

area of north-east Spain by Virgili & Kirchner: combining a rich textual and toponymic record and landscape archaeological data they map an altered, colonised landscape featuring diverse crop types, intensified cultivation, marsh and riverside reclamation, plus several watermills – the latter characteristic of Catalan feudal systems. Earlier, dramatic change affecting potential kin or local elite sites in late tenth-century central-northern Portugal is discussed by Tente: seemingly new, compact and wall-and-palisade defended bases containing 3 to 6 families, these lay in a largely independent ‘buffer zone’ between Christians and Muslims, but a majority saw destruction by fire and then abandonment (though Senhora do Barrocal saw revival, suggesting that its occupants managed to retain some authority in the zone), with destruction deposits offering many insights into site economies and contacts.

The volume is rounded off with the topical theme of the potential impacts of climate change on settlement and economics. The two papers tackle different periods: Solheim & Iversen exploit the block of 855 radiocarbon dates for 66 farms and houses in south-east Norway to question if declining numbers from the mid-sixth century relate to documented climate and plague events; and Theune addresses possible environmental impacts on both gold-mining activity (workers, supplies, transportation) and animal husbandry in late medieval and early modern Alpine Austria (Tauern region).

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***Power & Place in Europe in the Early Middle Ages.*** (Proceedings of the British Academy 224). Edited by Jayne Carroll, Andrew Reynolds & Barbara Yorke. 16 x 24 cm. xxi + 506 pp, 123 b&w pls and figs, 13 tables. Oxford: Oxford University Press, for the British Academy, 2019. ISBN 978-0-19726658-8 (ISSN 0068-1202). Price: £105.00 hb.

With its roots in a conference held at UCL in 2011, itself part of a Leverhulme-Trust funded project (2010–21) on ‘*Landscapes of Governance: Assembly Sites in England, 5th–11th Centuries*’, this sizeable volume features a full 23 contributions across 20 papers (plus the editors’ valuable extended introduction and overview), including scholars not part of the 2011 event. There has been a time-lag in the publication coming out: a few authors note completion of their texts in 2012/13, and the Preface acknowledges how submissions saw revisions and updates during the gestation period. While a shame to have been delayed (and, sadly, one contributor, Lars Jørgensen, an expert on Danish elite sites, passed away in 2016), nonetheless, the publication forms an important gathering of case studies and insightful discussions on foci of assembly (for elites, authorities and commoners) and their written and archaeological traces across early medieval Europe.

This review cannot cover all the articles presented, but outlines the main contents and highlights some of the contributions on show. The volume’s Part I: ‘Assemblies, Meeting Places and Negotiation’ features nine papers, including four on Scandinavia. Among the latter, Halldis Hobæk shows how a combined analysis

of textual, toponymic and topographic evidence in western Norway magnifies numbers of known and presumed locations of major to local assembly or *thing* sites from a mere six to 83 examples (though with few bearing, as yet, archaeological guides). Intriguing are those recognised by cooking-pit assemblages, here discussed by Marie Ødegaard for the large farm sites of Lunde and Bommestad in south-east Norway in particular, although this mass-meal activity (Lunde has c. 1000 pits, many evidently reused), if with pre-Roman Iron-Age roots, does not generally extend beyond the fifth century AD. In Lunde’s case, the documented medieval *thing* site was likely relocated, perhaps to enhance its formal judiciary role. Importantly, other assembly-oriented chapters stress the diverse scales and status of these sites and events: Levi Roach (flagging how ‘Assemblies are very much “in” research-wise, especially on an interdisciplinary level’) emphasises ‘regnal assemblies’ (or ‘meeting places of the *witan*’), such as those called by King Edgar at Bath and Chester in 973, for which texts offer insights into the players, stages/venues and audiences; John Baker highlights how some Anglo-Saxon meeting-place-names bear heroic, regal or even saintly connotations to emphasise authority and common bonds; and Stuart Brookes’ investigation of early Anglo-Saxon south-east England pinpoints meeting, execution and high-status burial foci often in topographically prominent and symbolic points, sometimes coinciding with prehistoric monuments and burial mounds, thereby tying past and present authorities and peoples together. In Norway (as elsewhere) crosses might be set up to ‘Christianise’ these sites; the Church’s role as convenor and arbiter is reflected in evidence from both Lombard Italy (paper by Alexandra Chavarria Arnau) and early medieval Castile (Julio Escalona), indicating spaces in front of rural churches used for village meetings and decision-making; indeed, in Italy, many notarial acts from the eighth century on were signed and witnessed at churches. Escalona notes, however, that for Castile, until the later eighth century, many rural sites lacked a church; did their communities necessarily gather elsewhere at a designated church or might their local cemetery have been used instead?

