleadingly called '*The Age of the Carolingians, c. AD 600–900*' ('Carolingian' is of course normally only applied after the mid-8th century) and comprises a full seven chapters, ranging in scope from 'Small farming communities of West Francia' (ch 3) and 'Expressions of leadership and models for emulation' (ch 6) to 'Diocesan towns' (ch 8) and 'Ports and maritime-oriented societies' (ch 9). Part III is termed '*From the Viking Age to Angevin Hegemony, c. AD 900–1150*' and features five chapters (plus the 'Final conclusions', chapter 15, though this should presumably have been its own Part IV): themes include 'Transformations in architectures and settings of public power' (ch 10) and 'Towns as regional centres and urban diversity' (ch 14), but also two chapters on the rural world ('Lifestyles of old and new aristocracies' – ch 11 – and 'Social mobility, landscape reorganisation and colonisation' – ch 12). Throughout, examples are readily drawn on, whether a donjon complex such as Boves in the Somme, an emergent medieval town such as Angers (hosting counts, bishops, artisans), or a long-lived island community like Scalloway on Shetland (active from c. 100 BC into the 8th century AD). For many of these, the archaeological signatures,

whether houses, rubbish deposits, boundaries, coinage, botanical remains, etc. are tidily summarised and often questioned for what they can or cannot tell us of their owners or communities. Indeed, while in a few cases (e.g. uplands, transhumance), the appetite is merely whetted, generally ample evidence is provided to inform – such as when discussing elite hunting, where we are told of riding gear, hawks, deer, cranes and horns (pp 259–66), or when discussing the actual populations of and visitors to early medieval trading centres (pp 204–12).

In sum, this book forms a valuable resource: guiding well on the trends in settlement, society and economic expression across periods of notable change; enabling links, but also contrasts, to be drawn across wide areas; outlining the varieties of archaeology available, and issues in interpreting these; and bringing together much non-UK archaeological scholarship into a coherent and rewarding narrative.

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El poblamiento rural de época visigoda en Hispania. Arqueología del campesinado en el interior peninsular. (Documentos de Arqueología Medieval 6). Edited by Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo. 21 × 30 cm. 432 pp, 232 b&w pls and figs, 26 tables. Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea Argitalpen Zerbitzua, 2013. ISBN 978-8-498608-89-2. Price: €28,00 pb.

Readers of this journal might recall the excellent article by the editor of this monograph on the Zaballa project in the Basque region of north-east Spain (*MSR* 28, 2013, pp 1–8) – a substantial exploration of an abandoned village prompted by rescue archaeology. Zaballa's roots lay in the 6th-/7th-century Visigothic period and it is a site that could have been included in this impressive publication which examines a number of rural sites of early medieval date (5th–10th centuries AD) in central Spain, specifically within the provinces of Madrid and Castilla y León. The information is substantial and provides much scope for wider debate on landscape re-organisation after Rome, land use changes, status in rural contexts, house types, local economics and village organisation. Too often we have limited scraps to mull over when discussing early medieval farms and villages; but these Spanish sites – all discovered in wake of development needs and thus in the context of rescue archaeology (in projects undertaken mainly in the period 2000–10, but with some sites first recognised in the 1990s) – offer a fair feast of data. Furthermore the work is an important joint venture between academics from the University of the Basque Country and archaeologists from two major commercial units in Central Spain, forging vital research links – vital given that so much of the larger scale site data nowadays derive from rescue projects.

The core of the volume is section 2 (pp 65–258) which details the eleven rural sites under scrutiny. These extended entries are presented in standardised

fashion (with headings for: site type; estimated extent; area excavated; chronology; co-ordinates; excavation details (mode, scale, team, conditions, sampling strategy); historico-geographical context; internal site organisation; analysis of the domestic structures (house forms, storage units and productive spaces); material culture (ceramics, metals, tiles); bioarchaeological finds; chronological indicators (a good set of C14 dates were obtained); and interpretation. Each entry is well supported by plans, air photos and site images (but not that many finds are illustrated, and few burials too); images are black and white and of fair quality, but a bit 'flat' at times and some photos for the La Cárcava site were blurry; it is a shame that no colour images are used as these will have been very useful.

