

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by NEIL CHRISTIE

The Archaeology of Medieval Villages Currently Inhabited in Europe. Edited by Jesús Fernández Fernández & Margarita Fernández Mier. 21 × 29 cm. vii + 119 pp, 40 colour and b&w pls and figs, 7 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2019. ISBN 978-1-78969-300-3. Price: £30.00 pb.

This interesting, compact collection of five papers is derived from a colloquium on the archaeology of currently occupied medieval villages held at Oxford in 2016. The common theme is a need to redress the imbalance within medieval settlement studies away from deserted villages and towards the vast majority of sites that are still occupied. In the first contribution, Carenza Lewis provides an excellent overview of Cambridge University's programme of test-pitting within villages across eastern England. Up until May 2017 a total of 2,022 test pits had been dug in 59 villages spread across six counties, and it is acknowledged that the project's success in part comes from this being one of the few regions in England that has a continuous ceramic sequence. Lewis reports that very little Romano-British pottery has been recovered in these village cores (what little has been found was from peripheral areas), and that the few sherds of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery occurred in similar locations to this Romano-British material. There was clearly a discontinuity in settlement location in what has traditionally been called the Middle Saxon period, since Late Saxon and later medieval pottery generally occurred in different locations beneath the later villages. The late medieval contraction of settlements shows up very well in the test-pit surveys.

Edith Peytremann provides a far more wide-reaching review of archaeological fieldwork within currently occupied medieval settlements across France. This shows that, contrary to the traditional view, most villages did not originate in the tenth century but evolved over longer timeframes. One issue that emerges, however, is the need for more critical assessment of the archaeological sequences, because the presence of Neolithic occupation layers beneath a medieval village does not imply that the location has been continuously occupied! J. P. W. Versay, H. Renes, B. Groenewoudt and J. van Doesburg then provide an excellent overview of work in the Netherlands. A major synthesis of recent fieldwork revealed that although 181 currently occupied medieval settlements have seen some archaeological excavation, in very few cases was this work on a scale sufficient to draw significant conclusions. Ingvild Øye then takes discussion to Scandinavia, and in particular Norway, and once again we are given an extremely useful introductory summary of previous work and

information on the large-scale re-organisations of rural landscapes in the post-medieval period. This paper in particular raises the important issue of terminology and the need to clarify what we mean for 'farm', 'hamlet' and 'village'. In the final paper, the volume editors Margarita Fernández Mier and Jesús Fernández Fernández report on recent fieldwork within two still-occupied medieval settlements in the Asturian mountains of northern Spain.

Although a mixture of broad overviews and reports on specific projects, this is a thought-provoking collection of papers from which a series of common themes emerge that are discussed by Chris Wickham in the Conclusion. One is the need to adopt strongly interdisciplinary methodologies that embrace both below-ground archaeology and upstanding village fabric, while the need to use clear terminology is also highlighted. In addition, the need to avoid uncritical assumptions of continuity in occupation is a feature of most papers which is crucial when trying to determine when our present-day villages came into being. Wickham furthermore identifies the crucial role of churches as providing focal places within the landscape around which settlements coalesced. Overall, this is a fascinating set of papers that both review past work and present the results of current research.

STEPHEN RIPPON

*Department of Archaeology
University of Exeter*

Mediterranean Landscapes in Post Antiquity. New Frontiers and New Perspectives. (Archaeopress Archaeology). Edited by Sauro Gelichi & Lauro Olmo-Enciso. 21 × 29 cm. iv + 199 pp, 120 colour and b&w pls and figs, 6 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019. ISBN 978-1-78969-190-0. Price: £40.00 pb.

Beyond the editors' Introduction, this nicely illustrated volume comprises 12 contributions (all well-translated), of 10–20 pages length, with a geographical coverage running east from Greece to Italy and then Spain, and with a final case study from Morocco; Spanish papers form the core (six papers), with Italy next best covered (three papers). A useful new publication to complement this is *Change & Resilience. The Occupation of Mediterranean Islands in Late Antiquity* (edited by M.A. Cau Ontiveros & C. Mas Florit, Oxford 2019), whose contributions often extend discussion into the eighth or even ninth century AD. Temporally, *Mediterranean Landscapes in Post Antiquity* ranges from late antique to late medieval, but with some extension into the modern era; sometimes

looking back to the Roman era for comparison, most authors seek to emphasise the distinctive character of early medieval and medieval settlements and their economies. The editors state that they wanted ‘a chronological selection’ and papers with ‘the application of a new perspective by which the various aspects of the landscape are analyzed and connections established’ (p. iii). Many papers are therefore interrogations of specific landscapes – some site(s)-focused, some period-focused, and some looking at the landscape itself as an environment of change – and with methods often highlighted. The Italian contributions fit well in this regard: Corro *et al.* exploit archaeology, geomorphology and text to show how floods, drainage and reclamation (especially in the sixteenth century) remodeled the setting of a monastery associated with the dukes of early medieval Venice; Librenti uses the underexplored archaeology to reveal late medieval transitions in the Bolognese landscape, with a combination of seigneurial castle loss, nucleation to defended locales, urban elites creating rural moated foci, plus open villages, all adding up to a landscape ‘with a population density and social uniformity that it probably had not witnessed for centuries’ (p. 60); and Campana draws on his EU Marie Curie project ‘Emptyscapes’ in sample zones of Tuscany and Lazio, where the aim is to properly ‘apply a holistic approach encompassing many different methodologies [most notably new geophysical techniques and LiDAR] to reconstruct the linked evolution of cultural and environmental landscapes within a Braudelian ‘longue durée approach...’ (p. 66).

Among the Spanish contributions, close palaeobiological analysis is core to investigating human: environment bonds and resource exploitation patterns at the quietly industrious Roman and medieval rural site of La Noguera in the Upper Ebro valley (López de Calle *et al.*), while animal bones and palaeoenvironmental studies inform on landscape and economic dynamics (notably relating to salt and transhumance) in the southern medieval Kingdom of Granada (Malpica Cuello *et al.*). Aridity and scarce water resources in parts of Granada’s territory also meant investment in cisterns and irrigation works; careful exploitation of water to generate an irrigation infrastructure is meanwhile seen as core to the ninth-century birth and growth of the urban centre of Aġmāt Ūrika in Morocco (Cressier & Gonzalez Villaescusa). Sequences of Roman to medieval settlement and exploitation are the focus of papers on the Fariles-Velillos Valley on the north-west frontier zone of the Kingdom of Granada, an important communications line to Cordoba (Porrás *et al.* – noting a key phase of settlement formation from the ninth century and a more militarised pattern from the eleventh, with the castle at Moclín prominent), and on the hinterlands of Tolmo de Minateda (Visigothic *Eio* – a bishopric, Islamic *Iyyuh*), Albacete province, where diverse fieldwork offers excellent scope to trace late antique and early medieval land-use (Bautista *et al.*). Olmo Enciso *et al.* focus on the sixth to eighth centuries in the central Spanish Meseta and reassess landscapes and settlements, charting distinctive changes from the preceding Roman image. Scaled approaches – notably regional – help highlight spaces/sites (villages, hilltop communities, towns, mining), social hierarchies (and inequalities)

and landscape changes: a detailed case study is offered for the royal foundation (AD 578) of Reccopolis and its modified territory, responding to new demands and environmental pressures. Similar emphases come from Quirós Castillo and Vigil-Escalera Guirado in their reconstruction of rural settlement in north-west Iberia, looking to ‘an approach that values the peasant agenda in a multivocal way’ (p. 131) and treating landscapes ‘as the materialization of social practices in spatial terms’ (p. 132). Despite the advances in recognising medieval villages and communities, the authors flag critical issues affecting Spanish archaeology: economic downturns and resultant loss of archaeological units/companies may mean that many excavation reports will never appear.

