

*Archeologia e storia dei paesaggi senesi. Territorio, risorse, commerci tra età romana e Medioevo.* (Biblioteca del Dipartimento di Archeologia e Storia delle Arte – Sezione Archeologica, Università di Siena, 21). By Stefano Bertoldi, Manuele Putti & Edoardo Vanni. 21 x 29 cm. 138 pp, 57 colour and b&w pls and figs, 1 table. Sesto Fiorentino: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2019. ISBN 978-88-7814-937-3 (ISSN 2035-5351). Price: €28.00 pb.

Most scholars engaged in exploring rural landscape evolution are aware of the extensive mapping and investigative efforts of the Progetto Carta Archeologica della Provincia di Siena, pursued by diverse archaeologists at the University of Siena (alongside colleagues from further afield) for over two decades since 1989, who developed innovative methods of study, recording and archiving, especially via GIS. Surveys extended over 1300 sq km (34% of the territory — a heavily ruralised one, featuring only two main urban foci), revealing 638 sites; there were associated excavations at sites such as the early medieval village of Poggibonsi, the castle community at Miranduolo and within Siena itself. As well as multiple publications, the project has spawned numerous doctoral theses and helped develop museums and local awareness of the 'Modello Toscano' of landscape change, especially in the historic era. This volume is a very welcome synthesis of data (archaeological, historical/archival, cartographic, environmental), approaches, ideas and models centred on landscape evolution and exploitation.

The three authors draw on their doctoral theses and on work since, first outlining in an introductory paper the combined project approaches and recent theoretical leanings. Three chapters by Bertoldi provide essential (and well-illustrated) overviews and discussions, first on the settlement data in the 1st millennium AD (showing, for example, 1st-century peaks, the 7th-century low, 10th-century expansion) and site types (including 39 villas, mostly quitted in the 5th century, but a number seeing partial reuse/exploitation; and village formation); then on road and river networks and site connections; and then on economic indicators via ceramic industries and imports. Putti's two contributions comprise a compact assessment of lands and ownership in the middle Ombrone valley and a composite analysis of agricultural activity based on the archaeobotanical evidence linked to four elevated early medieval sites, informed by the early 19th-century Catasto Leopoldino landuse maps. Vanni cleverly pieces together and reflects on the evidence for the nature, extent and strategies of transhumance (or, more broadly, 'sistemi agro-silvo-pastorali') in southern Tuscany, assessing routeways or 'economic corridors' as well as the scattered built, material and ethnographic evidence. Combined — as stated in the Conclusions — these diverse papers successfully merge different types of data, method and analysis to generate a long-term image of the historic Sienese landscapes and point to specific period trends and issues of much wider relevance.

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*San Paragorio di Noli. Le fasi del complesso di culto e l'insediamento circostante dalle origini all'XI secolo.* (Biblioteca di Archeologia Medievale, 26). Edited by Alessandra Frondoni. 21 x 29 cm. 551 pp, 483 colour and b&w pls and figs, 54 tables. Sesto Fiorentino: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2018. ISBN 978-88-7814-804-8 (ISSN 2035-5319). Price: €76.00 pb.

Noli is located c 50 km south-west of Genoa in Liguria province (NW Italy). This monograph details excavations within, around and in the environs of the elegant early 11th-century church of San Paragorio (a cathedral since 1239) and brings to the fore a fascinating sequence of cult, burial, economic, settlement and industrial activity across the Roman to early medieval centuries, highlighting an unexpected maritime connectivity to this sheltered centre. The church's late-Roman period and Byzantine roots were revealed through restorations following earthquake damage in 1887, and in diverse excavations since (early 1970s, late 1980s, from 1990 and to 2004 — the latter campaigns

exploring spaces in front of the façade, long blocked by the railway embankment). Rescue excavations to north and south at the former railway piazza and in Via XXV Aprile, respectively, enhance understanding of Noli's profile. While there are useful contributions on the medieval church (and on other churches in the town and environs) in terms of its architecture, art, restoration and the mid-11th-century Islamic bowls displayed on the apse exterior (papers in sections 20, 18 and 15, respectively), the volume's focus is the later Roman and early medieval evidence for a first church, workshops, trade and context. The site had no Roman urban roots; *Vada Sabatia* to the north served as municipal focus where the coastal road was forced inland. But Noli's deep bay enabled safe anchorage and the archaeology reveals a healthy servicing seaport (with houses and burial ground) from Augustan times at least (section 5.1). Most striking, therefore, is the construction of a baptismal church here c AD 450, with modifications in the 6th century (an epitaph suggests an episcopal seat by then, while sarcophagi signify a prominent funerary focus), and additional works between the mid-8th and later 9th century when a major conflagration occurred (church archaeology detailed in section 6; inscriptions in section 8). The fire destroyed domestic and craft buildings, notably in Area G, where 50 sq m of carbonised beams (chiefly oak) were excavated (pp 157–62). Area G, set close to the baptistery, is important for an industrial building, whose mid-6th-century phase featured an iron foundry; the unit was extended in the 7th century to form three workshops, with the craftsmen also then using copper alloys (section 12, plus archaeometric analyses in section 19.5). Cucini's lucid and informative discussion of installations' working debris (and possible mineral sources) shows that the primary output fits with the period of Byzantine control of what was a frontier province against the Lombards (AD 540s–643); she argues that products went to local forts and to the shipyards. The archaeology is exceptional for the region in also revealing post-Byzantine to Carolingian period archaeology. Various specialists catalogue and discuss a useful body of material finds (ceramics: section 7 — notably common wares and amphorae; organic finds: section 9) and the early medieval burial data (sections 9.3 and 13). Finally, I would highlight the valuable contextualisation of the site and region in section 5, notably by De Vingo on the Lombard–Carolingian epochs. All told, this was an enlightening excavation, one very well served by this detailed and strongly illustrated publication.

NEIL CHRISTIE (*University of Leicester*)

*Polity and Neighbourhood in Early Medieval Europe.* (The Medieval Countryside 21). Edited by Julio Escalona, Orri Vésteinsson & Stuart Brookes. 16 x 24 cm. xviii + 430 pp, 72 b&w pls and figs, 5 tables. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019. ISBN 978-2-503-58168-2 (ISSN 1784-8814). Price: €110.00 hb.

This volume examines the creation and negotiation of neighbourhoods in early medieval polities. Rather than being concerned solely with the immediate localities of early medieval communities, it concerns the multi-scalar expression of community, neighbourhood and belonging, as well as its integration and connection with strategies of political reproduction. It is multi-disciplinary, assembling contributions from a range of scholars across Europe, but centring principally on a group with a fruitful history of collaboration in recent decades based in the North Atlantic, United Kingdom and Iberia. Indeed, the volume is explicitly offered as a 'culmination' for these collaborations (p 2). Ultimately, the concern of the editors to ensure dialogue and debate between contributors has been unusually effective and, as a result, the contributions coherently and holistically address the core theme of neighbourhood from diverse perspectives.

Alongside a wide-ranging and insightful Introduction and Conclusion come 12 penetrating analyses revolving around three themes defined by their scalar concern: (i) social complexity from the perspective of localities; (ii) supra-local relationships and specifically those between localities and higher order political entities; and (iii) the ways in which local settings are the locus of larger-scale political and ideological action(s). The individual papers cover: diversity and change in rural