Part II turns to ‘Landscapes of Power’, featuring 11 papers and widening out discussion to see other built, spatial and material manifestations of authority (state/royal/lordly/monastic/ecclesiastical) and their impacts on aspects of social organisation, economic display and settlement design; there are also papers on the ‘language of justice’ and disputes by Wendy Davies for northern Iberia and on early medieval English mints, moneyers and outputs by Rory Naismith (stressing the *who* more than the *where*, but showing minting might happen where it was needed, not just at urban power-bases). Instructive are two papers on how monasteries could be active in politics (Ian Wood on Luxeuil in the Burgundian Kingdom) and land control and exploitation (Elizabeth Fentress & Caroline Goodson on Villa Magna in central Italy), while extended histories of control can be seen as exploited by diverse powers, such as in the Plain of Kosovo (Felix Teichner), but were more difficult to harness in south-east Wales, where early medieval kingship was weaker and less able to impose a coherent landscape of power (Andy Seaman). Stimulating are contributions that look at emergences of

states, politics and power-zones, namely those by Andrew Reynolds for Anglo-Saxon England generally (modelling three developmental stages), by Christopher Scull for south-east Suffolk, by Patrick Gleeson for the multiple ritual landscapes of Cashel and Munster in Ireland, and by Egge Knol for the extended coastal lands of Frisia, here interpreting a mix of archaeology (e.g. sites, objects, boats).

Perhaps simply a problem with my own review copy (though that seems rather unlikely), the print publication was marred by residual typographical/copy-editing elements or problems with formatting and spacing. For example, on the Contents page the Chapter 5 title has '...Norway Regional...' which is repeated on the title page of the actual paper (p.107); similar issues are evident twice on the facing page 106 (and likewise in the Introduction, with six instances on p.18). Spacing slips occur in various points, such as in footnotes (e.g. p.76 n.49 has 'Eagles pers.c omm.2007') and in captions, for example in Chapter 3 where numbers seem to be 31, 32, 35 instead of 3.1, 3.2, etc. and a space often comes after the first letter of the first word (e.g. p.65 with 'Figure 31 Distribution'). There are also issues with the left-page header for authors' names across Chapter 7. I might further note that various b&w images were not very crisp (Figures 7.1, 13.5 and 17.5 being examples); in some cases the original colour plates were probably much clearer.

These niggling points aside, there is plenty of excellent and stimulating research on show here; the range of papers and approaches certainly makes this a volume worthy of close scrutiny by any scholar engaged with Europe in the Early Middle Ages.

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***The Shaping of the English Landscape. An Atlas of Archaeology from the Bronze Age to Domesday Book.*** (Oxford University School of Archaeology: Monograph 82). By Chris Green & Miranda Creswell. 20 x 28 cm. vi + 123 pp, 136 colour pls and figs. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2021. ISBN 978-1-80327-0060-9; epub: 978-1-80327-061-6. Price: £35.00 pb.

This attractive volume arises from the *English Landscapes and Identities* (EngLaId) project and constitutes a companion to the 2021 monograph of the same name. Two outstanding features of the EngLaId project are, first, its collation and interrogation of several vast national datasets; and, second, its integration of artist Miranda Creswell into a multi-faceted team of archaeologists. Both of these features are at the fore in this book, a collaboration between Creswell and EngLaId's GIS expert Chris Green, which provides a strikingly visual commentary on the project: nearly every page displays one of Green's maps/graphs or Creswell's artworks (and, sometimes, both combined). The result is both thought-provoking and a pleasure to browse – including, notably, the blended methods and philosophies of the closing chapter.

Inevitably, the dataset cannot remain up-to-date (dated on p. iv to 2012), but its staggering size (over 900,000 records) offers reassurance as to its

representativeness. By way of context and as a refined measure of this representativeness, Chapter 1 presents a range of views on archaeological 'affordance' – the likelihood of sites of certain types or periods being archaeologically detectable across different regions. Using the distribution of Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries as a proxy for ceramic usage is rather mysterious, but overall this chapter's findings have important implications for inter-regional archaeological studies.

Most of the rest of the book is arranged into thematic chapters, each examining a different feature, function or activity in the landscape (such as 'settlement' and 'belief'), spanning 1500 BC to AD 1086, within the modern borders of England. Most of the maps in these core chapters plot the presence or density of a particular class of monument, such as roads, metalworking sites or churches. Their clarity, in presentation and exposition, is admirable. There are occasional spelling mistakes and empty cross-references, and the inferences drawn from the multitude of maps are sometimes a little vague, telling (rather than necessarily showing) us that particular patterns are useful or interesting. Some of the observations on distributional patterns (such as the mismatch between the Danelaw and open-field landscapes) are not necessarily surprising, but the sheer breadth and depth of the evidence compiled and analysed in this volume – together with the skilful interleaving of original artwork – make this an essential and characterful atlas for anyone undertaking large-scale archaeological studies of England. The availability of a free digital edition is a welcome bonus.

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***Planning in the Early Medieval Landscape.*** (Exeter Studies in Medieval Europe). By John Blair, Stephen Rippon & Christopher Smart. 16 x 24 cm. xv + 351 pp, 100 b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1-78962-116-7. Price: £80.00 hb.

This volume explores the medieval use of gridded planning using standardised measurements to lay out rural settlements within the present country of England. It takes as its starting-point Blair's previously published suggestion that in England a number of rural settlements of seventh- to ninth-century date were laid out using precisely measured, planned, regular grids repeating squares of standard dimensions of 15 or 18 perches, in a modular manner analogous to that observed in some medieval buildings. This volume seeks to advance understanding of this type of settlement planning: to establish its chronology and geographical extent, to investigate its tenurial context – i.e. who it was that required settlements to be planned in this way – and, finally, to establish why this was done.

The research analysed nineteenth-century first-edition Ordnance Survey maps to identify relevant settlements and then consulted archaeological evidence for possible corroborative support for grid planning. Other sites were included to avoid missing those where medieval grid plans might not have survived to be mapped by the early OS surveyors, including deserted