North of the Mediterranean basin, trends across the sixth- to ninth-century Central Balkans are considered by Ivanišević and Bugarski: in particular they observe a ‘retreat’ from the Roman and Byzantine frontier landscapes, with a much sparser demographic; regeneration is delayed till the ninth century. They interrogate the Ras region of modern-day Serbia, with 30 sites attested, some at very elevated heights, and with some revamping of late antique/Byzantine forts and refuges; while defences have seen study, more work is required on site interiors. The authors identify that the context of (re)settlement and defence relates to frontiers between Serbs and Bulgars, contested from the 830s.

The final paper to note, but the first in the volume, is John Bintliff’s concise but informative appraisal of the ‘transformation’ of medieval to post-medieval archaeology in Greece, with his field experiences in Boeotia as a lead.

NEIL CHRISTIE

*School of Archaeology & Ancient History
University of Leicester*

The Role of Anglo-Saxon Great Hall Complexes in Kingdom Formation in Comparison and in Context AD500–750. (Archaeopress Archaeology). By Adam McBride. 21 × 29 cm. xvi + 350 pp, 228 colour and b&w pls and figs, 37 graphs, 12 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020. ISBN 978-1-78969-387-4. Price: £55.00 pb.

In 1983 Peter Sawyer complained that there was an ‘over-optimistic tendency [by archaeologists] to interpret every large and elaborate structure of the period as a royal palace’. Even so, he then proceeded to list some 180 or so places, which he identified on historic grounds as royal sites. Sawyer was not, however, a great enthusiast for the results of archaeological excavation. In the forty years or so since he wrote, archaeologists have continued to find sites with notably large buildings, and with the recent excavations at Lyminge and ongoing work at Rendlesham, the question of high-status settlements is again at the forefront of the Anglo-Saxon archaeology of the late sixth to early eighth centuries.

Thinking about these sites has come on a long way since Sawyer made his caustic observation. Instead of the evocative, but over-interpretative description of these as ‘royal palaces’, the more neutral term ‘Great Halls’ is now preferred. In the present book McBride

picks out ten Great Hall Complexes (a label used quite specifically for groups of large, architecturally elaborate buildings) and three other possibles, plus three 'Minor Hall' sites. Some of these are very familiar to early medieval archaeologists – Yeavinger, Cowdery's Down and Hatton Rock; others are less well known – Eynsford, Atcham and Long Itchington. McBride makes the argument that these are not merely buildings which are bigger than others, but were ones constructed in a manner intended to impress and to play a part in the emergence of elites who formed the kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England.

The importance of this study is that it begins with the evidence and progressively moves outwards to set the buildings in the wider process of state formation. In the first part McBride looks at the Great Hall buildings themselves and argues that during the course of the early seventh century they became increasingly elaborate, employing more timber, and consequently more ostentatious. In the second half of the seventh century there was a change with the development of annexes at the ends of the halls and new foundation types which presumably reflected different forms of building. The later halls are described as less 'robust', but it is not clear what that means in the context of buildings. Were they designed for a shorter period of use, or was it that the earlier structures were over-engineered and experience had taught the builders that less complex methods of construction were sufficient? The implication of McBride's work is that there were specialist, itinerant builders who worked on different sites, bringing their expertise and creating similar forms of hall for their clients. As the seventh century progressed, greater diversity appeared in the construction methods and, at the same time, the Great-Hall style was adopted by others who built Minor Halls in imitation of their more powerful neighbours. By the turn of the eighth century, the Great-Hall style had not only lost its social prestige, but appeared to be outmoded. McBride considers that it may have become associated with the re-use of prehistoric monuments and pre-Christian cult sites, features which now seemed 'uncivilized'.

The second part of the book looks at the role of various sites in the emergence of hierarchical groups. In order to identify centres of power, McBride uses GIS to map the locations of concentrations of wealthy burials in the Upper Thames Valley in the sixth and seventh centuries. This complex exercise is done with considerable skill and with an understanding of the inherent problems of identifying wealth. Four centres of wealthy burials are identified: in the Fairford–Lechlade area, at the confluence of the Windrush and the Thames, at the confluence with the Evenlode and in the Abingdon–Dorchester area. Similar work is done with the settlements, identifying concentrations in broadly the same areas. The Great Hall complex at Sutton Courtenay lies near the centre of the Abingdon–Dorchester activity area. That settlement seems to have emerged as an important centre in the mid-sixth century, prominent for high-status craft-working. The first Great Hall was constructed c. AD 600 in a landscape marked by numerous prehistoric barrows; indeed, one of the halls was constructed over a barrow – that presumably levelled before building work.

In a remarkable concluding chapter, McBride brings together all the evidence to argue that Great Hall Complexes played an active role in the emergence of elites and the foundation of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms; this is a *tour de force*, deploying many strands to think about the emergence of kingship. In fact, the whole volume is a brilliant example of the sophistication of thought about this crucial moment in the development of England. It sets an agenda for everyone working on the period and, although not a simple read, it should be essential reading.

MARK GARDINER

*School of History and Heritage
University of Lincoln*

Living off the Land. Agriculture in Wales c. 400–1600 AD. Edited by Rhiannon Comeau & Andy Seaman. 19 × 25 cm. xii + 252 pp, 17 colour pls and figs, 50 b&w pls and figs. Oxford & Philadelphia: Windgather Press/Oxbow Books, 2019. ISBN 978-1-91118-839-1. Price £34.99 pb.

The contributions to this volume largely reflect the proceedings of a 2016 conference held in Cardiff, and in their introductory chapter the editors spell out both the impetus for the conference and the objectives of the book. They rightly point to the long history of 'under-research' into medieval agriculture and settlement in Wales, and they have attempted here to create a platform for more coherent, thematic research by deploying what is an excellent series of studies at various scales – local, regional and national – from 13 contributors.

