

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by NEIL CHRISTIE

Caves and Ritual in Medieval Europe, AD 500–1500.
Edited by Knut Andreas Bergsvik & Marion Dowd. 22 × 29 cm. viii + 314 pp, 206 colour and b&w pls and figs, 6 tables. Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2018. ISBN 978-1-78570-832-9. Price: £50.00 hb.

This fascinating collection of papers takes us into subterranean spaces across Europe and explores early to late medieval use of rock shelters and caves, from diverse modes of ‘ritual’ to plain domestic and storage roles. Eighteen chapters/papers are presented (including the editors’ introduction) with 24 contributors (the editors exclude themselves in the Preface by noting 22 authors) covering sites geographically spanning Iceland to the Crimea. As many contributors remark, the medieval phases in caves have often been damaged or compromised through early (not always fully archaeological) exploration of prehistoric activities; where some notice was made of medieval finds this would be selective. Nonetheless, all the papers reveal that much can still be learnt from compromised sites and even more can come from careful analysis of *in situ* materials, whether inscribed crosses and symbols, burials, discarded cooking wares or deliberate hoarded deposits; the problem lies still, however, in interpreting the types of activities involved. Clear-cut might be ritual usage connected to holy people: texts, names and traditions point to Christian monastic hermits living in or retreating to caves which subsequently became built foci or remained simple points of veneration and visitation. Thus, Dowd discusses caves and ‘holy wells’ in Ireland associated with saints such as Kevin, Leo and Patrick, and the (often much later) related pilgrimage to these; an Irish virgin queen’s cave refuge on the island of Selja, western Norway, is considered by Hommedal, exploring the shelters incorporated into the Benedictine monastery which honoured the memory of the (perhaps fictional) St Sunnifa, adopted patron saint of Bergen; and in the Ebro valley in northern Spain the notable site of San Millán de la Cogolla links to the hermit-saint Aemilian of the later sixth century, but Feijoó otherwise notes how the vast majority of caves across Spain have no named saintly association yet attest a busy early medieval eremitic practice. Church expansion of caves and hermitages is considered also for Germany (Schulze Dörrlamm), the Crimea (Dneprovsky) and Malta (Keith Buhagiar), while late Roman and Byzantine Malta also features purpose-built rock-cut tombs/catacombs with a diversity of tomb and decorative forms (Mario Buhagiar).

Unlike in Ireland, Scotland and Iceland feature caves with incised crosses and symbols, which Ahronson views as a ‘subset’ of ‘early medieval monastic tradition of placing sculpted stones and carving simple rock-cut sculpture’; he seeks to link some of Iceland’s 200 artificially-cut caves to this tradition,

with tephrochronology setting two such ‘marked’ caves at Seljaland to the later ninth century. Meanwhile, Büster and Armit focus on early Pictish symbols by the entrance to the Sculptor’s Cave at Covesea in north-east Scotland, whose front and interior featured human bones both of late Bronze Age date (potentially many juvenile skulls displayed) and of the third century AD (a likely number of decapitated individuals); the authors suggest the symbols commemorated ‘fallen political and genealogical allies’ to the founders of nearby Burghead fortress (p. 95). Equally intriguing are the bodies of five later eighth-century individuals (all juveniles) ‘hidden in the depths’ down shafts in the Lower Gallery of La Garma in northern Spain (Arias *et al.*): these were not lost teenage potholers, but were laid out as inhumations (possibly at the same time) with some broken-off stalagmites as markers; most strikingly, the chamber was later revisited and the bodies’ skulls then crushed – Arias *et al* question if these were plague victims (or perhaps mentally unstable youths?) whose bodies had to be kept far from the living.

Keith Buhagiar’s paper widens discussion to usage of caves for other, more functional/workaday needs – houses, stores – while for two main caves in north-west Italy De Vingo concentrates on the late antique and early medieval ceramic repertoires to show stable occupation, in full touch with urban markets. The final section of papers for Central and Eastern Europe include fourteenth-century military usage of Polish caves (Wojenka), cave refuges and coin forgers in the late medieval Czech Republic (Peša, and Golec on the ‘Bull Rock Cave’), while Prijatelj’s paper on Slovenian sites spans pastoralists roles, defensive installations and points for hoarding, but also has a well-judged consideration of caves and natural foci in folklore, popular tradition, rituals and beliefs (aligning with discussion in the earlier paper on western Norway by Bergsvik on images of cave use in Scandinavian myths, sagas and poems).

Editing overall is good and the volume’s format and the quality of illustrative support and reproduction are high. However, I would note some unfortunate slips in the editors’ introduction – such as the ‘Anglo-Normal invasion’ (p. 3); ‘the second century artificial cave of Mithream in Rome’ (p. 5); and ‘adopts a long durée approach’ (p. 3).

The Preface to the volume nicely kicks off with the editors noting that they are both prehistorians but ones who had, in their own studies, recognised multiple medieval period presences and intrusions in many cave sites; their organisation of a session on medieval cave usage at the 2013 EAA conference in Pilsen then formed the stimulus for discussion and for this volume. It merits wide readership to encourage more concerted exploration of these sites which clearly formed, for many communities, important loci in their landscapes of work,

belief and memory. (Note, however, an earlier collection of papers, with Spanish contributions to the fore: J. López Quiroga and A.M. Martínez Tejera (eds), *In concavis petrarum habitaverunt. El fenómeno rupestre en el Mediterráneo Medieval: de la investigación a la puesta en valor*, BAR International Series 2591, Oxford, 2014).

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Frisians and their North Sea Neighbours. From the Fifth Century to the Viking Age. Edited by John Hines & Nelleke IJssennagger. 18 × 25 cm. xx + 279 pp, 78 colour and b&w pls and figs, 25 tables. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017. ISBN 978-1-78327-175-5. Price: £75:00 hb.

This volume results from a conference at the Fries Museum (2014) and is ‘intended to advance the appreciation of the long-distance and maritime contacts that were fundamental to the flourishing of the Frisian identity and culture’ in the early medieval period. Beyond that, the component chapters vary considerably in focus, style and readability, though are likely to appeal (and be useful) to all those interested in Frisia and the Frisians.

Editors Hines and IJssennagger remind us that early medieval peoples are (to an extent) a modern construct, shaped by apparent variations in language and material culture, but also their landscape. They argue that the Frisians have been moulded by their relationship to, and distinction from, neighbouring peoples. The dichotomy between Frisia (place) and the Frisians (people) is explored further by Knol and IJssennagger via evolving landscapes, people settlement and changing material culture.

Hines explores the relationship between England and Frisia especially in terms of shared language, runographic practice and material culture. He usefully summarises current understanding and encourages deeper deliberation. Schrijver’s lucid paper further explores the linguistic evidence, arguing that Frisian arose when Celtic-speaking peoples changed to communicate in Germanic.

Using archaeological and place-name evidence, Dijkstra and de Koning attempt to build a picture of habitation in the western Netherlands during the migration period – a challenge complicated by complex and sketchy written sources. They argue that Anglo-Saxon influences in West Frisia have been exaggerated, with the area being void of ‘international interest’ until about AD 600. For Nicolay, high-status metalwork shows the wide and varied cultural contacts of the North Sea elite, explored through ‘five cultural phases’. Evidence from outside the Netherlands necessarily concentrates on England and Denmark, both rich in metal-detected finds.

Waxenberger’s long (and rather technical) paper assesses the Englishness of the so-called Early Frisian Runic Corpus, suggesting some ‘Anglo-Frisian unity’; problematic is the fact that not all the items in the Corpus were found in Frisia. According to Versloot and Adamczyk, the geographical spread of North Sea Germanic linguistic features of Old Saxon shows an

‘east–west division’, potentially moulded by riverine routes. The strategic importance of these is explored further by Aufderhaar, taking as a case study the Elbe–Weser triangle: here it is suggested that precious metal finds emphasise the special character of certain areas and elite cross-territory links.

A handful of papers explore Frisia’s closest neighbours: Deckers looks to coastal Flanders to examine cultural convergence through study of organic-tempered pottery and domestic architecture against linguistic developments. Importantly, he assesses potential reasons for differing levels of convergence. Pestell uses the wealth of metal-detected finds in East Anglia, including coins, as well as pottery, to examine cultural connections between that Anglo-Saxon Kingdom and the continent, including Frisia; interestingly he highlights divergence in levels of interaction within East Anglia.

Fascinating is Nijdam’s study of injury tariffs in early Kentish and Frisian law codes. Although variation between the law codes makes it ‘impossible to reconstruct an Anglo-Frisian proto-tariff’, the relative closeness of the traditions recommends fuller study. Finally, Zimmermann and Jöns suggest that trading centres within a wide geographical sphere around the North Sea area were multilingual; the same might be said for the written languages used, with a particular focus on runes. They highlight the trading centre at Groß Strömkendorf and the find of a comb fragment with runic inscription.

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On the Ocean. The Mediterranean and the Atlantic from Prehistory to AD 1500. By Barry Cunliffe. 20 × 25 cm. viii + 631 pp. 340 colour & b&w pls and figs. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. ISBN 978-0-19-875789-4. Price: £30.00 hb

‘Anyone thinking or writing about history has to begin by trying to understand the environment in which the action takes place. There are really two environments to bear in mind: the actual physical ecozone as it was at the time of the event, as the world as it was conceived to be by those who inhabited it’ (p. 551).

These are the opening lines to the concluding chapter of Barry Cunliffe’s impressive new book *On the Ocean*, another of his broad-ranging syntheses. Focusing on the relationship between humans and the sea, the book switches effortlessly between environments: on the one hand, there are the changing ‘cultures’ of Europe, North Africa and the Levant; and on the other, the challenges and opportunities created by the environment that surrounded and connected them – the sea. As such, *On the Ocean* is much more than a book about the sea: it is a retelling of history, starting with the migrations of early hominid species from Africa and ending with the discovery of the New World in the fifteenth century AD (the cut-off date, we hear, is ‘when the imperative [for seafaring] became the destination’, rather than the journey itself – p. 34).

The book is divided into 14 chapters. Chapter 1 sets the scene with a discussion of perceptions of the sea – in art,

in literature, on maps – from prehistory to the medieval period, drawing on sources as diverse as prehistoric rock art and the Irish *immrama*. Chapter 2 turns to more practical matters, in particular the challenges of marine navigation, including the revolutionary impact of the compass in the later Middle Ages.

From Chapter 3, the main chronological overview that forms the book's backbone starts. At times it reads more like a potted world history than a book about seafaring, although the sea is what binds everything together. Themes structuring the narrative include the migration of early humanoid species; hunter-gatherer societies; the spread of agriculture; developing cosmologies; the emergence of the urbanised states; and finally the Phoenicians, who are the focus of Chapter 6. The date of c. 600 BC is seen as a watershed, resulting from the growing dominance of iron instead of copper and tin, with far-reaching consequences for trade networks and ship technologies – as made explicit in Chapter 7's in-depth technical discussion of ships and sails across c. 1300–300 BC.

