'In la terra de Formigine'. Archeologia di un abitato. Edited by Elena Grandi & Mauro Librenti. 21 × 29 cm. 175 pp, 213 colour and b&w pls and figs, 12 tables. Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2013. ISBN 978-88-7814-546-7. Price: €30.00 pb.

A fine late 16th-century panoramic fresco at Spezzano depicts the Formigine castello and habitat (Modena province, north Italy). Its detailing of the landscape, building density and structure types greatly informs this report on the 1999–2006 University of Venice excavations behind the castle's façade. Covering 2,000 sq m, the trenches provided insights into site roots — an (isolated?) early medieval church, growing burial activity from the 11th century, village emergence — prior to the imposition of an adjoining first fortified complex in the 13th century. The early 15th century marked the transfer in ownership to one Marco Pio, lord of Carpi, who imposed a grand castle which enclosed the church but blotted out the old houses and workshops through extensive raising of the ground level. In a tidily organised and well-illustrated publication, various authors detail the excavated data: the editors describe the main excavations (later, Labate outlines trenches made outside the castle) and Gabrielli assesses the castle's standing fabric. Of the finds, besides a tidy late-medieval ceramic, glass and coin assemblage, Moine discusses an interesting range of over 2,300 metal finds, reflecting the presence of a 13th-century workshop (although the actual production spaces were not traced), manufacturing keys, locks, knives, spoons and metal lamps. Metal rings, buckles and buttons meanwhile came from burials and these finds and their analysis feed into the strong discussion and coverage of the cemetery (Gasparin et al), the related palaeopathology (Bertoldi et al, revealing a working population with fair diets) and the analysis of tiles used in the varied 11th- and 12th-century tomb types (Gasparin). Interestingly, the Preface reports a programme of study extended to other castles in the Modena region, some badly hit in the May 2012 earthquake; the Formigine excavation thus provides a valuable foundation to this wider project.

NEIL CHRISTIE *(University of Leicester)*