Stephen Rippon's chapter, informed by his ground-breaking *Fields of Britannia* research project, highlights one key problem for Wales: the paucity of lowland pollen sequences which would enable a more comprehensive analysis of archaeobotanical evidence for the Roman to medieval transition. The contribution by Tudur Davies confirms the preponderance of upland pollen sites, and the relatively poor representation of arable areas most likely to have remained in cultivation during and beyond this extended transition. For Ireland, by contrast, Meriel McClatchie and her colleagues demonstrate the huge return, in terms of archaeobotanical data, that has been achieved on the back of major infrastructure projects. It is to be hoped that archaeological investigations during recent road-building projects in south Wales will lead to a fuller and more balanced archaeobotanical record for Wales, too.

Sara Roberts, Della Hooke and Bob Silvester explore what the analysis of documents and place-names can tell us about agriculture in medieval Wales, what can be gleaned from the patterns of enclosed and unenclosed land recorded in nineteenth-century maps, and what is evidenced by their physical remains in the landscape. Roberts notably focuses on the evidence for agrarian practice contained in early Welsh laws, exploring not only the illuminating detail of cultivation and stock management, but also the laws concerned with the regulation of hunting. Hooke delineates some transhumance patterns in north Wales (and compares them with evidence for similar patterns in the west of England), as well as assessing some of the physical

evidence for seasonal settlements in upland pastures. Silvester's contribution emphasises the need for a better structured and broader approach to the analysis of both cartographic and field evidence for 'open' and 'subdivided' field systems, not least to the nomenclature used to describe them. It should also be possible to establish more clearly the characteristic widths of ploughing ridges in open-field systems as against those typical of cultivation in enclosed fields (at whatever date).

For this reviewer, the book's highlights are three studies of agriculture and settlement at more local levels contributed by David Austin, Rhiannon Comeau and Andy Seaman – each firmly rooted in an appreciation and understanding of the local landscape. Comeau investigates the characteristics of medieval farming landscapes in north Pembrokeshire – hamlet settlements with adjacent areas of infield girdling outfield zones of occasionally cultivated common pasture, along with more distant upland pastures used for transhumance. Seaman offers a study of two early medieval estates in Brycheiniog, recorded in the Llandaff charters; again, the late medieval evidence suggests that the small nucleations at the centres of the estates were accompanied by outlying farmsteads which formed girdle patterns around commons or areas of infield.

Austin explores the monastic estate of Strata Florida and concludes that it represents not the straightforward importation of a Cistercian home farm and granges, but a more nuanced transformation of a former Welsh royal estate. And it is this conclusion that leads directly to Andrew Fleming's characteristically perceptive concluding remarks. It is far too easy – and therefore all the more unhelpful – for those studying the agricultural and settlement history of Wales to reach for and apply models and modes of thought imported from England: to define what is 'Welsh' by subtracting what is believed to be 'English'. As the present volume clearly demonstrates, the agricultural and settlement history of Wales should be understood in its own terms, before attempting to tease out of it the threads of external influence.

STUART WRATHMELL
Fishergate, York

Llangorse Crannog. The Excavation of an Early Medieval Royal site in the Kingdom of Breichiniog. By Alan Lane & Mark Redknap. 22 x 29 cm. xx + 491 pp, 401 colour and b&w pls and figs, 43 tables. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. ISBN 978-1-78925-306-1. Price: £40.00 hb.

Massive is the apt adjective to describe what is both a weighty tome of 500 pages and a significant piece of interdisciplinary archaeological analysis. Few sites of royal settlement have left such a strong archaeological signal and Llangorse is to date the only crannog site both known and excavated in Wales. This book tells its story through 26 chapters arranged in nine sections, encompassing place-names, the history of enquiry, the excavation programme (1989–1993 and 2004), environmental assessments, finds analysis, water transport and the crannog in context (assessing

the historical, textual evidence and the crannog's significance).

This is a cohesive, multi-layered report that is dialogic – questioning the evidence, questioning expertise across interdisciplinary bridges and questioning the reader – and accessible and, commendably, richly illustrated. What shines through is the exemplary account given of a particular form of settlement with a multi-layered significance, including the location and structure of the crannog (with one of the largest assemblages of early medieval structural timber from Britain), its attendant logboats and the diverse, if quantitatively relatively small, artefact assemblage. The 'unprecedented corpus of structural wood' from Llangorse (albeit without building remains) 'suggests that structural wood workers in Brycheiniog were technologically closer to pre-Roman methods, without the use of sawing or tight mortise and tenon joints... What is unique is the combination of construction methods, to create a hybrid structure without close parallels so far from Wales' (pp. 146–47). The environmental data revealed the farming and processing of bread wheat, barley, oats beans and flax in the late ninth/early tenth century AD, processed before arrival on site. The main domestic animals were also relied on for food – pigs, cattle and sheep/goats – plus high numbers of deer. The high concentration of pig is read as indicative of high-status food and feasting.

The various categories of small (and other) finds are catalogued in requisite detail, with forays into rich, comparative discussion where necessary, notably for the shrine/reliquary fitting (pp. 209–18); the drinking horn fitting (one of only 34 known from Northern Europe – pp. 225–30); the so-called 'slotted pointed tool' (one of 34 known from the British Isles; the Llangorse example prompted the suggestion of a new, multi-purposes function – see pp. 233–38); the logboats (Ch. 16); and the close analysis of the historical records (Ch. 21). The approach perhaps reaches its high point in the treatment of the textile remains (Ch. 14): the main textile bundle is 'unique and striking evidence for high status clothing and conspicuous display at a Welsh court and a significant addition to our understanding of European textiles in the late first millennium AD' (p. 276). In addition, other small fragments of textile were recovered and taken as an indication of great potential for further discoveries. In assessing the early medieval craft base the report recognises the limitations of the small dataset from Llangorse but it still enables comparison with assemblages from Irish and Scottish power centres; it identifies craft specialism vs. Jack-of-all-trades as a question needing further work to fully answer.

Overall, the analysis is chronologically focussed (chiefly because of the tight overlap between their archaeological evidence and the textual records) but it does take the time to point out the biographical trajectories of some of the material, on various scales, adding to the complexity of the human habitation of the site. The textile discussion, for example, suggested that 'a larger decorative panel had been cut down (tailored) after completion to fit the construction of the garment, reminding us of textile reuse and cycling [sic.] beyond their original purpose' (p. 298). Biographical nuances are also evidenced in the analysis of the glass beads (Ch. 12) where it is proposed that they 'may represent an

heirloom, manufactured in the seventh and early eighth century, perhaps passed on through generations, until finally lost in the early tenth century' (p. 262). It clearly helps to explain the presence of Roman gaming pieces (pp. 206, 336). The approach seems more reluctantly addressed for the assemblage of prehistoric lithics, however, despite there being no early prehistoric context identified at the crannog site (yet the concluding remark on p. 451 admits of more possibility in this area).

