

*Due storie, una valle. La transizione Antichità-Medioevo nell'Alta Valle del Tagliamento attraverso l'archeologia.*

Edited by Sauro Gelichi, Silvia Cadamuro and Alessandra Cianciosi. 21 × 29 cm. 242 pp, 283 colour and b&w pls and figs, 31 finds Tavole, 8 tables. Sesto Fiorentino (FI): All'Insegna del Giglio, 2022. ISBN 978-88-9285-034-7; epub: 978-88-9285-035-4. Price: €56.00 pb.

Excavations at the later medieval castle of Sacuidic in the Carnia region of NW Friuli province (NE Italy) were published in 2008 and formed a first major output of the Alta Valle del Tagliamento project. This was initiated in 2004, a venture between archaeologists from Venice University and a set of local municipalities (chiefly Forni di Sotto and Forni di Sopra). The project aims (summarised by Sauro Gelichi in this volume's Section 1, pp 11–26) were to trace key moments of archaeological visibility in this magnificent Alpine landscape, to understand the types of settlement and community; sources highlight notable defensive/military/status investment in the 8th–10th centuries and the 12th–14th centuries, while townships like Forni and Ampezzo in the valley floor emerge by the 15th century. This well-produced and strongly illustrated publication concentrates on periods little supported by direct textual sources, yet important for the region generally—the late Roman and the early medieval—here informed through two interesting sites.

Section 2 (with seven parts/reports, each with end English abstracts; pp 27–119) covers the 2006–11 excavations at the hilltop site of Cuol di Ciastiel, located 924 m above sea level, revealing a pseudo-rectangular defended space of 23 × 78 m, featuring two circuit towers and a funnelled entry. Coin finds suggest a first site usage perhaps already in the late 3rd/early 4th century, and then a more consistent presence in the later 4th/first half of the 5th century, which was terminated by a destructive fire, registered in burnt deposits (enabling C14 dating). An official military role is evident for phase 2, based on tower provision, coin finds, imported materials indicating supplied goods, some weaponry and other tools; a small garrison here could have performed watch- and signalling duties, in line with other forts and towers known across the Italian Alpine and sub-Alpine zones and reflecting significant efforts to help protect Italy in the turbulent 400s–430s AD.

Section 3 (six parts/reports, pp 121–208) details the 2007–11 excavations of a compact burial ground at Andrazza, whose presence was first recognised by an Austrian scholar in the 1890s: 20 individual burials were traced, distributed over five areas, while an isolated, stone-built Tomb 1 featured remains of 33 persons: jewellery finds (earrings, arm-rings, brooches, necklaces) in the former tombs indicate a 6th- to 7th-century chronology, while use of the collective Tomb 1 may have persisted into the 8th century. The very shallow archaeology meant

that the burials and bones were in fairly poor condition, but sufficient survived to guide on tomb form, core rituals, sex and ages (burials and finds are catalogued and fully illustrated from pp 157–208).

In the volume's final section (pp 209–39), Gelichi provides an excellent, detailed contextualisation of both sites and their archaeological stories: he talks of the communities evidenced at each, emerging in an area seemingly of limited prior stable settlement activity and marking in their individual ways how this upland region begins to gain a new identity, especially in the early-medieval period.

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