investment in the 12th and 13th centuries, traced both in standing structures (notably the chapter house), excavated features (belltower; bell-pits/furnaces) and in architectural remains (Chapter 6). Over 150 medieval burials were investigated, but many were damaged by later activity (pp 206–10). Chapter 7 considers first 17th- to 19th-century works and then 20th-century devastations at Aulla, first in a 1920 earthquake and then in 1943–44 allied bombardments (one unexploded 250 kg bomb was excavated in 2003 in the abbey church's main apse). The whole sequence of site activity is tidily summarised in the concluding Chapter 8.

NEIL CHRISTIE (*University of Leicester*)

The nEU-Med Project: Vetricella, an Early Medieval Royal Property on Tuscany's Mediterranean. (Biblioteca di Archeologia Medievale, 28). Edited by Giovanna Bianchi& Richard Hodges. 21 × 29 cm. 206 pp, 160 colour and b&w pls and figs, 26 tables. Sesto Fiorentino: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2020. ISBN 978-88-7814-971-7 (ISSN 2035-5319). Price: €46.00 pb.

This volume reports on fieldwork within a European Research Council-funded project which aimed to assess the material evidence of transformations of the Maremma territory in southern Tuscany between the 7th and 12th centuries AD. So far, the project has generated five volumes and a string of articles, all freely accessible on a dedicated website (<*https://www.neu-med.unisi.it*>); this specific monograph focuses on Vetricella, a royal-owned site, investigated between 2016 and 2019.

As the editors state in their Introduction, Vetricella and its territory were selected for research because they form a valuable case study for coastal settlements and contacts in the early-medieval western Mediterranean. They stress how the excavation campaigns uncovered a new set of data that enabled them to draw out the framework for future research avenues, while extensively reviewing past materials; but this does mean that contributions in this volume should be considered as preliminary, awaiting further studies on single topics/data types.

To open, Lorenzo Marasco and Arianna Briano assess closely the stratigraphic sequence, providing syntheses for each of the six periods of Vetricella's history and archaeology, and connecting them to events documented for the area. Davide Susini and Pierluigi Pieruccini then illustrate the results of geoarchaeological analysis regarding the formation and function of the settlement's intermediate ring-shaped ditch. Next, a group of seven papers explores the material culture of Vetricella: Alexander Agostini assesses the metal finds and metalworking evidence; Briano deals with glazed and painted wares (scientific analyses are included); Luisa Russo focuses on coarse, fine and 'selezionata' wares from two key contexts, while Letizia Castelli analyses glass artefacts, to which Bernard Gratuze's study of blue and bluish glass is directly connected; Alessia Rovelli surveys the site's important coin finds, with notable emphasis on the role of the Pavese mint; and Lorenzo Marasco and Cristina Cicali focus on the coins' stratigraphic contexts.

Serena Viva presents a thorough analysis of the 52 burials dating to between the mid-10th and early 11th century from the cemetery (located near a small oratory), while Veronica Aniceti assesses animal exploitation through the zooarchaeological assemblages. Three papers focus on environmental and landscape reconstruction of the surrounding territory, using a multidisciplinary approach (Mauro Paolo Buonincontri et al), geochemical mapping (Luisa Dallai et al) and via coring (Pieruccini and Susini).

Three final contributions round up the site, studies and significance: Hodges' remarks explore the archaeology of the first feudal age, suggesting how Vetricella in its Phase 2, in particular, could have played an important role in land-use strategy pursued by Tuscan royalty in the 9th century, while Bianchi exploits the site's material culture to draw a picture of the changes occurring between the 10th and 11th centuries, and formulates hypotheses regarding the role of

central powers, as well as of the State–aristocracy relationship; finally, Alessio Fiore analyses specialist production strategies and economic structures through (little known) written sources, proposing some avenues of research.

Despite its admittedly preliminary nature, the volume's prompt publication – just two years after the excavations concluded – is exemplary, making it a rare exception in the panorama of archaeological publishing. Good illustrations and graphs are provided in support; texts are chiefly in English, but with full abstracts in Italian of each.

GIULIA BISON (*University of Leicester*)

L'incastellamento nei Monti Lucretili. Dinamiche insediative e paesaggio rurale tra alto e basso medioevo. (BAR International Series S3027). By Martina Bernardi. 21 × 30 cm. xx + 239 pp, 114 colour and b&w pls and figs, 29 tables. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2021. ISBN 978-1-4073-5750-8; epub: 978-1-073-5751-5. Price: £60.00 pb.

This volume is a welcome addition to studies on medieval Latium, representing a thoughtful contribution to settlement dynamics in the area of the Monti Lucretili; this is a territory of high importance for developing our understanding of Lazio's historical landscape organisation, being an area cushioned between the metropolis of Rome and the Apennines, and with notable foci – from Tibur to Hadrian's vast villa and to Farfa abbey.

Bernardi opens with a detailed summary of the various theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of *incastellamento (castle formation and upland nucleation)*; this is highly appropriate, since *Latium* was the centre of Pierre Toubert's quintessential volume on the rise of fortified settlements in the Middle Ages. Bernardi tidily summarises 50 years of modern debate since Toubert's work, including all the major research perspectives and results; however, as she notes, while earlier debates centred heavily on Tuscany, the horizon of case studies has now widened to much of the Italian peninsula.

Next we gain a concise geographical picture of the area, plus a review and assessment of the archaeological evidence from prehistory until the Early Middle Ages, helping to frame the phenomenon of *incastellamento* from the 10th century AD. Fieldwork and survey evidence for the Monti Lucretili zone in fact detail a fairly sophisticated medieval landscape in which, first, the Imperial Abbey of Farfa and, later, aristocratic families and lords played a crucial role in shaping the settlement network. Chapter 4's close assessment of the written sources facilitates a reconstruction of the castles in the area, and draws together historical maps, aerial photos and related archaeologies; the analysis of building techniques in Chapter 5 meanwhile allows a better profiling of the chronologies of the different sites.

Almost 90 pages are then dedicated to presenting all the settlements of the study zone: this well-organised catalogue forms the fulcrum around which the final chapter models settlement networks from the pre-castles period (8th century AD) to the end of the Middle Ages. Here, Bernardi neatly intersects consolidated interpretative models with innovative and future lines of research on castle emergence and development, their economies and their slow but progressive loss of importance in the territory.

In summary, this publication is a fundamental step forward in enhancing understanding of the complex rise of castles in *Latium*, and in shifting the research debate from Tuscany (and certain northern Italian regions) to the central area close to Rome. It will be welcomed in its overall approach to the phenomenon of *incastellamento* and hopefully will prompt new archaeological fieldwork to confirm the modes of territorial organisation in the Middle Ages.

ALESSANDRO SEBASTIANI (*University at Buffalo – SUNY*)