The final chapter draws on some of the key facets of the archaeological record from Llangorse to relate their meanings in terms of the human occupation of the site and its wider task-rich landscape. The concluding assessment of the crannog's significance weaves together the constructional evidence, the scientific dating, the context of Irish and Scottish crannogs, the artefact record's identification of high status and the corroboration of the historical record to suggest that 'In all probability Llangorse is a royal crannog with an Irish pedigree' (p. 449).

MARK A HALL
Human History Officer
Perth Museum & Art Gallery

The Ancient Ways of Wessex. Travel and Communications in an Early Medieval Landscape. By Alexander Langlands. 19 × 25 cm. xiv + 242 pp, 51 colour and b&w pls and figs, 11 tables. Oxford & Philadelphia: Windgather Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-91118-851-3. Price: £35.00 pb.

The headline title deceives: for this is no Viatores-style volume, still less an *Old Straight Track*. Its origin is Alex Langlands' 2013 Winchester doctoral thesis; so, the sub-title tells the more accurate story and signals the book's academically serious intent. It is even structured with echoes of a thesis, with the main sections entitled 'Literature review', 'Case-studies' and 'Discussion'. But there is plenty of evidence throughout of updating – not least in the scholarly work cited and with the very useful supporting Bibliography.

Langlands' core idea is to tap into the plentiful pre-Conquest charter material for Wessex, and specifically the rich name-hoard of their boundary clauses; but to do so *en masse* and in the context of the landscapes to which they apply, in order to map the roads of early Wessex and to differentiate layers of origin and use. This is done through ten case studies, comprising blocks of topographically varied landscapes dotted around the region, from Hampshire to Devon. Results are presented via a suite of impressive-looking coloured maps, with a complex symbology. Their details can be hard to read and a full engagement entails memorising 30-plus symbols from a key that appears in an earlier chapter (plus another dozen-or-so linear conventions!). More problematic still, whereas there are no map scales, one comes to realise that the maps are (almost invisibly) gridded with five-kilometre OS grids with their identifiers placed centrally, in the form SX64NW, and the text uses these as reference keys. No doubt this resource will be mined by those parochially interested; but the general reader is perhaps better regarding it not as a means of communication, but

as a demonstration of the method whereby the author has gathered and ordered his data.

Most importantly, the case studies provide the platform for lively, stimulating and wide-ranging discussions of the level of survival, replacement or revival of Roman roads, signposting and memorialising routeways (often through ancient monuments that inscribed place), controls on access and movement. But also, and overarchingly, we recognise better the role of political authority in promoting roads – for defence, for commerce – and the timing and shifting priorities that may have driven and created a phasing of that, that is susceptible of analysis.

If there is much here that depends on the relatively high level of documentation that characterises early Wessex and that relates to traditional, Wessex-specific agendas, there is much too by way of approach that is applicable in landscape studies anywhere and that challenges us to get more, interpretatively, from them.

PAUL EVERSON
University of Keele

Early Medieval Britain. The Rebirth of Towns in the Post-Roman West. (Case Studies in Early Societies). By Pam J. Crabtree. 15 × 23 cm. xvii + 227 pp, 45 b&w pls and figs, 3 tables. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. ISBN 978-1-521-71370-2. Price: £24.99 pb.

This book is an excellent summary and introduction to an important theme in medieval archaeology. The author references all of the most recognisable papers on the topic from the last 25 years and synthesises them into a broad picture of early medieval Britain, en route weighing in on each of the major debates in the field. For example, she attempts to link the early medieval 'urban revolution' with a revolution in land tenure, based on her own appraisals of the contemporaneous emergence of wealthy burials (*e.g.* those at Sutton Hoo and Yeavering) and the intensification of agricultural production in the seventh century as evidenced by new ploughing technology, although she fails to provide the attention such an ambitious synthesis would require, and as written it stretches the evidence.

Rather than dissecting post-Roman towns across the entire volume, Crabtree dedicates more than half of her work to exploring historical context, with a chapter dedicated to the counter-urbanisation of Roman Britain and another dedicated to early Anglo-Saxon settlement and society. This approach helpfully frames the archaeology in its broader history. Chapters 3 and 4 then deal with Middle Saxon emporia and Late 'Anglo-Saxon' towns respectively. Crabtree provides descriptive case studies across each of her chapters, such as when comparing the area of Lundenwic to that of Hamwic, and contrasting the faunal remains between Londinium and Viroconium; however, on some such occasions she attempts no new interpretation.

The author successfully situates her book in a broader context of the publisher's 'Early Societies' series, critiquing processes of 'gift' to 'market' economy and critically engaging with the duality of primary versus

secondary state formation. While Crabtree perhaps fails to contend with several interesting, recent theoretical papers on early medieval towns, her perspectives tend to be nuanced.

The book's final strength is a conclusion that looks beyond the Middle Ages. Thus, the early medieval North Sea is compared to the Persian Gulf in the third millennium BC, arguing that both settings hosted complex societies engaged in high volume trade with meagre/restricted urban centres. Crabtree expands on an analogy made in one of her earlier articles where she likens the 'Anglo-Saxon' nobility to those of pre-contact Hawaii, because both claimed divine genealogies and both were provisioned by food rents. She then contrasts the societies because the English developed towns whereas the Hawaiians did not, and she speculates on the causes of their different trajectories. The analogy is creative, but I would argue that the similarities between the two are tenuous; arguably it would have been better to compare eastern versus western Britain. Crabtree quickly concludes that Britain's accessibility to and contact with a large continent, and its opportunities for trade, are what enabled its early medieval trading centres; in sum, trade emerges as the vital ingredient in the re-emergence of towns in post-Roman Britain.

BRANDON FATHY

*School of Archaeology & Ancient History
University of Leicester*

From Mesolithic Encampment to Medieval Estate. The Archaeology of the Bay Gateway. (Lancaster Imprints, 24). By Jeremy Bradley & Christine Howard-Davis. 21 x 30cm. xiv + 308 pp, 190 colour and b&w pls and figs, 37 tables. Oxford: Oxford Archaeology North, 2018. ISBN 978-1-907686-25-2. Price: £25.00 pb.

This latest monograph from the prolific Oxford Archaeology North, in their Lancaster Imprints series, provides a comprehensive specialist account of the archaeological discoveries along the route of the Bay Gateway. This roadway was constructed between 2014 and 2016 to connect the Port of Heysham on the Lancashire coast with Junction 34 of the M6 motorway. The volume represents the culmination of over ten years of work including desk-based assessment, walkover survey, geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation.

One of the most significant findings, towards the central part of the route, was an area of preserved organic deposits located just upslope of a palaeochannel of the Howgill Brook. Here, a concentration of later Mesolithic flint-working debris, radiocarbon dated to the mid-fifth millennium BC, suggests an area often frequented by hunter-gatherers. Human activity also occurred here during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, characterised by a group of pits and post-holes which may represent a rare building of the mid-fourth millennium BC.

