

excavations just to the south; no hearth was identified, but truncation by post-medieval cultivation could be the cause. Further radiocarbon dates confirmed fifth- to seventh-century usage. The lack of pre-modern dateable material beyond this period is notable.

Much of the volume addresses new work at other enclosures in the immediate vicinity, involving extensive geophysical survey as well as excavation. This identified early medieval activity and possibly a roundhouse at Lisnamanroe, with radiocarbon dates here endorsing settlement between the fifth and sixth centuries. At Lisheenagreine, a double-ditched enclosure was explored, with an internal souterrain (first identified in the nineteenth century) and a large pit; radiocarbon dates support site usage mostly in the eighth to tenth century, though two dates generated were of the fifth- to sixth-century. Small-scale excavations were carried out at two further enclosures and a souterrain, but without major results.

Diverse papers are collected as 'specialist studies' and include an edited text of the medieval poem on Ráith Raithleann; a review (not obviously connected to the sites) of the tenth- to fourteenth-century political history of the region; a Bayesian analysis of the radiocarbon dates available, demonstrating probable contemporaneity of settlement; a short paper on imported pottery offering a useful update on this material in Ireland; an analysis of the metal-working residues from the recent excavations; and some pollen studies relating to the region's prehistory. The final contributions offer wider reviews, drawing mostly on recent syntheses of Irish early medieval archaeology, although one of these usefully evaluates map evidence for the disappearance of ringforts in early modern times.

The academic strength and integrity of the work are substantial, but the amount of 'overview' could probably have been slimmed down a bit. Occasional overlap occurs between chapters, and not all of the material seems strictly relevant to the archaeological focus. Colour illustrations are used lavishly throughout and presentation is to a high standard in terms of quality of design, etc., but the text as a whole might have benefitted from some kind of 'executive summary' at the beginning and a few more fingerposts at key places. It would have been interesting also to reflect on the relatively short timespan of site use when compared with the longevity of the monuments, still named and known in the landscape as places over a thousand years after they were abandoned.

DEIRDRE O'SULLIVAN

*School of Archaeology and Ancient History
University of Leicester*

Ireland Encastellated, AD 950–1550. Insular Castle-Building in its European Context. By Tadhg O'Keeffe. 16 x 24 cm. 240 pp, 99 b&w pls and figs. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2021. ISBN 978-1-84682-863-8. Price: €45.00 hb.

Castles have always somehow seemed naturally 'at home' in Irish medieval settlement studies, given that so many formed components within a predominantly non-nucleated rural settlement pattern — alongside other forms of secure, defended or enclosed monuments such

as ringforts, raths and cashels — that had ancient origins. Recent years have seen Irish castle studies booming, with several works of synthesis, fresh studies of individual sites and numerous PhD theses refreshing the subject. The key achievement of Tadhg O'Keeffe's ideas-led volume is to offer something entirely new by shifting the prism of castellology to consider the interrelationship between insular traditions of defence and the wider European context of castle-building. Covering the period between the tenth and sixteenth centuries, the text stresses both how sites in Ireland deserve greater recognition on the wider European stage and how developments in fortress building on the island, both before and after the Anglo-Norman conquest and colonisation, can be viewed as part of the European mainstream rather than as traditions peripheral to it.

The volume's style and tone are as distinctive as its scope. Discursive, argumentative at times and always lively, ideas bubble away through an expertly constructed narrative. Innovative thinking is everywhere: prominent, for example, is detailed exploration of the shared ground between traditions of church-building and fortification-building, in a way not often addressed due to the compartmentalised nature of scholarship. In this way and others, the volume opens up new ways of looking at castles that have much wider — indeed, perhaps universal — applicability, with its implications stretching far beyond the island of Ireland.

The meat of the volume is contained in four key chapters sandwiched between an Introduction (Chapter 1) and Conclusion (Chapter 6). Chapter 2 has as its focus 'private' fortification in the periods immediately before and after the Anglo-Norman conquest, in so doing collating a wealth of evidence for pre-Norman 'encastellation'. Here and elsewhere, O'Keeffe does a great job of speaking to a non-Irish audience: the text is especially good on navigating critically and circumspectly through the complex medieval and modern terminology around these sites. Chapter 3 explores rectangular donjons, including exemplars at Trim and Maynooth, while Chapter 4 looks at 'medieval modernism' (high medieval trends) and Chapter 5 considers a 'late medieval epilogue'. The text concludes with some reflections for future research.

Within this chronological narrative, potted case studies focus on sites and their associated landscapes worthy of wider international recognition. Two examples that leap out are Roscommon castle, Co. Roscommon, where O'Keeffe favours a less explicitly colonial explanatory framework for the castle's construction and a less scientific analysis of its form than is usual, instead placing emphasis on its watery wider landscape, which is seen as having ancient ceremonial associations. At Balymoon, Co. Carlow, an unfinished (early?) fourteenth-century castle defined by a plan of continuous ranges around a central rectangular courtyard suggests forward-looking thinking around castle design that is related to planning for an unusually complex medieval household. For settlement historians and archaeologists a key area of interest will be in O'Keeffe's emphasis that castles and tower-houses were themselves settlements and intrinsic elements of the non-nucleated settlement pattern, rather than providing insight into seigneurial re-shaping of the landscape through planning.

