

*Nonantola 5. Una comunità all'ombra dell'abate. I risultati degli scavi di piazza Liberazione (2015).*  
(Insegnamento di Archeologia Medievale — Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia). Edited by Mauro Librenti & Alessandra Cianciosi. 21 × 29 cm. 102 pp, 120 colour and b&w pls and figs, 23 tables. Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2017. ISBN 978-88-7814-827-7. Price: €25.00 pb.

This latest Nonantola volume adds an important new layer to the studies undertaken on the medieval abbey, its habitat and its territory in a collaborative project between the Comune di Nonantola (in the province of Modena) and archaeologists from the University of Venice since 2001. While a sixth volume is in preparation, focussed on investigations within the abbey itself, this present publication is a compact but detailed and well-presented analysis of the evidence from excavations undertaken across c 1000 square metres in the habitat's Piazza Liberazione in conjunction with repaving and services work here. In relation to location, while Fig 1 offers a basic location map and outline plot of the borgo and its 14th-century circuit, there is no figure illustrating its relationship to the abbey — ie to show how it is 'in the shadow' of this — or to give names of streets or main buildings. The site was known to be important since sondages in 2004 identified part of a cemetery (182 burials) linked to the 'lost' church of San Lorenzo (demolished in the 15th century): the 2015 excavation uncovered 38 further burials (detailed in Chapter 2 as a fairly unhealthy group) but also c 70% of the church itself. While heavily robbed and without floor levels, the foundations for the second-phase (12th-century) church (25 m × 11 m) survived; within was traced the robbed phase-one church (15 m × 8 m) of the mid-11th century AD. Elsewhere in the piazza 9th- to 11th-century timber units (some with hearths) were identified, suggestive of an attendant village to the abbey, perhaps providing labour and craftworking. The building of the (parish) church of San Lorenzo clearly marked an expansion and formalisation of this community. Ceramics and faunal and other finds link mainly to the church periods and include five 10th- to 12th-century coins.

NEIL CHRISTIE (*University of Leicester*)