Chapters 8 and 9 deal mainly with the Romans. The main interest for readers of *MSR*, however, starts in Chapter 10 (AD 300–800), with – among other things – the 'barbarian' migrations in the north and the Arab conquests of the Mediterranean. Chapter 11 is devoted to the Vikings. Chapter 12 discusses the two separate worlds of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic (with its adjacent northern seas) against the background of the Crusades, the Black Death and the *Reconquista*, which, according to the author, finally united these two marine environments. Chapter 13 concludes the chronological overview through a focus on some of the world's most famous early explorers: Don Henrique (a.k.a. Henry the Navigator), Columbus and John Cabot.

Of course a book of this scope comes at a price, which is a tendency towards the simplified and broad-brush. Many of the narratives are well-established rather than ground-breaking, and period specialists may find some issues unsatisfactorily explained. The book's maritime focus furthermore means that settlements are touched on only occasionally and often superficially. A particularly irksome example from the chapter on the Viking Age is the inclusion of a reconstruction of the early medieval upland farmstead excavated at Ribblehead, North Yorkshire (p. 452), whose caption suggestively describes it as 'a Viking Age farmstead', but the text makes no reference to the extensive literature on the difficulty of identifying Viking influence in the rural settlement record in England.

Having said that, *On the Ocean* was conceived as a synthesis aimed at a broad audience, and for that purpose it is well-suited, being easy to read and unencumbered by in-text references. A selection of further reading is included in the back, as are a glossary of nautical terms and an index of names, places and key concepts. The lavish colour illustrations very much assist, a nice detail seeing the maps generally oriented with north-west roughly at the top, providing a different visual perspective on the relationship between land and sea.

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The Village World of Early Medieval Northern Spain: Local Community and the Land Market. (Studies in History, New Series). By Robert Portass. 16 × 24 cm. xiv + 225 pp, 10 b&w figs, 1 table. Woodbridge: The Royal Historical Society & The Boydell Press, 2017. ISBN 978-0-86193-344-0. Price: £50.00 hb.

Robert Portass' first monograph is dedicated to early medieval northern Spain and, more specifically, to the economic, social and political developments and peculiarities of this area between the Muslim invasion (AD 711), the first centuries of the *Reconquista* and end of the Umayyad Caliphate (1031). Nevertheless, although some readers might think that this book will centre on the centuries of the Arab-Berber presence in the Peninsula, the author's geographical choice avoids this question – or at least, it forms only a circumstantial subject – by focussing on a small Christian realm, the Asturian–Leonese one, which endured in the mountainous regions of the northern Cantabrian chain.

The new realm was in some way an heir to the Visigothic Kingdom and, in fact, the royal seat of Oviedo (later transferred to León) was considered as a restorer of the power stripped from Toledo. Probably as consequence of this, the realm of Asturias–León has been glimpsed as part of the transition between the end of the Roman West and the consolidation of a feudal society. Nevertheless, as this monograph reveals, a complex landscape of chief families, monasteries and their related territorial properties emerged in this area across this period, wherein the networks of power and authority worked sometimes in co-operation and sometimes in conflict with local society.

The study of this resistant Christian society is Portass' first objective, analysing royalty, lay and ecclesiastical elites, but also peasants and dwellers in general, through a growing land market and active economic transactions. Using the fairly abundant textual material (sadly, archaeological data are only superficially included in this study) for two specific case study regions – the Liébana, in modern Cantabria region, and the Celanova in southern Galicia – Portass outlines the processes of political and social change across these centuries, considering especially the materialisation of a new power in Asturias before c. AD 800, the growth of factional politics and the relation of those with monasteries and villages. The early medieval documentation, above all charters from monasteries archives, permits a detailed reconstruction of the society—one sometimes necessarily nuanced by other types of documents.

The author is clearly fully versed in the Spanish bibliography and is up to date with recent and new research projects and developments in the Iberian Peninsula. *The Village World of Early Medieval Northern Spain* generates a detailed and very well-documented historical analysis, in which Portass brings the non-Islamic Spain of the Early Middle Ages a little bit closer to English-speaking scholars.

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Peasants and their Fields. The Rationale of Open-Field Agriculture, c. 700–1800. (CORN: Comparative Rural History Network Publication Series, 16). Edited by Christopher Dyer, Erik Thoen & Tom Williamson. 16 × 24 cm. × + 275 pp, 64 b&w pls and figs, 7 tables. Turnhout: Brepols, 2018. ISBN 978-2-503-57600-8. Price: €84.00 pb.

This latest publication of the Corn network – focused on studies in the long-term development of rural society from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century – contains 12 contributions, including a relatively brief introduction by the editors, and their longer concluding discussion. Two papers consider open fields in England: Tom Williamson provides an overview of the topic; Christopher Dyer discusses their social and economic context in the English West Midlands. Eight other authors discuss open fields in a wider geographical context. For Scandinavia, Carl-Johan Gadd offers a surveys for between c. AD 900 and c. 1850; Hans Antonson explores landscapes in two Swedish provinces; and Petri Talvitie considers open fields in Finland. Hans Renes takes a wide view of research in the Netherlands and Europe; Erik Thoen discusses open fields, capital and labour in medieval and early modern Flanders; and Nicolas Schroeder reviews medieval and modern open fields in southern Belgium. More widely flung are Hanne Cottyn, whose excellent chapter explores communal land systems in the Andes; and Junichi Kansaka comparing Japanese field systems with open fields in medieval Europe. The figures are printed in black and white but appear originally to have been in colour, and their reduction to grey scale makes some difficult to decipher.

This interesting collection thus covers a range of different forms of open-field systems. However, their comparability is somewhat impaired by a degree of fuzziness between contributors about how open-field systems might be defined: some describe intensively-managed, ‘regular’ open-field systems in which all aspects of physical layout, tenure and cropping were collectively directed; others outline ‘irregular’ systems in which forms of physical layout, distribution of holdings and patterns of cropping had so little conformity that cultivators undertook almost all production in severalty. Thoen’s introduction (p. 163) comes the closest to an analytical approach in that it describes specific characteristics of ‘regular’ open-field systems: intermingled arable holdings of two or more cultivators in an ‘open’ fieldscape where cropping and fallowing was collectively directed.

Of particular interest are three contributions to current debates, the first concerning distinctive regional distributions of different forms. ‘Irregular’ forms of collective arable cultivation were found across Britain; regular forms tend to be restricted to a clearly-defined zone running diagonally across central England from SW to NE. Talvitie draws attention to similarly distinctive distributions in Finland, where open fields lay only in the west (pp 105–6). Although they conform in some aspects to English ‘regular’ open-field systems, Finnish open fields were relatively small islands of cultivation set within large areas of forest while the English form tended to include almost all the available land of the vill. The relative proportions between pasture and arable –

which Thirsk regarded as central to the emergence of English ‘regular’ open fields – thus remains an open question for research.

The second debate relates to chronologies. Thoen accepts Verhulst’s conclusion that ‘regular’ open-field systems in Flanders were first introduced on ecclesiastical demesnes in the early ninth century; but he extends that work by suggesting that that they were adopted by peasant communities between about 1050–1300 (pp 167–8). In a distinctive difference with ‘regular’ English systems, those open-fields in Flanders were cultivated alongside other land that continued to be exploited as outfields (in which defined areas were temporarily used for growing crops and then returned to pasture for long periods of fallow in a pattern of shifting cultivation).

The rationale for collaboration between cultivators is the focus of the third debate. Here, Schroeder’s all-too-brief exploration of collective management of open fields in Flanders is the only chapter to explore Mark Bailey’s seminal contribution (‘Beyond the Midland system: the determinants of common rights over the arable in medieval England’, *Agricultural History Review* 58:2, 2010, 153–171) to the debate: that shared holdings in an open-field layout predicate a minimum level of collective governance and management; and the greater the number of cropping units among which sub-divided holdings are distributed and the more evenly those units are distributed across the open field, the greater the degree of collective control of cropping and fallowing is likely to be required. Schroeder pushes further by suggesting that the introduction of open-field systems beyond the demesnes was driven by peasant cultivators, motivated by the values of a moral economy – equality of access to resources – and by the need for a collective response to ‘pressure of lords, markets or particularly powerful farmers’ (p. 199).

There is more of interest here. It is always a reviewer’s regret that space inevitably focuses on discussion on the most significant aspects of a publication.

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Building Anglo-Saxon England. By John Blair. 22 × 29 cm. xxiv + 471 pp, 109 colour pls and figs, 43 b&w pls and figs. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-691-16298-0. Price: £49.95 hb.

This is indeed a weighty tome – both in heft and in the breadth and detail of the subject matter. It is an ambitious examination and analysis of the material evidence for cultural and social developments over a period spanning five centuries, c. AD 600 to 1100. A short review cannot convey the book’s full span or the richness of the details unearthed (literally and metaphorically). Blair’s multiple ‘birds’-eye viewpoints’ move us with seamless ease between discussions of patterns in both archaeological and landscape evidence to broad characterisations of the cultural and historical backgrounds. This is all backed up by abundant references, showing an impressive research

base. Conclusions are in most cases well illustrated by detailed drawings; and expositions of both ideas and evidence are always presented with a masterful clarity and lucidity of expression – though the well-turned phrase can often hide ambiguities and uncertainties as much as reveal new insights.

The book combines evidence from place-names, landscape studies and archaeology of building and settlement layouts and structures, in a way which has not been achieved previously with such breadth of view in Anglo-Saxon studies. There are illuminating sections on the histories of archaeological analyses of settlement development; of the logistics of the accumulation of, and access to, archaeological data; and defining landscapes in terms of both regional variation and development through time. Developments in the Scandinavian, Frisian and Frankish worlds are also explored to set earlier periods in historical context and to determine transformative processes on a wider scale. An illuminating chapter describes ‘Landscapes of the mind’ and includes sections on ‘Living with the supernatural’ and ‘Monumentalising the sacred landscape’. Chapters dealing with the seventh and eighth centuries see ‘Landscapes of power’ discussed, in both secular and monastic contexts, creating a dialogue with Blair’s earlier views on the importance of monastic influences.

The chapters on Mercian geopolitics and the manifestation of these developments in infrastructural elements such as earthworks, bridges and forts is perhaps the most original aspect of the book. In terms of settlement evolution, Blair explores, for instance, the ‘world of central clusters, not complex centres’. In this context, sites with Bourton place-names (*burh-tunas*), as representing functional satellites on the periphery of central defended places, are usefully explored as key developments in the eighth and ninth centuries.