For readers of this journal, the most interesting findings comprise extensive archaeological remains dating to the mid-eleventh century AD and later, a little to the north-west in the Beaumont area of Lancaster. Here, three phases of timber buildings, a stone channel and a grain-drying kiln, may represent the site of a

twelfth- to thirteenth-century mill on the west bank of the Howgill Brook, later destroyed by fire. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, occupation had switched to the eastern side of the partly diverted brook and took the form of a stone-footed building. This building contained substantial hearths and a possible *garderobe* and was surrounded by external cobbled surfaces. Significant artefact finds included pottery originating in Yorkshire, window glass, dressed stone and timbers from a possible waterwheel.

The prompt publication of this volume, which is clearly presented and very well illustrated, is a significant achievement, and all those involved should be commended for their efforts. A feature of volumes arising from commercial archaeological projects, especially linear schemes like this, is that it is often tricky to present a coherent narrative of wide-ranging results across different time periods. Here, however, the inclusion of a period-based discussion (Chapter 7) allows for an engaging overview. In particular, for the medieval evidence, it is possible to highlight the documentary evidence for Beaumont Grange, one of the many holdings of Furness Abbey founded in the mid-twelfth century. A number of farms in the vicinity claim to represent the site of the grange, but the findings of the Bay Gateway excavations raise the possibility of a much more complex settlement set-up with multiple, potentially specialised, activity foci within the Beaumont Grange estate.

GARETH DAVIES

*Trent & Peak Archaeology
1 Holly Lane, Chilwell
Nottingham NG9 4AB*

Moor Medieval. Exploring Dartmoor in the Middle Ages. Edited by David Stone & Richard Sandover. 21 x 30 cm. xviii + 181 pp, 11 colour and b&w pls and figs, 21 tables. Exeter: Moor Medieval Study Group, 2019. ISBN 978-1-5272-4320-0. Price: £15.00 pb.

In its origin, this volume will be familiar to many: a successful Heritage Lottery Fund application for a Landscape Partnership Scheme; an acceptable historically oriented project, Dartmoor in the medieval era; a focus in on a single area of the moor, namely six parishes on its eastern flank; and the involvement of two professionals, David Stone (a medieval economic and social historian) and Richard Sandover (a landscape archaeologist), together with staff from the National Park authority, various specialists and, vitally, enthusiasts from several local communities. And, after four and a half years of effort, the result is this well-produced, highly illustrated report, launched at a project-closing conference in June 2019.

Six chapters, authored by the two editors, examine eastern Dartmoor in chronological stages. The first chapter sets the scene and what the authors do well here is to take the results of recent and, in some instances not so recent, research, across Dartmoor and the wider region of south-west England, encompassing research specifically relevant to the locale, or adapting it from broader geographical commentaries: thus Margaret

Gelling and the more recent work of Oliver Padel on topographical place-names, Steve Rippon and others on convertible husbandry, Harold Fox on transhumance, Andrew Fleming on trackways and Bruce Campbell on agriculture, are flagged.

Two chapters examine the selected group of parishes prior to the Black Death. With little obvious sign of pre-Conquest activity, the starting-point is the beginning of the eleventh century, and one chapter is devoted largely to a conjectural reconstruction of the Domesday landscape based on GIS analysis of nineteenth-century tithe map data. The century before the plague had witnessed an increase in the amount of contemporary documentation and manorial extents are used to illustrate the expansion of settlement, the nature of manors and of farming, and the rising importance of the tin industry. Subsequent chapters cleverly unravel economic and demographic trends on the moor and its fringes in the two centuries after the Black Death. Account rolls, manorial court records and agistment lists are utilised to show that, within a few decades, Dartmoor was revealing its economic resilience; unlike other regions of England, it was not an era of 'demographic stagnation', and farming and industry both saw marked growth.

Sporadically, the chapters reveal the authors resorting to archaeological evidence and to the landscape in order to supplement their documentary material. More of the community's involvement in the project is visible, though, in the various 'boxes' offering shorter texts covering a diverse range of subjects that are interleaved within the chapters and are usually compiled by community team members or, occasionally, specialists. Thus, two stand-alone texts offer snapshots of the community excavations at North Hall, a moated manor site in Widecombe-in-the Moor, while a further two relate the medieval pottery from the site; a plan would have aided the reader's understanding, but presumably there will be a full report in due course. Other boxed texts consider test-pitting in two of the villages; a possible deserted tenement site known as *Blakefurses* in 1348 identified from fieldwork; longhouses in their landscape setting; the medieval hamlet of *Uppecote* with its two longhouses; the late medieval church houses used by the community, several good examples of which survive around the moor; and the evidence for tin-working along the River Bovey.

What this volume delivers is a readable narrative of the social and economic history of a group of Devon parishes with a landscape gloss, with newly discovered archival material being melded with earlier research to create a fresh picture of this particular portion of Dartmoor. The Heritage Lottery Fund should be well satisfied with their investment.

BOB SILVESTER
University of Chester

Mount Grace Priory. Excavations of 1957–1992. By Glyn Coppack & Laurence Keen. 22 × 28 cm. xxiii + 422 pp, 253 b&w pls and figs, 63 tables. Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2019. ISBN 978-1-78925-314-6. Price: £30.00 hb.

The Preface to this long-awaited report tells a sorry tale of disagreement, compromise and delay that, to some extent, excuses its repetitious structure. Albeit a problematic conservation history, however, our authors don't actually need the Trumpian defensive tone adopted, as there is much of value here. The volume offers valuable information, not just about Mount Grace itself, but about other English Carthusian sites, and is destined to become a significant source of archaeological detail about this intriguing monastic order.

Readers of *Medieval Settlement Research* will be particularly interested in new evidence for the vill of Bordelby – a lost settlement in East Harlsey parish, hitherto known exclusively from documentary sources. The 1990–92 excavations in the refectory area revealed earth-fast post-built structures and accompanying ditches on the upper terrace, dated by late eleventh- to thirteenth-century ceramics. Yet the decision to nominate these scant remains a 'village' may prove controversial. It might have been wise to consider the 'character' of this limited settlement evidence more fully; no distinction is drawn here between the manor as a legal entity and the 'village' as a specialised settlement form. Furthermore, documents establish that Bordelby manor contained a detached chapelry. Is this relevant to the early grave-cover found within the church? The new monastery of 1398 had an interesting settlement background, then, but our authors prefer a functionalist account of site-selection, insisting that the monastery's site was chosen for 'maximum use of existing water sources and drainage, whilst providing shelter...' Unfortunately, Mark Dinnin's excellent study of insect remains, looking at pre-monastic topography and land-use, reveals no hint of substantial settlement nearby, but rather a 'boggy and uneven terrace drained only by the natural streams that crossed it'. Our authors suggest, however, that pre-monastic ceramics indicate early settlement foci: a 'village' distributed around the central pond of large open 'green'. On the face of it, this sounds unlikely. On the lower terrace, below the monastery, substantial earthworks (surveyed by RCHME, but interpreted by Coppack) might represent the site of 'Bordelby manor house'. They were not excavated, so certainty is impossible but, with their clear divisions into rectangular compartments orthogonal with the post-Dissolution house, these earthworks might equally be interpreted as its associated gardens. Indeed, a complicated phasing is proposed here, suggesting that the earthworks originated in a moated manor house, later re-used as gardens. Place-name evidence clearly indicates that Bordelby was somewhere hereabouts, however, although a single diagram locating relevant details would have been helpful.