Excavation at many of these sites was extensive: at Gózquez (San Martín del la Vega) the full settlement and cemetery were examined, covering 30,000 m², while nearly 70,000 m² was excavated at El Pelicano; at other sites coverage was between 3,000–13,000 m². Since these were all abandoned or 'lost' sites, this scale of excavation means that, especially for those short-lived sites (most of those discussed were between the 5th/6th and 7th century, but a few extended into the 10th/11th) detailed statements can be made on village form, economics and contacts. Gózquez, for example, emerges as a loosely planned, undefended site comprising 10–12 domestic/family units (showing little status differentiation) in plots of c 44 × 80 m, with a cemetery set between western and eastern house groups; units comprised a main house plus 3–5 annexes/stores and up to 6 grain silos or storage pits. These silos are distinctive to all the sites, of bulbous form and set generally alongside the house exterior or occasionally inside; at Gózquez nearly 100 silos were traced, of which a small number had a capacity of c 6,670 litres, although most held between 1,000–3,000 litres. House forms vary from those with stone footings (usually earlier, 5th century) to timber-built types, which resemble longhouses; but there are also many smaller, utilitarian structures, many sunken-featured.

Later sections of the volume provide synthetic analyses of combined features of these eleven sites: section 4 (pp 289–328) considers the houses and work buildings; section 3 (pp 259–88) examines funerary practice and ritual (including where the community switches to Islamic rites); section 5 (pp 329–44) deals with the faunal data; and section 6 (pp 345–56) debates land use and crops. Results are discussed in section 7's excellent interpretative essay by Vigil-Escalera Guirado and Quirós Castillo who look also at contacts, land organisation and, equally importantly, the ends of these communities.

Finally, it is important to highlight that this monograph is just one in a hugely informative series published by the University of the Basque Country. The Zaballa project was fully published in 2012 as volume 3 of the *Documentos de Arqueología medieval: Arqueología del campesinado medieval: la Aldea de Zaballa* (edited by J A Quirós Castillo). Volume 2, with the same editor, was on *Vasconia en la alta edad media, 450–1000. Poderes y comunidades rurales en el Norte Peninsular* (2011); and volume 4, edited by J A Quirós Castillo & J M Tejado Sebastián examined *Los castillos altomedievales en el noroeste de la Península Ibérica* (2012). Spain (or at

least its north) is fast becoming one of the best studied regions of early medieval Europe.

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The Archaeology of Medieval Spain, 1100–1500. (Studies in the Archaeology of Medieval Europe). Edited by Magdalena Valor & Avelino Gutiérrez. 20 × 25 cm. xiv + 336 pp, 144 colour and b&w pls and figs. Sheffield & Oakville: Equinox, 2014. ISBN 978-1-845531-73-7. Price: £80.00 hb.

This substantial and well-illustrated volume, edited and to a large extent written by Magdalena Valor (University of Seville) and Avelino Gutiérrez (University of Oviedo), is most welcome. Providing the first modern English language survey of the medieval archaeology in Spain, it draws upon the remarkable developments in this field since the transformation of Spanish archaeology in the 1980s. Here we get an overview of some of the results of 'an explosion of archaeological excavations in towns and countryside' and the 'mountain of new data' that have been generated. Every reader should be able to find much of interest in this synthesis.

The background to this explosion is helpfully traced in the introductory chapter. For MSRSG readers, the chapter devoted to Rural Settlement and Landscape will be of special interest. Very different trajectories can be traced in Andalusian rural landscapes and those of the (Christian) north: in the south a range of rural settlements types, open and defended – some centred on tower-houses – are known; some aspects of the wider settlement organisation around castles and estate centres, irrigation and livestock management are also now being reconstructed, albeit commonly lacking historical documentation. Many of the rather different narratives which emerge in the Christian north are not unfamiliar from other parts of western Europe, with some explicit discussions of the local manifestations of processes of *incastellamento* here, and in an additional chapter devoted to Castles and Fortifications.

Turning to the urban sphere, we are confronted with many remarkable achievements of medieval urban archaeology in both Andalusia and the north. Coverage ranges across varied and dynamic urban landscapes from Seville, Jaen, Barcelona, Leon and Compostela to the Basque towns of the far north. At a much more focused scale, the archaeology of Housing and Domestic Life highlights interesting differences between the domestic material culture of Andalusia and the north. Archaeozoological and archaeobotanical studies remain at an early stage, although isotope analyses are beginning to contribute to dietary studies. New insights into the transformations of domestic worlds in Andalusia after the Christian conquest may be of interest to many. A chapter on Technology, Craft and Industry (by Ricardo Córdoba) provides yet another excellent introduction to aspects of urban and rural crafts, textiles and leatherworking, mining and metallurgy, pottery and glass manufacture, mills and milling. Aspects of medieval Trade, Transport and Travel encompass both

seaborne and land trade, ports, shipyards and markets, coins and bridges.