It is, however, the sections on urban developments in the ninth and tenth centuries which raise most questions in this reviewer’s mind. In one section Blair’s otherwise judicious birds-eye view of developments of earlier centuries appears, at least in part, to dissolve into justifying particular but questionable models of urban genesis. A case in point is the requirement to ‘decouple’ the growth of towns from burghal development. Why so? There is much evidence (not considered by Blair) from the size, layout and siting of these *burhs* for the thesis that many (if not most) fortified *burhs* of late Saxon origin mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle or the Burghal Hidage were in reality new planted towns. This is hardly a novel idea, but deserves more discussion. For instance, the existence of a swathe of regularly laid-out streets in London, representing probable Alfredian urban planning, is air-brushed out of existence, as is the topographical evidence of an earlier pattern of streets linked with hythes or landing points on the river. Nor are similar phenomena in places like Gloucester and Colchester referenced – though Winchester does get a passing mention. Such evidence would appear to contradict Blair’s conclusion that King Alfred’s intervention in London’s development (and presumably elsewhere) did *not* involve the ‘settling of urban populations’. There is little in this analysis to show that Blair has considered the logistics of how the defended *burhs* and their streets and other infrastructural

elements such as bridges and mills were constructed, manned and maintained.

Similarly, good evidence for the existence of burgrave plots as comprising structural components of towns from the late ninth century onwards (as they did in earlier *wics*) is ignored or dismissed, ostensibly in service to a mono-dimensional model in which towns consisted of collections of aristocratic compounds (*hagae* or *hagan*). This ‘alternative’ evidence indeed subverts the currently fashionable model (by now a paradigm), upheld by Blair, in which towns outside the Viking north only developed as ‘complex centres’ from the late tenth/early eleventh century onwards.

These are all instances in which the spatial evolution of large towns such as London, as well as most other urban settlements of the period, should not be seen as having followed a single trajectory; nor should their origins be directly delineated from the presence or absence of single historical or archaeological data-sets.

Such is Blair’s treatment of the ubiquitous urban–rural connections: merely citing instances where economic interests and connections have been brought into play says nothing about their genesis. This ignores wider landscape patterns, which evidence arguably tells a more complex story of social control by the king aimed at involving whole populations in his civil defence agendas through the setting up and support of defended towns as sustainable settlements. In this way Blair sidesteps many aspects of social and economic control of populations and resources inherent in the imposition of burghal systems, in both Wessex and Mercia, from the late ninth century. The late Saxon coinage and the proliferation of mints at key locations are, in this regard, barely mentioned. These processes arguably created new ‘landscapes of control’, rather than ‘landscapes of power’, which, as Blair points out, characterised earlier periods.

As elsewhere, however, the devil is in the detail, of which so much is used throughout the book (in spite of these minor quibbles) to such very good effect. Blair’s ‘birds-eye view’ models, expressed in terms of interconnecting historical narratives over the whole of the Anglo-Saxon period, represent a *tour-de-force* which will inform and stimulate creative thinking on the Anglo-Saxon period for the next generation and beyond.

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Farming Transformed in Anglo-Saxon England: Agriculture in the Long Eighth Century. By Mark McKerracher. 19 × 25 cm. x + 154 pp, 83 b&w pls and figs, 2 tables. Oxford and Havertown PA: Windgather Press, 2018. ISBN 978-1-911188-31-5. Price: £34.99 pb.

This well-written and extremely useful book is timely. New techniques and much research – not all published – are currently yielding information which could be highly relevant to the study of rural England if made more accessible and intelligible to the non-specialist. McKerracher brings together a range of such information to propose a transformation in English

farming from the seventh to ninth century. Taking the availability of evidence of sufficient quality as his criterion, the author confines his analysis to sites in two areas of study in southern England, each containing a range of soils and terrain (in terms of counties, the western group comprises Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and west Berkshire; the eastern group contains Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk); these he divides into sub-areas based on Natural England's 'National Character Areas' and so he is able to give good local topographical information when discussing a particular site. At the heart of the book is an argument for the expansion of cereal production and a questioning of the range of techniques through which this can be studied. Pollen and charred grains, as indicators of what cereals were being cultivated at a particular site, prove to be less reliable than a third kind of evidence – the type of 'alien' wild seeds present. Graphs, maps and figures are clear and usefully deployed and explained. Figure 56, for instance, (although seemingly lacking some letters) is excellent on processing different cereal grains; throughout, how different grains 'behave' is shown to be crucial.

In discussing what factors may have influenced developments in arable farming, I was impressed by McKerracher's caution: for a scholar who has worked at Lyminge and must have come under the spell of its mysterious coulter, he resists temptation to hazard a date for the introduction of the mouldboard plough, nor is he drawn into the 'origin of open fields debate'. Instead, he proposes that the growth in cereal production should be sought elsewhere and his chapter 'The Changing Harvest', which sets this out, is the book's core. Here he looks for the *proportion*, rather than the *presence* of the different plants which are present in each of his samples; and he seeks the 'importance' rather than the cultural or dietary prestige of particular grains, that is to say that people opted to grow what would give the best yields in their area and on their soils. So far so commonsensical, but here McKerracher points to the two key research questions: 'when did free-threshing wheat supplant spelt, and when did it replace hulled barley? He gives some good reasons for modifying accepted views in several ways: hulled grains being less common and spelt having had a longer presence than was previously thought.

Changes in livestock husbandry are made part of the arable story; developments in food-processing and storage and animal husbandry are seen as consequent on this. McKerracher uses diverse archaeological evidence to investigate working landscapes rather than just 'settlements' and proposes a type informed by Francis Pryor's work. Figs 26–34 comprise a very interesting assemblage of several 'paddock and droveway complexes' (including West Fen Road, Ely) in his study area. In this connection his argument is that the shift to more permanent sites in the seventh century was part-and-parcel of increased cereal cultivation, which put hitherto grazed land near settlements permanently under plough, and increasingly managed riverine areas for hay. Now livestock needed more management, being manoeuvred through farmland and moved out to new, more distant, transhumance sites along 'stroods' and trackways. I would find it hard to square this chronology of transhumance with the work of Tom Williamson and

others on the antiquity of many long-distance droving routes, but this did encourage me to look at the period more generally as one in which human space was having increasingly to accommodate the needs of livestock space and cultivated space, giving rise to problems which the contemporary law codes addressed.

References to the written sources reveal these are not the author's strong point, but that hardly matters, given that this compact book makes a mass of research data (and the techniques that can be used to interrogate these) available to the many readers interested in the history of early medieval farming; and it does so in an agreeable style with some quite tolerable jokes along the way! The basic figures and maps are clear, although as soil is argued to matter, surface geology might have been added to site maps; but overall, for a Windgather publication, the look is somewhat drab. An end Gazetteer of Sites gives summaries, short descriptions of locations and bibliography for each, and while there is a Bibliography no index is provided. What makes the book particularly attractive is the care the author has taken to explain the different techniques used to produce a range of these datasets and the time to set out the means by which to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence each produces. At some point, however, some malign influence – a peer reviewer, perhaps – has thought this book needed 'sexing up', and so we get a selection of the usual suspects as Causes and Contexts, ranging from Christianity through to *Romanitas*, literacy, lordship, the Carolingians and kingdom formation. McKerracher had shown such good judgement throughout; it is a shame he allowed himself to be carried away with all this at the end!

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Water and the Environment in the Anglo-Saxon World. The Material Culture of Daily Living in the Anglo-Saxon World. Volume III. (Exeter Studies in Medieval Europe). Edited by Maren Clegg Hyer & Della Hooke. 18 × 25 cm. xv + 261 pp, 42 b&w pls and figs, 3 tables. Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press. ISBN 978-1-78694-028-5, Price: £80.00 hb.

This is the third in a series of multi-author volumes that seek to digest, for a wider audience, our multifarious new insights into the Anglo-Saxons' environments, settlements, buildings and material culture. Whereas *The Material Culture of Daily Living* achieved a coherent focus and generally very high standard, *The Material Culture of the Built Environment* was more disparate in scope and variable in quality. Measured against these two predecessors, *Water and the Environment* reaches the standards of the first, partly because its well-defined scope allows thematic coherence and genuinely helpful cross-reference.

Its chapters move from the general and conceptual (water in the natural world, water in literature) to the more specific (fishing, waterways, water-management, mills). In poetry, observes Jill Frederick, 'nature in general

was no friend to the Anglo-Saxons', while the many passages on the dangerous and terrifying qualities of water 'speak profoundly on a metaphorical and symbolic level, representing waters both as figurative boundaries between the natural world and the otherworldly, and channels to the other world'. Della Hooke's survey of 'Water in sacred and mystical contexts' makes much the same point, though she balances it against the positive connotations of sacred watery environments for Christian sites. Kelley Wickham-Crowley, discussing fens and frontiers, likewise highlights the distinctive, sometimes idiosyncratic, character of fenland ecosystems and their inhabitants. The negative perspective sits oddly with Bede's enthusiastic emphasis on the resource-richness of British waters, and with the abundant evidence for the many and crucial functions of water in Anglo-Saxon daily life. In his survey of marshland and other wetland economies, Stephen Rippon observes that, while written sources see wetlands as hostile environments, 'this has more to do with mythologization by early Christian communities than reality'. But is the right distinction perhaps between the uncanny quality ascribed to *water-bodies* (which looks too deep-rooted to be just a Christian literary topos) and the practical benefits of water *as a substance*? This opens up a glimpse of the Anglo-Saxon psyche that merits further exploration.

Turning to practical aspects, Della Hooke's survey of aquatic features in charters, laws and place-names is admirably thorough and wide-ranging, and although emphasising her usual West Midland region, she offers much that is new and interesting. Fishing is well covered in the complementary accounts of Rebecca Reynolds (on the biological evidence of the fish themselves) and Rippon (on the weirs and traps used to catch the fish). Picking up the hydrophobic theme, Reynolds suggests that the conspicuous lack of early Anglo-Saxon fish consumption 'is probably due to a taboo surrounding aquatic environments' which broke down during the transformative changes of the late seventh to early eighth centuries. Mark Gardiner considers the extensive and growing evidence for inland water-transport and landing-places, but concludes (rather mysteriously) that 'we cannot really imagine that water transport was as important as has been claimed'. Martin Watts' excellent and very fully-illustrated account of watermills and waterwheels will now be the standard guide to the subject. Finally, Hal Dalwood (sadly deceased) surveys a range of aquatic aspects of towns (both *wics* and *burhs*), such as cargoes, boats, quays and industries, overlapping with some of the other chapters but also resonating with them in interesting ways.

This volume brings a central, but sometimes technical and obscure, aspect of Anglo-Saxon life to a wider public, and should be the first point of reference for many years to come. It sets high standards for continuing the series.