With almost 100 illustrations, the volume is enlivened by a superb array of (mainly bespoke) line drawings, crisp photographs and other attractive visuals. Overall, O'Keeffe presents a compelling case that castle-builders in Ireland were not only buying into a Western European culture of nobility, but actively contributing to and shaping as players in a much wider game of power-projection; he is to be congratulated on an inspired and thought-provoking volume.

OLIVER CREIGHTON
Department of Archaeology
University of Exeter

Medieval Dublin XVIII. Edited by Seán Duffy. 16 x 24 cm. 389 pp, 101 b&w pls and figs, 4 tables. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2020. ISBN 978-1-84682-816-4. Price: £29.95 pb.

Assembled in COVID conditions, this collection of essays was brought together in lieu of the annual conference of the Friends of Medieval Dublin but also in memory of one of the champions of Dublin's heritage, Cllr John Gallagher, a man at the forefront of the defence of Wood Quay in the 1970s – although this formed only a part of his social and political commitment to the district of the inner city that he came to represent.

Several papers deal with the outputs from archaeological excavations in Dublin. A fairly small intervention on the site of St Sepulchre's Palace offers Hayden the opportunity to review the development of the palace from the twelfth century; the investigation also tentatively identified an earlier burial ground. A fairly extensive review of excavated ecclesiastical enclosures in Ireland by Harney, though interesting, has more tenuous links to the city. The late-medieval and early modern leather-working industry is particularly well served in this volume. First, in an update on work at St Thomas's Abbey, Duffy presents a series of results relating to different phases of the site: here, part of a cemetery pre-dating the abbey was explored as well as the north wall of the abbey precinct; while an extensive complex of pits distributed within and between tenement plots just north of the abbey seems mostly related to tanning in the aftermath of the Dissolution. A revised timeline for the use of the abbey site is also provided. Giacometti reviews the excavation of a large medieval and post-medieval tanning complex at Blackpitts; over 100 pits were distributed within burgage boundaries, offering strong evidence for a tanning quarter spanning several generations and multiple workshops. Different stages of the tanning process could be clearly identified from the character of the pits and their fills, including their distinctive odours. The penultimate paper is a well-illustrated study of a leather assemblage from Chancery Lane, where the distinctive styles of brogues and shoes are reviewed.

There is plenty of interest in the volume's more historically focussed papers, which include a group of papers by Bhreathnach, Smith and Sullivan debating the singularity or otherwise of Dublin's ecclesiastical arrangements. Casey explores the relationship between coin minting in Dublin and the rise in the value of cattle in the twelfth century; Whelan discusses the ways in

which the popular legend of Tristan and Isolde offers insights into how Dublin and the Irish were viewed from a European perspective; Coleman explores the records of late-medieval parliamentary subsidies in Co. Dublin, highlighting their strong link with defence, especially the building of tower houses; and Jones offers a study of one of Dublin's later medieval elite families, the Marewards.

The publication series is clear testimony to the continuing dynamism of multidisciplinary debates about the development of Dublin, embracing internal tensions as well as connections with hinterlands and the wider networks that connected it to other places far and near. In line with the challenges of the time, it is good to see some of the new COVID-generated resources made accessible to a wider audience on the Friends of Medieval Dublin website; this includes a playlist of virtual walks of the city and other resources and links: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzbBWN0Ddk1ly631QjYF2KQ>

DEIRDRE O'SULLIVAN
School of Archaeology and Ancient History
University of Leicester

Fen and Sea. The Landscapes of South-East Lincolnshire AD 500–1700. By I. G. Simmons. 19 x 25 cm. xxxv + 202 pp, 27 colour and b&w pls and figs, 8 tables. Oxford & Philadelphia: Windgather Press/Oxbow Books, 2022. ISBN 978-1-91118-896-4; epub: 978-1-91118-897-1. Price: £34.99 pb.

Reclaimed coastal wetlands are one of the most distinctive *pays* in the British landscape, and this fascinating book describes the development of a previously neglected marshland landscape in south-east Lincolnshire, from the early medieval period through to c. 1700. The study area lies on the northern side of the Wash, between the modern towns of Boston and Skegness.

The wide range of source material used in this study is very helpfully summarised at the start of the book, followed by an introduction to the 'scope and direction' of the study. Chapter 1 explores the relatively limited evidence for the landscape before Domesday that comprised a complex mosaic of wetland environments that human communities exploited for their rich natural resources while also starting to improve its agricultural potential through construction of fen banks. As Simmons notes, it is interesting how English Fenland settlements at this time were not raised up on mounds, in contrast to the *terpen* seen on the coastal wetlands of mainland North-West Europe. Chapter 2 covers 'The Manor and the Land: High Medieval Times and their Foundations, 1050–1300' – a period that saw a town established at Wainfleet and an increased intensity of landscape exploitation, including a burgeoning salt and fishing industry. We hear most about the heavy involvement of monasteries in both the reclaimed wetlands and the intertidal marshes, although some areas were in lay hands.

'The Later Medieval Era 1300–1500', explored in Chapter 3, was when environmental conditions were relatively favourable to living in coastal wetlands, but this changed in the fourteenth century when there were