The Display of Secular Power chapter singles out royal palaces of both Andalusia and the north, a more familiar and well-established area of Spanish medieval research. These may be juxtaposed against the remarkable legacies of three religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism), co-existing for considerable periods, each with their own internal dynamics. In this respect the material impact of 'fundamentalist' Almohads on al-Andalus in the 12th–13th centuries (CE) may find a special resonance today. This integrated approach to the religious identities and cultures, and religious buildings, seems particularly successful. The final core chapter introduces many aspects of the very varied mortuary archaeologies and associated bioarchaeological research, from urban cemeteries to princely tombs. All of life and death is here. An appendix usefully provides web-addresses relating to key journals, institutions and organisations, relevant to Spanish medieval archaeology. The substantial bibliography provides a guide to the mass of specialist literature; as a point of access, this in itself is a hugely valuable resource. The index is also very well organized and helpful.

As the authors (joined by the outgoing series editor John Schofield) conclude the volume, this work aims to place Spain firmly on the archaeological map of medieval Europe. In this they have succeeded admirably, and this is an excellent addition to this series. Some additional maps might have been welcomed by some readers navigating what are likely to be unfamiliar landscapes of medieval Spain; the other, often excellent illustrations are, however, to be complimented. There is so much here to be explored and digested, and so much will be of interest to many and varied audiences; and it is certainly a volume to be recommended for immediate purchase for institutional libraries.

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Poblament i societat als Pirineus els darrers dos mils anys. (Territori i Societat: el paisatge històric. Història, arqueologia, documentació, VI). Edited by Jordi Bolòs. 17 × 24 cm. 326 pp, 56 b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Lleida: Universitat de Lleida, 2014. ISBN 978-8-484096-39-9. Price: €25,00 pb.

The latest in a series of publications of (mainly) conference proceedings on the historic landscape overseen by Prof Jordi Bolòs of the University of Lleida, this volume draws from an event held in October 2010 at Erill la Vall centred on the theme of the origin and evolution of

settlements and communities in the Pyrenees across the 10th–18th centuries. Seven papers are presented, plus an extended (24 pp) English summary of the editor's much fuller (109 pp) Catalan text; short English abstracts of all the other papers are also included, and an English translation of the editorial introductory 'presentation'. The latter makes note of a major national project now active on '*Change and continuity in settlement and land use in periods of transition from the Middle Ages to the present day. Landscape analysis and society*'. This seeks to explore, primarily in the Mediterranean context, processes of change and imposition in the landscape of sites, fields, boundaries, route-ways, ownerships, power and communities, and to trace changes in, for example, commercial flows and landscape organisation; developing a methodology rooted in Historic Landscape Characterisation is also a highlighted target. This volume – and previous ones in the series – contains many examples of scholarship focussed on such themes in the landscape of Spain and beyond. Coverage here runs from the Gasconian to Catalonian Pyrenees, from feudal laws to cartography, from mountain pastures and forests to field boundaries, and from urban episcopal imprints to mountain village communities. Despite the timespan of the original conference, some papers look back to Roman times, such as in the imprint of roads and fields (notably Bolòs in his detailed and well argued analysis of the early medieval landscape of Cerdanya, Catalonia; and Victor Sabaté who also pinpoints the enduring boundaries of Roman centuriation in the southern Segrià). In particular, relationships between communities, individuals, lords and the Church are a theme across many papers, such as in Benoit Cursente's clever exploration of legal disputes in Gasconian Pyrenean groups in the 13th–16th centuries; in Jacinto Bonales' discussion of the 'mutations' of upland rural communities in the face of changing internal and external relationships; and in M Àngels Sanllehy i Sabi's detailed analysis of mountain communities in the early modern (17th–18th century) Val d'Aran, observing individual and household economic activities (from labour to renting to emigration), communal enterprises, as well as emergent productive specialisation. Combined, these papers – admittedly not easy for non-Spanish/Catalan readers to exploit to full effect – show an excellent dialogue in progress between scholars of diverse disciplines, showing how each can reveal much more about pre-modern communities and their landscapes. We should look forward, meanwhile, to the results from the noted, much wider '*Change and continuity in settlement and land use...*' project.

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