Mount Grace contains a full account of the superimposed charterhouse's physical remains, both excavated and standing, although – perplexingly – standing remains are not always described alongside related excavations, while their interrogation lies in

a third section. (My copy's binding was insufficiently strong to survive the thumbing to-and-fro!). For the first time, a layout of temporary timber cells is identified, and standing stone buildings are phased. Loose stonework is recorded and analysed (by Jackie Hall); a designer's name is suggested for the church; and a contribution is made to long-running debates about similarities between Carthusian and Mendicant architecture. Hayfield's ceramics report is valuable, and significant finds relating to manuscript production, illumination and early printing, lead Laurence Keen to suggest that the monks were producing indulgence certificates for pilgrims – presumably those visiting the chapel of Our Lady, higher up Rowberry Hill to the east (of which, mysteriously, no account is given).

Beyond exhaustive commentary on their monastic planning, however, scholars will not read this volume to understand Carthusian theological or liturgical distinctiveness. Impulses that drove Carthusians to adopt their severe form of eremitic monasticism are surely similar to those inspiring contemporary anchorites. Like anchorites, but unlike other monastic orders (especially Mendicants), Carthusian monks may have attracted the significant late medieval patronage seen at Mount Grace because they were symbolically 'dead-to-the-world': half-way to Heaven on earth (see R. Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture. The Archaeology of Religious Women*, 1994). This report offers illustrative detail to scholars thinking about such issues, but not substantive discussion.

DAVID STOCKER
University of Leeds

Burnham Norton Friary. Perspectives on the Carmelites in Norfolk. Edited by Brendan Chester-Kadwell. 16 × 24 cm. xx + 254 pp, 99 colour and b&w pls and figs, 2 tables. Drayton: Oldacre Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-9162869-0-0. Price: £15.00 pb.

Do not be deceived by the title of this book; its contents will be of interest to those interested in medieval coastal topography, urban development, shipping, trade and commerce, as well as the Carmelite friars. The Burnhams comprised nine parishes in close proximity around a crossing-point on the River Burn – these communities can be regarded as a town in the making, which never made the grade. That in itself is fascinating, and so too is the time-depth of the development from the post-Roman period. Fieldwalking and some excavation have identified cemeteries, buildings and many small finds from the early Anglo-Saxon period onwards. The attraction was the Burnhams' location at the head of a small estuary, identified in the later Middle Ages as a significant port. When the friars first arrived in the mid-1240s they occupied a marginal site, befitting the Order's origins, but within a decade they had moved next to the main E–W road leading from Burnham Market, via the Burnhams Norton and Sutton, to Burnham Overy. This shift is indicative of a major rethinking of the Carmelites' role: beginning as a community of hermits on Mount Carmel near Haifa in modern Israel, they were transformed after their arrival in England to echo

the remits of the mendicant Dominican and Franciscan Orders.

The house at Burnham was acknowledged as one of the first four English foundations, a number which rose to over 30 by the mid-fourteenth century. One of these was in Norwich and a chapter in the book is devoted to recent archaeology that has done much to clarify its layout and the evolution of the house there from its inception in 1256. It is doubtless significant that the bishop at the time, Walter Suffield, was the uncle of William Calthorpe, co-founder of Burnham Norton friary. The heyday of both Norwich and Burnham was the second quarter of the fourteenth century, a period that witnessed their enlargement and rebuilding. The most impressive extant testament to this is the precinct gate at Burnham, an elaborate set piece of Decorated architecture in a style associated locally with work of the Ramsey family of masons, whose national importance extended to Ely, London and Westminster.

Organised in nine chapters (and with an appendix of documents) by nine authors with different interests and expertise, the research represented in the book is part of the Norfolk Archaeological Trust's 'Imagined Land' project. The archaeological, landscape and archival chapters – the latter including an account of testamentary and other bequests – are especially welcome, as is the implicit encouragement to visit the site with the material presented here as a guide to understanding the friary in its medieval contexts.

T. A. HESLOP
Department of Art History and World Art Studies
University of East Anglia
Norwich NR4 7TJ

Monastic Granges of Derbyshire. A Gazetteer with Maps, Illustrations and Notes. By Mary Wiltshire & Sue Woore. 17 × 24 cm. 176 pp, 124 (unnumbered) colour and b&w pls, figs and maps, 3 tables. Ashbourne: W&WP, 2019. ISBN 978-1-5272-3551-9. Price: £15.99 pb.

Monastic granges are the poor relations of medieval monastic studies. Although granges were often at some distance from their monasteries they were an integral part of those institutions and yet have never received the same degree of attention. This book introduces those found primarily in the Derbyshire uplands, where many earthworks survive within a much older relict landscape.

The authors begin with a substantial introduction to their subject, beginning with the definition of what a grange actually was, the monastic orders that particularly developed them, and the donors involved. This is followed by comments on the grange buildings (religious, agricultural and industrial) and their possible effect on the local civilian/working population. What happened to monastic estates generally at the Suppression follows and, as we would expect, the monastic land went largely to the major established landowners in the county.

Now we arrive at the real value of this book, namely the gazetteer of 45 known or potential grange sites, each with an historical summary and a time-line from Domesday into the modern period, and, most important,

potential grange land and buildings, all outlined on the 6 inch OS map. Many of the extents are taken from early modern surveys which probably maintain their pre-suppression bounds and were non-parochial. Some sites are a little problematic, and though they were owned or tenanted by a particular monastery, may not have been granges but been treated as lodges dependant on a nearby grange or simply rented out. Two sites given to Louth Park Abbey, Birley and Barlow, were a cooperative venture with the landowners to smelt iron from the late 12th century and the monks had a court there, which they retained up to 1535 but they called it a manor, not a grange.

What this book does is demonstrate the potential; the next stage is to field-walk these sites and identify medieval features in the post-medieval landscape.