JOHN BLAIR
The Queen's College
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Fishing and Managing the Trent in the Medieval Period (7th–14th Century). Excavations at Hemington Quarry (1998–2000), Castle Donington, UK. (British Archaeological Reports, British Series 633). By Lynden P. Cooper & Susan Ripper. 21 × 30 cm. xii + 84 pp, 87 colour and b&w pls and figs, 15 tables. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2017. ISBN 978-1-4073-1617-8. Price: £20.00 pb.

This short but excellent report makes the latest contribution to the emerging picture of intensive early and high medieval activity along the middle Trent. The exceptionally mobile hydrology around the confluences of the Trent, Derwent, Soar, Tame and Dove rivers has left a wealth of preserved organic material in silted-up channels, first studied by the late Chris Salisbury and explored in the exemplary 2009 report on the Hemington bridges. The features reported here are slighter, but still important.

Two phases of fish-weirs (one in the late seventh- to ninth-century range, the other ninth- to tenth-century) comprised lines of wattles in V-shaped formation leading into wicker eel-traps with non-return valves, and piles of brushwood functioning as 'eel-tufts'. Exceptional finds are a chopping-block, the probable head of a 'pulse stick' for driving eels into the traps, and fragments of two wooden bowls (one with an elegant finish that illustrates how misleading it is to judge the domestic sophistication of the eighth-century English by their handmade pottery). These structures are plausibly identified with the *hæcc-wer* ('hatch-weir', not 'hedgeweir' as recurrently translated here) mentioned in some late tenth- and eleventh-century documents from Wessex: they imply that eel-harvesting in central Mercia assumed truly colossal proportions after AD 700.

A much more substantial weir or dam, comprising timbers salvaged from a complex structure (probably a mill), reinforced with dumped rubble and containing an apparent sluice with plank revetment, was dated c. 1100–30. The timbers illustrate some interesting structural features, including horizontal timbers held in tension by projecting tusk-tenons with dowel-pegs. The prize find was a prodigious wicker eel-basket, more than 2.0m long, in almost perfect condition, which could be dismantled to reveal the three enclosed wicker cones forming non-return valves. This method – attaching baskets to a substantial structure that may principally have functioned as a mill-dam – is rather different from the earlier free-standing hatch-weirs, which may have been given up c. 1050–1100 in response to the documented concerns about the obstruction of waterways.

Nonetheless, fishing remained a major industry on this stretch of the River Trent and is recorded in documents of the 1310s. Six examples of rubble-filled, jetty-like structures, dated to the early fourteenth century, are interpreted as 'cribs' placed in the channel to attract salmonids, while also perhaps functioning as landing-stages and fishing-platforms.

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) should again be congratulated on an exemplary presentation of material that must have been challenging to excavate and interpret. Except on some small parts of the south-east and east coasts, there is nowhere in

England where the material culture of fishing can be studied in such fine detail. We hope that the lost channels of the Trent still hold many surprises to disgorge from their mud.

JOHN BLAIR
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Oxford

New Forest. The Forging of a Landscape. By Hadrian Cook. 19 × 25 cm. xxiii + 224 pp, 41 colour and b&w pls and figs. Oxford & Havertown PA: Windgather Press, 2018. ISBN 978-1-911188-19-3. Price: £34.99 pb.

This handsome and informative book is more than just another history of the New Forest. For a start it comes bang up-to-date, telling the Forest's story up to its present incarnation 'as a largely open-access national treasure' (p. xi). Hence the final chapter, which commences in the 1980s, discusses the pros and cons of National Park status, taking in – among other things – agri-environment payments, eligibility criteria for modern-day commoners, economic challenges and new partnerships in hydrological projects. Such foci are unsurprising given the author's publication record in environmental science and policy. Indeed, he defines his approach as combining 'descriptions of political and economic dimensions [with] describing the... Landscape', listing four critical themes explaining 'why another book on the New Forest has been produced' (p. 11). These are: the shaping of the natural environment in prehistory; human intervention through natural resource management; governance and management over time including pressures on resources and attempts to exclude certain groups; and policies and designations meant to conserve the New Forest.

There are nine chapters, of which the second, exploring intertwining issues of ecology and human values over time, is perhaps the most novel. Chapter Three then covers *c.* 10,000 BC to AD 1066 and Chapter Four concerns the medieval forest up to AD 1500 with sub-sections on feudalism; economy and the law; boundaries and perambulations; economic development; and enclosures and settlements. The latter includes brief discussions of nucleated, dispersed, linear and 'gap town' settlements; grazing and turbary rights; assarts, and moated sites and lodges; plus vaccaries, deer parks, pig-pounds and sheep enclosures. Chapter Five then covers forest governance in the Middle Ages. The medieval end-date of 1500 allows for coverage on the period 1500–1700 (Chapter Six), too often neglected in forest studies, which concentrates on the preservation of timber but also discusses settlement under 'seventeenth-century pressure on land'. Finally, Chapters Seven and Eight address developments in 1660–1900 and 1900–1980 respectively.

This is an extremely user-friendly book which will be useful to students of a wide range of periods and disciplines. It begins with a comprehensive 10-page glossary for the uninitiated and Chapter One includes brief historiographies not only of the New Forest and its history but also of 'green history' via economic and ecological history. The volume is also lavishly

illustrated, with a variety of informative maps and plans – although the mislabelling of a fallow buck in Figure 1.4 as a 'New Forest red deer' did not, at first, inspire confidence; though I am sure that the author has been embarrassed enough already by this oversight, which should not detract from his achievement in crafting a detailed yet very readable account of changing economic and administrative objectives over time, and their role in transforming this unique forest landscape.

AMANDA RICHARDSON
University of Chichester

An Archaeological Study of the Bayeux Tapestry. The Landscape, Buildings and Places. By Trevor Rowley. 16 × 24 cm. xii + 209 pp, 160 colour and b&w pls and figs. Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2016. ISBN 978-1-78159-380-6. Price: £25.00 hb.

Contrary to what is stated on the dust-jacket of this book, Trevor Rowley is not 'the first author to have analysed the tapestry through the landscapes, buildings and structures shown... while comparing them to the landscapes, buildings, ruins and earthworks which can be seen today', but this does not weaken the value of the book. It is a challenge, nonetheless, to make a study of these aspects given the dearth of archaeological evidence for what is depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry. It also assumes that the Tapestry designer attempted to reflect the real-world of the eleventh century, especially given the embroidery's dependence upon late Anglo-Saxon art. Furthermore, is it realistic to suppose the designer travelled to all the places shown – in England, Brittany, Normandy and Ponthieu – specifically for the purposes of producing this large-scale embroidery?

Beginning with an introductory chapter, the book explores the Tapestry's archaeology and topography chronologically, with chapters including 'The Oath', 'Duke William prepares for War' and 'The Invasion'. But Rowley often digresses from what is certainly shown in the Tapestry to consider other evidence: for example, when examining 'Earl Harold's Journey to Bosham', he looks at 'Winchester', the Anglo-Saxon hunt and the geography of Bosham. This gives the book a more popular appeal than suggested by the title, but invariably relies on the research of others, who have explored the individual aspects in more depth. This is not a criticism of Rowley's work, but the interested reader should be aware that little in this work is revolutionary or new, but instead provides a useful synthesis of current or established knowledge on the archaeology of the Tapestry.

The aesthetics of this book are important to consider, given the significance of 'visual language' in the Bayeux Tapestry. There are plenty of colourful images here, though sometimes are of varying quality. Some, such of the embroidery itself, are particularly instructive; even those who know the Tapestry well need to be reminded of its complex imagery. A few, such as that of 'a modern wreck' at Dives-sur-Mer, are merely window-dressing. This is not to say that those interested in the material culture of the historic landscape will not benefit from reading this work, but they might be disappointed that

new archaeological or topographical techniques have not been applied to this ‘archaeological study of the Bayeux Tapestry’.

MICHAEL LEWIS
Portable Antiquities Scheme
The British Museum, London

The Anarchy. War and Status in 12th-Century Landscapes of Conflict. (Exeter Studies in Medieval Europe). By Oliver H. Creighton & Duncan W. Wright. 16 × 24 cm. xiii + 346 pp, 19 colour pls and figs, 52 b&w pls and figs. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016. ISBN 978-1-78138-242-4. Price: £75.00 hb.

Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements: Surveying the Archaeology of the Twelfth Century. (Archaeopress Archaeology). Edited by Duncan W. Wright & Oliver H. Creighton. 21 × 29 cm. xi + 167 pp, 146 colour and b&w pls and figs, 9 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2016. ISBN 978-1-78491-476-9. Price: £45.00 pb.

These two volumes are outputs from a Leverhulme Trust project ‘*Anarchy? War and Status in Twelfth Century Landscapes of Conflict*’. The first volume comprises a series of reports on fieldwork and desk-based research carried out on specific sites across southern England, while the second is thematically-structured volume synthesising, contextualising and discussing this evidence. Each volume, however, can usefully be read independently.

To proceed in this review from the specific to the general, *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements* presents a series of self-contained reports on fieldwork and archival research on 12 small castles or siegeworks identified as likely to date to the ‘Anarchy’ or civil war which broke out after the death of Henry I between Stephen and Matilda and which continued from AD 1135–54. The sites are Burwell Castle (Cambs), Castle Carlton (Lincs), Corfe The Rings (Dorset), Crowmarsh (Oxon), Faringdon Folly Hill (Oxon); Hailes Camp (Gloucs), Hamstead Marshall (Castle 1) (Berks), Malmesbury Cam’s Hill (Wilts), Mountsorrel (Leics), Rampton Giant’s Hill (Cambs), Wellow (Notts) and Woodwalton Church End (Cambs). Each 10–15 page report includes a review of previous historical and archaeological research followed by the results of new earthwork and geophysical surveys, complemented by modern and pre-twentieth-century maps, photographs and in some cases by LiDAR maps and digital viewshed analyses. These site reports are book-ended with a brief introduction and conclusion.

In some respects these reports recall Royal Commission (RCHME) surveys – or perhaps are indicative of one route RCHME fieldwork could have taken had it survived into this century. While Creighton and Wright’s earthwork surveys perhaps lack the intricate detail of later Royal Commission surveys such those carried out in NW Lincolnshire, RCHME site accounts in such volumes are much shorter, and any lack of topographical survey detail in *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements* is more than compensated for by close historic map analyses and, most significantly,

geophysical surveys (which for most sites includes both magnetometry and resistivity). The reports are beautifully presented with more than 100 maps and plans making good use of colour to enable readers to assess the data for themselves; and comprehensive site discussions provide measured analyses of all the data. On many sites, significant new advances in knowledge are made. At Hamstead Marshall, for example, traces of buildings and pre-castle features are identified by geophysical survey while viewshed analysis confirms its strategic position was as much determined by the scope to control movement by road and river as by its proximity to nearby Castles I and II. At Corfe, magnetometry and resistivity revealed new evidence for structures within the bailey (p. 47), while at Castle Carlton viewshed analysis refutes the suggestion that this structure was designed for coastal defence (p. 37). Sometimes the geophysical survey adds little new information, but this in itself is useful at sites such as Castle Carlton where the absence of features supports the argument that the castle and town were founded at different times and on separate sites. Repeatedly, it is in combining different techniques that this study shows its real analytical value, and simply as a methodological study, it is valuable to have a good range of recent studies where correlations between earthwork and geophysical survey data can be assessed.