GLYN COPPACK

*Archaeological and Historical Research
Goxhill*

A History of the County of Oxford. Volume XIX: Wychwood Forest and Environs. (The Victoria History of the Counties of England). Edited by Simon Townley. 22 x 31 cm. xx + 409 pp, 8 colour pls, 109 b&w pls and figs, 2 tables. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer for the Institute of Historical Research, 2019. ISBN 978-1-904356-51-6. Price: £95.00 hb.

For those interested in medieval and later forest and woodland history – the practical and administrative aspects, parks, lodges, and the nature of forest life – this is a rich collection; it is also a rich quarry for detail on the development and range of settlement types in such areas. The VCH's parish-by-parish structure used to make it hard to get a feel for an area's character and for themes and trends. But here, as is now usual, an introductory 30-page 'Overview' draws these out, inviting further exploration of particular places and subjects via the clear index. Praise, too, for the hundred-plus illustrations, including excellent historic maps.

Wychwood, on the eastern fringe of the Cotswold Hills, was a royal forest. For much of its history it extended to around 4,400 acres, although in the Early Middle Ages a much wider area – much of western Oxfordshire – was under Forest Law. It remained Crown property until disafforested in the 1850s; an area of private woodland bearing its name survives, south and east of Shipton-under-Wychwood and Ascott-under-Wychwood. The name itself, meaning 'wood of the Hwicce', first appears in a Mercian royal land grant of c. 840–2. How long the area had been densely wooded – indeed if it ever was – is uncertain, and following Beryl Schumer's important pioneering study *Wychwood: The Evolution of a Wooded Landscape* (1984; 1999), the VCH suggests a general expansion of woodland and wood-pasture hereabouts in the post-Roman centuries. In the Middle Ages the demesne forest comprised 'a complex mix' of coppices, open wood-pasture and timber trees. Here and there are vivid glimpses of woodland life: of John Archer, a woodward, who in the early fourteenth century held a house and 11 acres rent-free in Ascott D'Oilly, additionally receiving four bushels of multure

at Christmas for guarding the lord's pigs in the forest.

Abundant *lēah* and *fēld* place-names may indicate middle Saxon woodland clearance, certainly under way well before the Conquest around Wychwood's periphery. In the following centuries assarting (which continued up until the Black Death) was concentrated especially on higher ground, leading to a pattern of dispersed farmsteads and clustered buildings along roads and tracks separated by assarted closes and open fields. That this was not a simple story of frontiersmen gradually pushing into virgin woodland is recognised: Leafield had a primary focus around its large green and communal pond, while Ramsden lay around an early crossroads close to a Roman roadside settlement.

Contrasting settlement and field types developed in the Evenlode valley to the north of Wychwood, where nucleated villages with open fields were established by the thirteenth century alongside the river and its main tributaries. It is suggested that these may have coalesced from earlier, more scattered, hamlets suggested by field names such as 'Hidworth' and 'Tadesworth' in Shipton, and 'Mecheltonnestede' in Ascott. The place-name Ascott itself means 'eastern cottages', presumably referencing that it was a satellite of Shipton, lying within its large minster parish. Before 1066 the village was divided tenurially between two independent manors, reflected at least later in the two separate foci of Ascott Earl and Ascott D'Oyley. A parochial chapel was built on the green between the two in c. 1200, either as a joint manorial initiative or perhaps as part of the d'Oillys' wider replanning of their property associated with their castle. Here, in a parochial microcosm – as throughout the volume – we have glimpses of many of the complexities – and questions – about medieval settlement and its development.

The VCH can always be relied on for authoritative treatment of matters ecclesiastical, and here much of the framework is provided by the gradual break-up, from the eleventh century, of Shipton's extensive minster *parochia*; Swinbrook, Fifield and Idbury had largely gained autonomy around or soon after the 1220s. Bruern seems to have acquired an independent church by the eleventh century, and chapels-of-ease existed at Ascott, Fifield, Idbury and Lyneham by the thirteenth century and at Leafield by 1485, some with rights of baptism and burial. Two or three manors had private chapels, while three hermitages under the protection of religious houses combined chantry functions with occasional provision for Wychwood's itinerant foresters. From the 1170s the church at Bruern was downgraded to a parochial chapel belonging to the Cisterican abbey there, founded in 1147, which had its own church. At the same time the parish's existing settlements were depopulated and granges established.

All told, this is a volume of the highest standard; all associated with it should feel great pride.

PAUL STAMPER

*Centre for English Local History
University of Leicester*

The Place-names of Leicestershire. The Survey of English Place-Names, Volume XcIII, Part Eight. By Barrie Cox. 15 × 23 cm. xv + 287 pp. Nottingham, English Place-Name Society. ISBN 978-1-911640-01-1. Price: £45.00 pb.

Cox completes his survey of the place-names of Leicestershire with this detailed analysis. While the previous volumes have concentrated largely on cataloguing and regional analyses of the history of individual toponyms, this takes a broader approach discussing the implications of groups of toponyms.

Cox begins with a catalogue of river names and moves through roads and streams, discussing individual name-types and elements mentioned in the previous volumes. This is particularly interesting for those interested in the effects of the Danelaw on settlements and how it might be reflected in the settlement names. For those interested in the social and economic history of Leicestershire, Cox provides a list of Inn and Tavern names as they relate to industrial activities.

Taking the title 'Sense of Place', Cox embarks on a toponymic summary and history of the county. The only element which some may question is the uncritical inclusion of Gildas' and Bede's accounts to provide a narrative for the post-Roman period. This does not, however, detract from the overall flow, breadth and depth of analysis. The detailed index takes up most of the second half of the book, allowing the reader to navigate the previous seven volumes for individual place-name data. There is no doubt that this is a resource to be mined by serious scholars for many years; but it is also one in which the curious might just as easily dip for an 'I never knew that' moment.

It may not be the house-style of the publishers but there were occasions when I felt that distribution maps or illustrations would have added to the narrative. As one who has referred to library-held volumes from The Society in search of the maps, only to find the pockets at the back empty, inclusion within the body of the book would be the only improvement I might suggest in an otherwise superb piece of work.

The quality of production and the detail it incorporates makes this without question an essential bookshelf item for anyone interested in Leicestershire and the places which feature in its history.

GRAHAM ALDRED
*School of Archaeology & Ancient History
University of Leicester*

The Old Tracks through the Cheviots. Discovering the Archaeology of the Border Roads. (2nd edition). By David Jones, with Coquetdale Community Archaeology. 17 × 27 cm. xii + 212 pp, 169 colour and b&w pls and figs. Seaton Burn: Northern Heritage Services Limited, 2018. ISBN 978-0-9957485-0-7. Price: £14.99 pb.

The 'rolling' landscapes of the Cheviots, set within the Northumberland National Park and extending into the Scottish borders (the old county of Roxburghshire), fringed by towns such as Corbridge, Harbottle, Rothbury and Alnham, and with routeways extending onto Kelso

and Jedburgh, mask a rich array of field monuments. Very much rural nowadays, being only sparsely dotted by active farms and hamlets (but to which can be added the Otterburn artillery ranges of the Ministry of Defence), these moorlands, peat-bogs, valleys, hills and slopes feature the remains of sites of prehistoric to modern date that reflect numerous aspects of their extended history of occupation, exploitation and conflict. Some sites, notably of Roman and Iron Age date, have seen past excavation/investigations and a few medieval and later ones have had recent study, thanks largely to the Coquetdale Community Archaeology group.

Structured into eight chapters, after introductory sections on the region's history, geology, archive and archaeological sources (Ch. 1–3), this nicely produced and generously illustrated book explores the Cheviots' landscape and archaeology along a set of old routeways – Clennell Street (from Alwinton in the south to Town Yetholm) in Chapter 4; Salter's Road (from Alnham to join Clennell Street; Ch. 5); The Street (from Barrowburn to Morebattle; Ch. 6); and the Cheviot line of Dere Street, the Roman road linking York to the Antonine Wall (Ch. 8). Chapter 7 covers a circular zone labelled Buckham's Walls in Upper Coquetdale. While Dere Street's route discussion is dominated by the Roman fort of Rochester and the multiple Roman camps at Chew Green and Pennymuir, there is coverage of the possible early medieval 'nuclear fort' at Moat Knowe and the Iron Age Woden Law hillfort. The Clennell Street chapter shows the book's strength in offering descriptions (plus related historical evidence) of sites of all periods, from Alwinton's medieval church and nineteenth-century lime kilns, to Bronze Age and Iron Age enclosures and farmsteads, to the late medieval estate of Wholehope and its eighteenth-century illicit whisky still. For medieval presences in the zone, the chartulary of the Newminster Abbey in Morpeth (founded 1137) records lands, animals (sheep, primarily) and rights in its Kidland estate, which extended to the River Coquet. Significantly, for Barrowburn within this estate (see Chapter 6, pp. 122–127), David Jones and team report on their discovery and excavation of parts of a fulling mill, notably the wheel pit (of rare design suggesting a 'breast shot configuration' – the earliest known in the country), whose high-quality (imported) stonework reflects investment by the abbey in the wool trade in the thirteenth century (Other medieval units have been dug nearby). Most probably the mill went out of use in the face of border disputes and raids by Scots from the 1290s on; the Newminster prior and monks even sought to pay off the Scots to avoid damages to their lands, but their last documented presence within Kidland was in 1304. Pele towers and bastles are later efforts to protect lands and stocks in this and other border regions.

The Old Tracks through the Cheviots is complemented by the handy companion publication by Coquetdale Community Archaeology, *Walking the Old Tracks of the Cheviots. The Archaeology of the Hills*, a 120 pp A5 ringbound practical field guide to the routes and archaeological sites, with colour OS maps, photos and interpretative plans, and much valuable guidance on access, walk grading, etc. (but not on local watering-places!). Some of the maps and information are also offered at www.border-roads.org.

In sum, plenty to encourage you out to explore these beautiful Border landscapes and their often-striking and extended archaeological heritage.

NEIL CHRISTIE
School of Archaeology & Ancient History
University of Leicester

50 Finds from Berkshire. Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme. By Anni Byard. 17 × 23 cm. 96 pp, 150 colour and b&w pls and figs. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2019. ISBN 978-1-4456-7500-8. Price: £14.99 pb.

Keeping to the successful formula of other titles in this series of valuable county-by-county guides to the rich array of artefacts – from mundane to exotic – recovered by metal-detectorists and fieldwalkers in particular and passed to the busy, vital but, sadly, underfunded Portable Antiquities Scheme, Anni Byard here is tasked to select and illustrate (with comparanda) a mere 50 finds in order to give a taste of the material culture of Berkshire's landscape (a mere 1262 km²) and people from Lower Palaeolithic to post-medieval times. As her introductory summary of the county's landscape states (p. 10), the more heavily urbanised eastern side of the county is less productive of such finds, while the rivers Thames and Kennet provide notable foci for settlement and finds. For the historic period, Roman finds described include bird-themed objects such as an eagle head cart fitting (from West Isley), a figurine of a winged boy or *putto* either playing with or throttling a goose (Winterbourne), and a fine, enamelled 3-D cockerel brooch (Boxford); early medieval items include two iron spearheads (Lambourn), a gilded silver zoomorphic sword mount of c. AD 800 (West Isley) and an eleventh-century stirrup mount featuring a roaring lion (Old Windsor). And among the eight finds selected for the period 1066–1500, Byard features a seal matrix from Welford, belonging to Roger de Moulins, who visited Henry II's court at Reading as Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers in 1185; a fifteenth-century iron stirrup (Cookham); three papal *bullae* spanning 123 years but likely deposited together in c. 1400; and a 25 kg stone stoup (noted as debatably 'portable') of c. AD 1100–1300 from an unknown church but most recently re-employed in Ufton Nervet as a bird-bath.

NEIL CHRISTIE
School of Archaeology & Ancient History
University of Leicester

Bar Locks and Early Church Security in the British Isles. (Access Archaeology). By John F. Potter. 20 × 28 cm. xviii + 144 pp, 217 colour and b&w pls and figs, 11 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020. ISBN 978-1-78969-398-0. Price: £40.00 pb.

The author of this volume, Professor John Potter, sadly passed away in November 2019 and this publication represents some 40 years study on this rarely considered subject relating to churches and their fabric in the British Isles. Bar locks (or 'draw bars', as they are also known) are an often forgotten early (pre-1450) means of securing a building from the inside which could be applied to most openings. In this way, churches, which were often the only substantial building in a village, could offer security to clergy, church workers, the local population and their property in times of danger. Bar locks were in time supplanted by the use of mechanical locks which made it possible to secure buildings from both inside and outside.

John Potter had a geological background, as is evident from the outset, with his consideration of quarrying techniques, styles of stone working of the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Norman stone masons and their application to the dating of extant bar locks.

With the focus throughout being on church security in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, the book is in two parts: the first concentrates upon the nature of bar locks, their development and how they can be dated; the second part expands on the issue of churches as places of security or refuge, highlighting structural changes. As is often the case with topics such as this, it is easier to provide explanations through illustrations and this book is comprehensively illustrated throughout with accompanying tables; the map of a range of Irish churches (p. 127) is a case in point, relating a particular church feature to the landscape. More such maps would have enhanced the impact of the work; however, coverage of such a large geographical area (i.e. the British Isles) is not easy and one suspects that the author also intended to engage with the 'church crawling' community to broaden the coverage of the survey.

Overall, this is a welcome volume which may well also contribute to the consideration of the dating of some of our older parish churches which have themselves undergone so much re-modelling and 'modernisation'.

DR. MICHAEL HAWKES
Diocesan Archaeological Advisor,
Diocese of Leicester/University of Leicester