The complexity of site use and reuse is recurring theme as well as issues of dating, with the authors admitting the difficulties using non-invasive methods alone of dating recorded features to the twelfth century, let alone the 20 years of the civil war. For readers of this journal who are primarily interested in settlement, there is much to be appreciated in the complexity of the relationship between castle sites and previous/contemporary/later settlement with which many of the sites are closely associated. Often this highlights the fine balance to be made between command and contingency which characterised castle construction, evidently pertinent in the twelfth century as well as in the eleventh. In this respect interesting is evidence for possible reuse of pre-existing earthworks, which may have originated as prehistoric enclosures or as thegnly residences, as is tentatively proposed at sites like Castle Carlton and Burwell. Direct discussion of relationships between castles and settlement is illuminating at both Rampton and Burwell, where the suggestion that castle earthworks slighted existing settlement remains is questioned by the new data, while at Wellow geophysical survey suggested that parts of the interior of the village were never occupied at all. The concluding chapter is brief, but provides a useful summary of the key observations from each site placed within the wider context of the twelfth-century civil war. Overall, this is a well-presented and clear volume, especially useful for anyone interested in castles, rural archaeology or non-invasive archaeological fieldwork.

The Anarchy: War and Status in 12th-Century Landscapes of Conflict provides a wider context for the studies presented in *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements*, in a wide-ranging review of archaeological evidence for the twelfth-century ‘Anarchy’ (the authors are candid in admitting the difficulty of using the ‘A’ word which has popular appeal through long being applied to this period

but is one not entirely appropriate for a conflict which did not see the complete breakdown of political authority). One of many important observations to emerge from the research is that 'Anarchy' castles may be less common than previously thought, since the authors advise caution in pigeonholing undocumented motte and bailey or ringwork castles as belonging to the mid-twelfth century when they are equally likely, if not more so, to be earlier. Some of the material included in *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements* is reproduced in *The Anarchy*, but only in limited amounts in a volume which is much broader in scope, combining up-to-date overviews with analysis in chapters on architecture; material culture (including the arts and coinage); arms, armour and military apparel; and the Church. There is also an appendix listing sites to visit. Readers of *Medieval Settlement Research* may be particularly interested in Chapter 8 on 'Town, village and country'. Although much here focusses on urban rather than rural settlement, it features a thought-provoking discussion of the limited existing evidence for fortified villages – perhaps an area worthy of further investigation. Overall, this is an engaging and readable volume which will appeal to many, alongside providing medievalists with a comprehensive scholarly overview.

In sum, these two well-produced volumes complement each other well, with one presenting new data on 'Anarchy' period fortified sites, the other exploring the wider context of the period's archaeology. There is much to be learnt here from scrutiny of each.

CARENZA LEWIS
University of Lincoln

Northern England and Southern Scotland in the Central Middle Ages. Edited by Keith J. Stringer & Angus J.L. Winchester. 16 × 24 cm. xvi + 369 pp, 27 b&w pls and figs, 8 tables. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017. ISBN 978-1-78327-266-2. Price: £60.00 hb.

Richard Britnell organised a conference in 2012 to examine the country between the rivers Forth and Tees in its formative period between AD 900 and 1300, testing the hypothesis that it formed a region of 'Middle Britain'. A border along the Solway and Tweed, defined precisely in 1237, separated the north of England from the southern part of Scotland, but shared characteristics are found on both sides of the boundary. Britnell sadly died in 2013, but Keith Stringer and Angus Winchester have edited a book of papers from the conference with some new material.

The cross-border region has claims to unity, as it lacked a clear cut political divide, with both kings and great lords ruling pieces of territory on either side of the eventual boundary line. For example, David I of Scotland had control over Carlisle between 1135 and 1153, and the diocese of Whithorn in Galloway was subject to the archbishops of York. Turning to the rural institutions and settlements, which are the particular concern of readers of this journal, the territorial units consisted of shires (as Barrow called them) or multiple estates, which persisted throughout the region into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries after they had been superseded in much of

England. The parishes mirrored the secular land units. Within these large estates and parishes peasants tended to be lightly burdened, owing distinctive rents and dues either in produce, such as animals or grain, or in sums of money derived from these payments-in-kind. The land that they exploited combined areas of arable with large areas of pasture, but no matter how large the grazed areas, they still came under pressure and common rights had to be defended. Planned villages are found in both the northern and southern parts of the region, but so are small hamlets, often consisting of clusters of four or five farms. The lowland settlements sometimes sent cattle to distant upland pastures, where the herdsman occupied shielings.

There were some real and ingrained differences between the parts of the region that became Scottish and English. The rule of the English kings was more assertive than that of their Scottish counterparts, which meant that lords to the north of the border enjoyed more independence. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, monasteries took over more rectories in the areas under the Scottish kings, who had a particularly close relationship with the new religious orders. There were more personal serfs (*neýfs*) on Scottish landed estates in the thirteenth century, and Scottish tenants in general were more insecure in their tenures. Clustered hamlets predominated over nucleated villages in the Scottish countryside. Scottish peasants were more likely to be grazing their livestock on large pastures shared among a number of settlements, which were, by contrast, subdivided in England where manors had more control over grazing. The Scottish kings were restrictive in allowing grazing on their extensive upland hunting reserves, which may explain why shielings were more numerous in Scotland as herdsman had to travel long distances to accessible grazing grounds. These variations across the countryside of Middle Britain are ably defined in this book, especially in scholarly and well-presented essays by Richard Britnell, Dauvit Broun, Janet Burton, Piers Dixon, Richard Oram and the two editors. Readers will, however, have to provide their own synthesis, as the book has no conclusion.

CHRISTOPHER DYER
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Princes of the Church. Bishops and their Palaces. (Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 39). Edited by David Rollason. 18 × 25 cm. xviii + 441 pp, 21 colour pls and figs, 161 b&w pls and figs. Abingdon & New York: Routledge & Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2017. ISBN 978-1-138-71494-6. Price: £105.00 hb.

This edited volume stems from a 2015 conference held at the Bishop of Durham's former palace of Auckland Castle. As well as providing a venue for the conference, the residence of the Prince Bishops itself proves a rich vein of research for papers in this. The conference's chief aim was to begin setting an agenda for research on bishops' palaces, which it does successfully through a wealth of wide-ranging contributions. Rollason has

identified that, beyond cathedrals, which have been extensively examined, bishops and their domestic buildings are a much-neglected facet of medieval archaeology; the palaces are undoubtedly fully deserving of a comprehensive volume of case studies to illustrate their form, setting and significance.

After the introductory chapter, the book's 24 individual contributions are distributed under four headings which set out distinct research agendas: 1) Projecting images of power; 2) Palaces, forests and parks; 3) Palaces and the work of the bishop; and 4) Design, function and decoration. The focus of the various papers lies very much in Britain, with Durham featuring heavily, but also Winchester, London, Exeter, Oxford, Worcester, St Andrews, Glasgow and St Davids; however, Rollason has done well to include three comparative pieces from Italy, France and Croatia. Future work surely lies in exploring these buildings further afield and understanding the pan-European context of the medieval episcopate. Another welcome feature sees the volume range well beyond the Middle Ages, although the late medieval period naturally forms the core: a few interesting papers consider the lives of some episcopal complexes as far back as Late Antiquity, others over the course of the Reformation and seventeenth centuries, and some even into the Georgian and Victorian eras.

The majority of contributions consider the buildings themselves in detail, with particular attention to architectural plans, form, features and styling, but the book offers more than just architectural history and buildings archaeology case studies. Documentary history also features prominently, found in two papers on bishops' itineraries and another on the contents of the library of the Bishop of Worcester. A particularly interesting contribution by Michael Burger explores the texts of the registers of the bishops of Exeter and Lincoln to understand the use of space within the palaces, utilising documentary evidence to enhance our understanding of the inhabitation of these buildings – the episcopal *acta* which were performed in particular parts of the residences, and how the bishops, clerks and guests moved through them and interacted in them. MSRSG members will be pleased to see several papers considering the milieu outside the palaces, both placing the buildings within their immediate precincts and landscape settings, as well as considering the importance of the wider economic and leisure landscapes of parks and forests which fell within the episcopal purview. These chapters give particular insight into the peculiar position of the medieval bishop, supposedly raised by his religious position above the mundane, yet very much at home with the trappings and pursuits of the secular elite. Andrew Miller's paper 'Deer Parks and Masculine Egos' addresses this complexity head-on, demonstrating that both elite clerics and secular lords were, above all else, powerful men in constant competition with one another, jockeying for their places in society and employing the same material vocabularies of status.

The volume is very well edited and handsomely produced and, though expensive, it packs considerable, wide-ranging content into its pages. While the landscape-focused content is limited in comparison to the consideration of the buildings themselves, there

is nevertheless plenty of value here, and it clearly demonstrates that bishops' palaces and landscapes are a vast and much untapped archaeological resource.

ALEKSANDRA McCLAIN
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Colonising a Royal Landscape. The History and Archaeology of a Medieval Village at Mullamast, County Kildare. (TII Heritage 6). By Teresa Bolger. 19 × 25 cm. x + 163 pp, 75 colour and b&w pls and figs, 6 tables, plus CD-ROM. Dublin: Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 2017. ISBN 978-0-9932315-6-8 (ISSN 2009-8480). Price: €25.00 pb.

As County Kildare was within the Anglo-Norman Pale there is a strong likelihood that remains exist (but are seldom visible above ground) of abandoned manorial settlements. While castles, churches and moated sites may survive, evidence for their related settlements is hard to come by: post-medieval 'improvement' and ploughing have removed almost all standing earthworks and, as elsewhere, traces of settlements are now more likely to be detected by geophysical survey, aerial photography and, as in this case, rescue archaeology ahead of building developments and road schemes. But for a new road between Kilcullen and Waterford which cuts across Co. Kildare, it is unlikely that this site at Mullamast would have been found, let alone partially excavated.

Dug in 2007 by a team from Headland Archaeology (Ireland), now Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd, this site, where only an estimated 10% has been examined, is now said to be the largest single excavation of a medieval rural site in Ireland. As is so often the case, evidence of occupation comes mainly from a palimpsest of ditches, pits and gullies. Disappointingly there is little evidence of the settlement's actual layout: a central axial roadway widens at one end (postulated as a possible green) but there is no evidence for regular plots, nor can anything be said about house types. There was better luck with corn-drying kilns – two definite and one possible. Dating evidence was also hard to find: only one coin, a silver penny of Edward I, aside from a stray Roman one; however, a good assemblage of local pottery, mainly Dublin-type wares, together with a single sherd of Saintonge ware and two Ham Green sherds, point to a main occupation of the site in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. On present evidence it was not possible to indicate a date of desertion nor the reasons for it.

An unusual feature of this excavation was the high proportion of horse bones in the bone assemblage, forming over a quarter of the whole. The reasons for this are discussed at length in various places in the text and point to the likely breeding of the Irish hobby horse, much in demand for cavalry in Ireland in the medieval period. Was this a speciality of this particular place and a distant forerunner of Kildare's modern stud farms?

Evidence from the excavation is quantified and discussed within the wider context of medieval settlement studies in Ireland and elsewhere, especially England. There is an appendix on radiocarbon dates

(six) and a 10-page artefact catalogue. Backed by a wide-ranging bibliography of over 200 items, an index and a CD-Rom (whose contents are listed on pp vi–viii), this is an excellent publication, really nicely produced, with high quality illustrations, on which the editor, her team of contributors and the publisher, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, are to be congratulated.

In 1959 the late Professor Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, eminent historian of Anglo-Norman Ireland, wrote a paper on medieval Co. Kildare. Just a few years later she assured me that it was pointless to go looking for medieval settlement sites in Ireland as ‘there is absolutely nothing left to see’. She was right in most cases, but wrong in some. She would surely have been pleased to see this particular site where there was hardly anything to see now uncovered, if only partially.

ROBIN GLASSCOCK
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Manx Crosses. A Handbook of Stone Sculpture 500–1040 in the Isle of Man. (Archaeopress Archaeology). By David M. Wilson. 18 × 25 cm. x + 181 pp, 14 colour pls, 49 b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Oxford: Manx National Heritage with Archaeopress, 2018. ISBN 987-1-784917-57-9. Price: £19.99 hb.

Over 200 early medieval carved stone monuments have been recorded from the Isle of Man. Yet this is the first book on the subject since P.M.C. Kermodé’s ground-breaking corpus, *Manx Crosses*, published in 1907, which included the 117 monuments then known. This volume should therefore be welcomed as a much needed, up-to-date synthesis of the sculpture and its significance with the general reader in mind.

David Wilson’s first chapter sets the scene, giving an introduction to the island and its Irish Sea connections. The following chapters are concerned with the sculpture itself but further context is included where needed and some wider comparisons made. The discussion of the handful of early inscribed memorial stones includes some with ogams and also considers the early *keeill* sites which functioned as family or community cemeteries (though the simple cross-carved grave-markers often associated with them are only briefly described). One chapter is devoted to Maughold, the principal early monastic site on Man in the pre-Viking period, which has an interesting and comparatively little known collection of monuments, either incised or carved in low relief, with largely undecorated crosses and a range of inscriptions indicating wide cultural contacts. There is then an analysis of the relief crosses and cross-slabs decorated with interlace and other patterns as well as some hunting scenes which the author suggests were erected around the turn of the tenth century since there are no indications of Viking influence. In the following chapters Wilson explores the much better known stone sculpture of tenth- and early eleventh-century date associated with the Scandinavian settlement of the island. He introduces the Scandinavian art-styles and their chronology before a judicious consideration of the iconography featuring scenes from Scandinavian myths, such as the Sigurd

cycle, before bringing into play the major series of runic inscriptions; there is remarkably little Christian iconography. It is a pity that there was no concluding discussion to bring out the overall significance of the Manx early medieval sculpture. However, there is an annotated bibliography and an appendix with a full list of monuments known. The illustrations are good, though in some cases we are still reliant on Kermodé’s drawings or early photographs, often because the monuments have deteriorated since. This book will therefore be essential reading for anyone wishing to know more about the early medieval sculpture of the Isle of Man.

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Lived Experience in the Later Middle Ages: Studies of Bodiam and Other Elite Landscapes in South-Eastern England. Edited by Matthew Johnson. 21 × 30 cm. xvi + 246 pp, 185 colour and b&w pls and figs, 10 tables. St Andrews: The Highfield Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-9926336-6-0. Price: £25.00 pb.

While ostensibly focused on elite medieval landscapes in south-east England, the contents of this ambitious and attractively presented edited volume range over many other themes, including regional variation in landscape character, palaeoenvironmental reconstruction, community archaeology and the structure of working estate landscapes in the Middle Ages. This last point might be particularly relevant to a MSRSG readership: although the touchstone of the volume, and of the project that lies behind it, is the endlessly debated late fourteenth-century ‘show-castle’ of Bodiam in east Sussex, perhaps the single most prominent finding is that investigative field survey on these sorts of locations invariably reveals how it is artificial — impossible, even — to sever ‘elite’ sites from the workaday vernacular world.

The bulk of the volume is devoted to presenting the results of fresh fieldwork, funded from a portfolio of grants and other sources, on and around selected National Trust properties in Kent and Sussex. This is emphatically a team effort, embracing diverse volunteers as well as students, and is authored appropriately. Thirteen profusely illustrated chapters feature input from a team of 17 contributors, including several doctoral students whose investigations were embedded within the project. After an introduction that stresses the work’s intellectual foundations as well as its multifaceted methodology, come four chapters on Bodiam and one each on Scotney (another late medieval castle, this one set within a nineteenth-century picturesque landscape), Knole (an archiepiscopal residence also in a deer park) and the moated site of Igham Mote. The fieldwork programme did not include any significant excavation, comprising instead a rich suite of non-intrusive methodologies — topographical and standing building survey; an array of geophysics (resistivity and magnetometry, but also magnetic susceptibility and targeted ground-penetrating radar); pollen analysis from soil cores; digital techniques including GIS and LiDAR applied to landscapes, and

virtual reality to buildings; and historic map analysis. In the case of Bodiam in particular it is hugely refreshing to see a different body of evidence deployed to cast genuinely new light on a site with such an enormous historiography: the palynology serves to illuminate the *longue durée* of this special landscape, while the survey work emphasises how the castle's setting was a landscape of work as well as leisure and lordly showmanship. Inevitably, of course, questions are raised about the dating of features identified in the ambitious geophysics coverage. The volume's visual content is strong and varied, with full use of colour and some impressive visualisation of LiDAR and survey data, and is marred only by the occasional pixelated diagram.

Following the presentation of site-specific results, a final set of chapters explores the themes of public engagement in landscape heritage and investigation; moated sites in the Wealden district; and the 'lived experience' of medieval life in and around these sites. For MSRSG members the detailed scrutiny of moated sites, which applies some new theoretical approaches while grounded in close re-analysis of sites in the field, will be particularly welcome. Appendices catalogue finds of portable objects from Bodiam and detail the survey techniques and environmental methods.

The volume's contributors confront and respond to a series of familiar challenges in the investigation of these sorts of landscapes. Some of these are intellectual, such as the elitist tendency to focus on the closed world of the medieval aristocracy at the expense of those living and working on estates; others are methodological, including the need to capitalise on the potential of valuable material locked up in (sometimes) inaccessible grey literature. Contemporary social concerns are also woven into the narrative, including the importance not only of engaging volunteers and communities within academic research, but also of genuinely co-creating knowledge. The text sometimes departs from traditional ways of writing about these sorts of sites and landscapes, which is probably no bad thing, with papers punctuated with cultural references from Legoland and Disney through to Sherlock Holmes and Tolkien! Overall, the task of harmonising the fieldwork findings within such a rich narrative while retaining a coherence of approach and focus on the project's overarching aims is skilfully achieved, producing a work that represents a significant step forward.

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Court Rolls of Romsley, 1279–1643. (Worcestershire Historical Society New Series Volume 27). Edited by Matthew Tompkins. 19 × 25 cm. 357 pp, 3 b&w figs. Worcester: Worcestershire Historical Society, 2017. ISSN 0141-4577. Price: £28.00 hb.

One of the chief aims of the Worcestershire Historical Society is the publication of select historical records from the county. *Court Rolls of Romsley, 1279–1643* is the 27th in its New Series, which was created in 1960, and it is based on the translation into English

of the medieval and early modern court rolls for this Worcestershire township by Matthew Tompkins. Romsley formed a sub-manor of the large and important manor and parish of Halesowen in the north of the county, in an area characterised as wood pasture. Court rolls from this period can provide landscape historians and archaeologists with rich detail concerning the local environment, especially on landholding by servile peasants and, to a certain extent, on the management of the landscape. They are also incredibly useful for scholars interested in perceptions of rural settlement – very much an emerging area of settlement study.

Interdisciplinary scholars of medieval settlements are no doubt painfully aware of how inaccessible most original medieval manorial texts are to those without the specialist skills to decipher them. Before the early modern period, almost all sources were recorded in a contracted form of Latin and penned in a style unlike modern writing, that requires time and patience to understand. They are also occasionally faded, torn, nibbled or highlighted with gall ink rendering them illegible to the naked eye, and so we should be immensely grateful both to those scholars willing to undertake the mammoth task of translating them, and to the local societies that take the time to publish them and make them accessible to all.

The Romsley court rolls bring aspects of the peasant rural world to life in myriad ways. We learn how the community was organised, how certain key events in the agricultural calendar were managed, and how the management of the local infrastructure of roads, bridges and ditches was handled. There are entries outlining neighbourly spats, including boundary disputes and cases in which peasants encroached on another's land. Tompkins helpfully offers commentary on some of the more unusual entries: we learn, for instance, that the maidservant who was 'a habitual burner of neighbours' fences' was in fact most likely gathering firewood from the hedges and fences of local tenements rather than committing arson. On occasion there are some charming entries – my favourite being the reference to the poor man who found himself in court because his ducks had washed themselves in St Kenelm's holy well!

One of the most satisfying aspects of this volume, aside from the court rolls themselves, is the excellent introduction provided by Christopher Dyer, who offers a detailed overview of manorial court rolls, outlining what readers and scholars can hope to elicit from them, and helping those new to textual study to navigate their way through the frequently arcane language. In a series such as this, in which all members of the Worcestershire Historical Society receive copies of published volumes, necessarily there will be many readers new to medieval texts of this nature, and so Dyer's guidance will be of much value. For settlement scholars working outside the discipline of history, this volume, together with its prologue, will offer a valuable introduction to written sources such as manorial court rolls and their utility in enriching studies of medieval settlement and society.

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The Later Medieval Inquisitions Post Mortem. Mapping the Medieval Countryside and Rural Society. Edited by Michael Hicks. 16 × 24 cm. xiv + 226 pp, 18 b&w figs, 19 tables. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017. ISBN 978-1-78327-079-8. Price: £60.00 hb.

Following the first Inquisitions *Post Mortem* conference at Winchester in 2010, this volume is mostly drawn from papers presented at a subsequent conference, convened as a result of the 'Mapping the Medieval Countryside' project. This endeavour aims to provide open access to published calendars of Inquisitions *Post Mortem*, a valuable source for the study of the later medieval landscape. This in itself is an extremely worthwhile initiative, since the project intends to make the data available via British History Online (Although the link to this website, published within the volume, was not working recently, the current beta version of the project database is searchable and provides an exciting view of what will hopefully become fully available in the near future: www.inquisitionspostmortem.ac.uk).

Overall, there are useful and interesting forays in this edited work into territories that tend not to receive as much focus as midland and southern England, including Ireland (Paul Dryburgh), Scotland and Calais (Gordon McKelvie), and Northumberland (Janette Garrett). For readers of this journal, the three papers likely to be of most interest come from Christopher Dyer, Stephen Mileson and Matthew Tompkins. Dyer uses the IPMs in conjunction with manorial documents to assess differences in farming and land management between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries in three midland counties (Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire). Unsurprisingly, Dyer is excellent on the problems of using IPMs and their extents for this type of study, notably that the data are restricted to secular estates, and so, in some places, are skewed slightly. He argues that, used in conjunction with other material, these records can help provide a record of long-term change, which can be difficult to assess using only manorial records.

Mileson focuses on the newly-emerging scholarly field of peasant perceptions of landscape, largely using bynames and field-names. His material is drawn from his work on the South Oxfordshire project, and he too uses IPM extents as part of a range of evidence, including archaeological survey. He seeks to assess how peasant identities were shaped and to determine how these people developed a sense of place, suggesting in particular that residential arrangements could emphasise differences in peasant status. Tompkins' study focuses on mill assets in the later Middle Ages, where he suggests that IPMs can in fact help more than manorial accounts after 1350, due to the reduction in the level of detail recorded in account rolls after this date. He notes how his conclusions generally confirm Holt's and Langdon's earlier studies of 1998 and 2004 respectively, but that the IPMs allow for the introduction of additional detail.

One of the stated project aims is to increase awareness of, and to foster interest in, these important documents. Generally, I think that most documentary historians with an interest in landscape and society will already be aware of IPMs, using them as an integral part of their

research. For some of the papers here, there is a general tendency toward an inordinate focus on the processes of IPM production, and the volume is at its best when looking at new ways to extract detail from them, or to use them in conjunction with other sources and indeed other disciplines. This focus, I feel, will better encourage new interest, especially from those working in Archaeology and Historical Geography.

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The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace. Excavations between 2009 and 2015. (SpoilHeap Publications, Monograph 16). By Rob Poulton. 21 × 30 cm. xviii + 228 pp, 304 colour and b&w pls and figs, 53 tables. Dorchester: Surrey County Archaeological Unit, 2017. ISBN 978-1-912331-03-1. Price: £18.50 pb.

Demolished sometime in the early seventeenth century, only a fragment remains of Woking Palace, a manor granted in 1466 by Edward IV to Margaret Beaufort and her second husband, Henry Stafford. It became one of her favourite places. Convenient to London and with its own hunting park, the palace gained new importance after the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 when Margaret's son was proclaimed Henry VII. Later, after her death in 1509, her grandson Henry VIII made substantial improvements to the facilities there, including a new wharf for barges, new kitchens and, not surprisingly, a bowling alley. Despite further improvements by the later Tudors, by the time James I granted the estate to Sir Edward Zouch in 1620 the house appears to have been fairly run-down. Zouch then demolished it and, using a lot of its building material, erected a new house at nearby Hoe Place. Since then the site of the palace has been of little importance except, as now, to archaeologists.

Originating in a moated medieval manor and endowed with these noted royal connections, this site, now mainly grass-covered, presents a great opportunity for collaborative research. The challenge was admirably taken up in 2009 by the Surrey Archaeological Society, the Friends of Woking Palace and the County Archaeological Unit; excavation conducted over seven seasons also included very strong local community involvement. In this commendable monograph Rob Poulton has admirably drawn together the results from a large number of specialists.

After a general introduction to the site, its history and its environmental history (adjacent to the River Wey there has invariably been a high water-table) there are chapters on building materials, pottery, other finds and animal bone. Chapter 10 summarises what the excavation (comprising 26 trenches) has added to knowledge of the various phases of occupation between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. The excavation was backed by an impressive amount of primary historical research as is evident from the many manuscript and primary sources cited and a comprehensive list of secondary sources. Good quality paper for the publication has ensured excellent reproduction of maps (including a

very nice plan of the estate by John Norden in 1607), aerial photographs and plans. Importantly, there is a good index.

Working was never a Nonsuch. For a royal site, its foundations and finds appear modest in quantity and quality. Nevertheless this excavation has added valuable knowledge about this little known royal residence as well as highlighting the rewards of a project of collaborative effort and strong community involvement.

Ending on a personal note, it was with Lady Margaret's endowment that the College from which I am writing was founded through the skill and tenacity of her confessor, John Fisher, in 1511. Perhaps I ought to be grateful that she didn't spend all her wealth on one of her favourite residences!

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Archeologia di un paesaggio cristiano: Siurgus Donigala (CA) e le sue chiese (VI–XIX secolo). Insempiamenti e santi tra spopolamenti e devozione. By Maily Serra. 21 × 30 cm. 238 pp, 285 colour and b&w pls and figs, 11 tables, 15 'Schede'. Ortacesus (CA): Nuove Grafiche Puddu & Sandhi Editore, 2017. ISBN 978-8-97787-33-4. Price: €28.00 pb.

Sardinia's medieval archaeology remains, on many levels, very much under-explored, with many sites – castles, cities, churches and villages – known historically, but lacking structural and material investigation (the history itself is now well served by the recent Brill volume edited by Michelle Hobart, *A Companion to Sardinian History, 500–1500*. Leiden, 2017). Thus, for example, while deserted/abandoned and 'lost' medieval villages have been mapped through documentary references, only a handful have had concerted archaeological scrutiny (the major exception being the project centred on *Geridu* (Geriti) – Marco Milanese (ed.), *Vita e morte dei villaggi rurali tra Medioevo ed età moderna: dallo scavo della Villa de Geriti ad una pianificazione della tutela e della conoscenza dei villaggi abbandonati della Sardegna*. Florence, 2006). Any project, therefore, that seeks to highlight the potential of the landscape and of standing structures and archaeological traces in detailing something more of the medieval island and its populations is to be welcomed.

In the case of this well-illustrated and strongly landscape-oriented monograph, Maily Serra exploits diverse sources (cartographic to ceramic; archival to architectural) to reconstruct both religious and settlement activity in the site and territory ('curatoria') of Siurgus Donigala (her hometown) from early medieval/Byzantine times to the nineteenth century; it is a study that looks to both extant but also failed structures and sites. Divided into three parts, the first ('Metodologia e analisi dei luoghi di culto cristiani') comprises nine chapters, which, after a discussion (Chapter 2) of source materials (highlighting the detail to be found on even small sites and communities in thirteenth- to fifteenth-century censuses, registers and transactions), form a chronological review of church presences from the

Byzantine period (San Teodoro, with related 'military' cemetery at a nearby (Bronze Age) nuraghic site, and possible monasteries at Ortu and Bidda de Salomone – ch 3), to medieval structures and phases (ch 4) and onto the nineteenth century (ch 8). The 15 sites and their contexts (within settlements, isolated, roadside, monastic) and dedications are then usefully reviewed in Chapter 9. Part II could, arguably, have preceded discussion of the church sites, as it explores the different settlement units, commencing with the focal site of Siurgus and discussing related sources, setting, plan and routeways (ch 10) and then considering Donigala (merged with Siurgus in 1927), before assessing the lost villages of *Sarasi* and *Mulargia* (chs 12, 13). Finally, Part III comprises catalogues of mainly post-medieval church fittings (wooden sculpture, liturgical and votive items) from the two main extant churches of San Teodoro and Santa Maria, but also catalogues a notable collection of (now free-standing but all relocated) pilasters, some nearly 3 m high, with carvings of eighth- to thirteenth-century date, whose function remains debated.

I must admit to some confusion about the location of the diverse churches and sites discussed: while there is ample use of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century land/property (cadastral) maps, air photographs and site views, there is no combined plotting or map except on the rather uninformative Figure 91. Similarly the volume really needed good general regional maps to show Siurgus Donigala within medieval and modern Sardinia (inland, south-east Sardinia, Cagliari province) apart from the limited Figure 41; and, in addition, one might have expected plans of the extant churches to accompany descriptions in Part I and Part III. Nonetheless, despite some shortcomings, Serra has worked hard to bring disparate sources together, to tease out a clearer image of sites and religious spaces and to question their chronologies and roles, but also to flag the need to exploit the archaeology more, with knowledge of local ceramic sequences a notable current weakness. In particular there is much potential shown here to read longer histories of the Sardinian landscape, with instances of reuse of prehistoric and Roman sites and materials, toponymic survivals, and continuities of ancient boundaries and routeways.

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Abandoned Villages. (Britain's Heritage). By Stephen Fisk. 17 × 24 cm. 64 pp, 78 colour and b&w pls and figs. Stroud: Amberley, 2018. ISBN 978-1-4456-7917-4. Price: £8.99 pb.

This well-illustrated guide is part of the Britain's Heritage series by Amberley Publishing that includes topics as diverse as Dinky Toys and Tea Gardens. Taking as its title *Abandoned Villages*, its scope is wide-ranging, including settlements deserted due to changes in land use, villages lost to coastal erosion, forced evictions for military training grounds and much more. The coverage includes England, Wales and Scotland; and settlements that were deserted between the fourteenth and the mid-

twentieth century. It therefore provides a wider scope than previous books on deserted settlements – with a greater focus on more recent abandonments.

The first section sets the scene on generally why settlements are abandoned. The book then follows a thematic approach looking in each section at reasons for desertion such as: the sea; farming and land use; mining and industry; and military training. Each topic is examined via a small number of carefully chosen examples such as Dunwich for coastal erosion, Stowe for emparking and Tyneham for military-led evictions. The final section ‘What Next?’ encourages people to visit sites to review the setting of these (often) long-gone settlements.

The text is clearly written to appeal to the non-specialist – though some points may be too general and broad-sweeping – but the series format does not allow for expansion. Occasionally the more up-to-date thinking on sites has not been included – for example, it states that Wharram Percy was deserted by 1517, which is no longer thought to be the case. As a general audience work, there are no footnotes accompanying the text; however, there is an end listing of some of the main texts on abandoned villages. Overall this is a neat, very competent little addition to the literature on abandoned settlements for the general public.

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50 Finds from Hampshire. Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme. By Kate Hinds. 17 × 23 cm. 96 pp, 180 colour and b&w pls and figs. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2017. ISBN 978-1-4456-6234-3. Price: £14.99 pb.

50 Finds from Lancashire. Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme. By Stuart Noon. 17 × 23 cm. 96 pp, 180 colour and b&w pls and figs. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016. ISBN 978-1-4456-5837-7. Price: £14.99 pb.

50 Finds from Lincolnshire. Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme. By Adam Daubney. 17 × 23 cm. 96 pp, 180 colour and b&w pls and figs. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016. ISBN 978-1-4456-5811-7. Price: £14.99 pb.

50 Finds from Wiltshire. Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme. By Richard Henry. 17 × 23 cm. 96 pp, 140 colour and b&w pls. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2017. ISBN 978-1-4456-6314-2. Price: £14.99 pb.

50 Finds from Warwickshire. Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme. By Rangie Bolton. 17 × 23 cm. 96 pp, 180 colour and b&w pls. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2017. ISBN 978-1-4456-6514-6. Price: £14.99 pb.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme has been operating for 20 years in England and Wales. Its springboard was the

new Treasure Act of 1996, but its practice has mimicked that of liaison and positive cooperation with metal detectorists practised in Norfolk effectively since the 1970s. In that time, it has recorded well over a million artefacts and made that information accessible to all, as an unprecedented public benefit. Just as importantly, the Scheme’s Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) have extended networks of goodwill through their localities, promoted knowledgeable interest in archaeology and antiquities, and – in cases where Treasure Trove is in question – helped local coroners discharge their duties appropriately and, with increasing frequency it seems, linked on-site archaeological investigations to such major discoveries, to ensure maximum recovery and an understanding of site context.

What a good idea, then, to parade and celebrate these benefits through the publication of a series of relatively inexpensive and very accessible books – of which those listed above and noticed here are but a sample! And, at the same time, these books neatly bring the FLOs into the limelight as authors. It makes for a very nice series indeed. An incidental interest is to observe the different bases from which FLOs work: here a heritage trust, there a museums service, there a historic environment team in a local authority Planning Department. Each background informs and enriches these books in different ways. For example, a distinctive and valuable feature of *50 Finds from Wiltshire* is a suite of reports, one per chapter, of the author’s experiences of experimental recreation of ancient technologies that underpinned the production of contemporary artefacts.

There is a template here. Each book looks very similar externally (with the publisher insisting on gold and bejewelled objects figuring prominently!) and internally (with a standard Foreword by Michael Lewis at the British Museum and some form of sensibly limited ‘Further Reading’); but there is flexibility within the format, if authors choose to use it. The standardised titles obviously seek to draw energy and attract interest from the formula of Neil MacGregor’s excellent and successful radio programmes and books using museum objects, both exotic and mundane, as stimuli or exempla for larger events and ideas. The content here, while rarely matching MacGregor’s broad sweeps and sustained aspirations, sometimes – notably in several medieval and later choices in *50 Finds from Hampshire* – succeeds in opening up fascinating backgrounds and wider perspectives.

Most authors take little advantage of possibilities for flexibility in the format. Volumes characteristically present a range of artefacts in a chronological procession of seven to nine chapters, from ‘Stone Age’ (sometimes sub-divided) to ‘Post-Medieval’. The results are variable; but the effect is something like a small local museum of uniformly outstanding items. The potential is that (just as such museums always have) this might fulfil an educational and/or inspirational purpose, for children, young adults, local communities and students. In some cases – with that function in mind – the issues for the text are museum-like ones: more care might have been taken with cutting out the technical jargon and obscure terminology with which archaeology is riddled, and in illustrating use. The strength of the PAS database is routinely deployed, however, and the volumes enriched

by picturing comparanda from elsewhere in the country.

The exception in this batch, in respect of format, is Adam Daubney's *50 Finds from Lincolnshire*. He opts for a structure of six chapters based on topographical areas or landscape types, and he ensures a chronological range through choice of artefacts; the county lends itself particularly well to that approach. More significantly, this opens up important insights about the variability of site discovery between landscape types and the unevenness of archaeological datasets. There is more substantial preliminary matter here, too. A 'Preface' speaks vividly about the PAS's exceptional value in high arable landscapes with a tradition of deep ploughing; it introduces the book's chosen structure, by landscapes, and features a full-page picture of the series' implicit heroes – responsible local metal detectorists. An 'Introduction' then attractively (as much by supporting images as by words) sets modern finds recording within a tradition going back to the sixteenth century. 'Final thoughts' contains the sobering example of an excavated Roman villa whose occupation appeared to finish in the third century, until a ploughsoil survey revealed later third- and fourth-century artefactual evidence there; thus, only by combining the two sources could a full story be revealed. This particular volume is a distinctively purposeful use of the opportunity provided by the series.

How, after all this, does this series and PAS's cataloguing of artefacts impinge on settlement studies? Well, one would expect by signalling locations which form part of the fabric of ancient landscapes and land-use but are not in a straightforward sense 'settlements': such entities as cemeteries, ritual locations, places of congregation and marketing, or industrial facilities. On a larger canvas than these county volumes, too, distinctive metalwork from Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire has given archaeological substance to the Anglo-Scandinavian settlement of those areas where Scandinavian place-names are prevalent. Or, for the Roman era, distribution of coinage finds seems (as Stuart Wrathmell has argued) to differentiate the monetised, more arable east and south from the conservative, low-investment and more pastoral west and south-west of the imperial province.

This sort of commentary appears sporadically rather than systematically in the volumes reviewed, but they nevertheless stand as a stimulating celebration of a successful programme that amply justifies its continuing existence.

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The Great Transition. Climate, Disease and Society in the Late-Medieval World. The 2013 Ellen McArthur Lectures. By Bruce M.S. Campbell. 15 × 23 cm. xxiv + 463 pp, 78 colour and b&w figs, 12 tables. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-521-14443-8. Price: £22.99 pb.

This volume was generated as a result of its author giving the Ellen McArthur Lectures at the University of Cambridge in 2010. The original lectures focused on the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, while the

book expands this study to encompass the fifteenth century. Campbell examines the climatic and ecological impacts on the later medieval economy and society across Europe – with forays into eastern Asia – although his main focus throughout is on England. The Great Transition of the title begins as the late thirteenth-century economy faltered and societies experienced climatic instability during the final years of the warm Medieval Climate Anomaly (ninth to thirteenth centuries). Since both climate and disease are foregrounded, the critical point of transition is seen as the short period between 1340–1370, characterised by war, plague and continued climate change. The completion of the transition occurs in the late fifteenth century, at which time, it is argued, both environmental and economic outlooks had been radically altered, following the onset of the Little Ice Age after 1370.

This study is a masterly synthesis of a range of sources, encompassing manorial data amassed by the author over the course of his long career, and incorporating new material generated by palaeoclimatologists, microbiologists, geneticists, archaeologists and historians. This array of new scientific evidence allows Campbell to reassess the consequences of a series of major European traumas, including the Great Famine (1315–22), a succession of serious livestock epidemics between the later thirteenth and mid-fourteenth century, and the mid-fourteenth-century Black Death and its subsequent intermittent outbreaks. Proxy climate measures, taken using a variety of sources including tree ring dating, data from stalagmites (cave speleothems) and ice-cores are considered alongside the more familiar documentary data of the economic historian, and from these Campbell suggests that the multiple shocks experienced during this period coincide with climatic instability. In the case of medieval disease – in both humans and livestock – he positions the erratic weather patterns witnessed between c. 1280–c. 1340 (coinciding with the Wolf Solar Minimum) as a key agent in their severity and spread.

Campbell argues that, hitherto, little attention has been paid to environmental factors in attempts to understand later medieval economy and society. While not strictly true, it is the case that no one has attempted such a far-reaching analysis as that presented here, and no one has foregrounded climate and its ensuing effects on medieval society within their analyses quite as overtly as Campbell. He is mildly critical of what he sees as historians' relegation of ecological influences in favour of other (mostly human) agencies. Arguably, a closer assessment of environmental factors is welcome, and perhaps overdue. Nevertheless, I wonder whether, in his determination to convince readers of the primacy of the influence of the changing climate, human agency has been rather consigned to the background. For example, Campbell emphasises that the increasing number and variety of English monastic houses between the late eleventh and late thirteenth centuries coincides with a period of climatic warming, but it is surely mainly wrapped up in religious devotion, reform and also secular investment, albeit benefitting materially from an improved climate. This volume will no doubt generate debate among medieval scholars for years to come.

In this developing period of modern climatic instability, there is increased interest in comparing modern and medieval weather patterns, and in investigating documented and physical medieval responses to climatic instability. Smaller scale studies emerging from this scholarly interest will certainly benefit from this outstanding work, but may also contribute to the debate by assessing at a more local level the human responses to fluctuating medieval environmental conditions.

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Dry Stone Walls. History and Heritage. By Angus J.L. Winchester. 17 × 23 cm. 96 pp, 180 colour and b&w pls and figs. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016. ISBN 978-1-4456-5148-4. Price: £14.99 pb.

Reviewing is always enjoyable – but every now and then a book comes along that seems so energised by the high quality of both its content and presentation that it seems to leap into one’s hands. Angus Winchester’s beautifully-written guide to the history and heritage of dry stone walls is just such a one: a pleasure to hold, to read, and simply to dawdle one’s way through.

The book largely focuses on medieval and early modern stone walling, principally (but not exclusively) in northern England. It is divided into two roughly equal parts: firstly, a history of dry stone walls subdivided into five topics: Walls in the Landscape, Medieval Walls, Walls in Old Farmland, Intakes and Cow Pastures, and Parliamentary Enclosure Walls; and then there is a field

guide to ‘reading’ dry stone walls subdivided into four topics: Materials and Construction, Functional Features, and Ownership and Legacies of the Past.

The entirety is excellently produced on high quality paper, with so many high-resolution images – many of them in colour – that the author’s knowledge and enthusiasm are immediately transparent. The prose is clear and beautifully constructed without a single unnecessary word, while at the same time including sufficient detail to illustrate or explain the points being made and to enable readers to go out and find similar features in the field (so to speak).

The data presented here are rich enough to demonstrate regional and chronological variation in building techniques. A brief flavour can be gained from the contrasts between ‘Galloway dykes’ – low walls two stones in width that are topped by a single stone wall – single stone walls in Ireland and parts of Scotland where large stones are available, or stock-proof fences made by placing large vertical slabs side by side in regions where stone could be split. To take just a few additional examples, there is detail presented on the use of projecting cap-stones on top of walls to retain stock, on creeps allowing stock movement between fields and on gateposts like those drilled to take wooden bars.

It is a pleasure to be able to recommend a book unreservedly. Both author and publisher should be congratulated for its quality; and readers will find that they have a classic on their shelves.

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