

value for researchers and students, and will deservedly appeal to those otherwise interested in the period.

*Practices of Wealth Depositing* deals with the composition and contexts of 69 'wealth deposits' (deliberately-placed material ranging from single finds to assemblages of more than 1,000 items) from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It is an unmoderated publication of the author's 2014 Cambridge PhD, with both the strengths and weaknesses that flow from this. On the one hand we have prompt publication of up-to-date research, which in this case has the added value of making available to a wider audience important aspects of eastern Baltic archaeology; against this, too much of the book is taken up with literature review and descriptive data presentation. The analysis identifies some interesting and significant long-term trends but is not always wholly convincing either in its methodology or conclusions. Assemblages are defined by principal elements or materials rather than interrogated through a multi-variate approach that might tease out the complexities of collection, selection and deposition, and there is no consideration of how possible retrieval biases might affect the distribution and composition of finds. The characterisation and explanation of deposition practices, and analysis of the broader social contexts, are more conventional than the theoretical introduction would suggest. Any thesis can now easily be made available through a digital repository, and the author (and readers!) should be offered the benefits of peer-review and the opportunity to reflect and re-cast, if monograph publication is envisaged — especially at this price.

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*Le forme della crisi. Produzioni ceramiche e commerci nell'Italia centrale tra Romani e Longobardi (III–VIII sec. d.C.). Atti del Convegno (Spoleto–Campello sul Clitunno, 5–7 Ottobre 2012).* ("Ricerche" – Series Maior 5). Edited by Enrico Cirelli, Francesca Diosono & Helen Patterson. 21 × 30 cm. 764 pp, 493 b&w pls and figs, 26 tables. Bologna: Ante Quem, 2015. ISBN 978-88-7849-094-9. Price: € 70.00 pb.

It is now over two decades since the publication of *Ceramica in Italia VI–VII secolo* (1994). That publication, and the conference that produced it, sprang from work begun by John Hayes' legendary *Late Roman Pottery* of 30 years before. *Ceramica in Italia* was based on the idea well-framed by Lisa Fentress in that volume: 'This ability to make history from sherds... is, in the end, the only serious justification for archaeology'. *Ceramica* pushed back the boundaries, but there was inevitably a focus towards long-studied areas such as Rome, northern Italy and the far South, and considerable emphasis on fine imported tablewares and amphorae. Nonetheless there was enough diffused information to create a result that was 'far more than a typology of sherds... a picture of 6th–7th century Italy far more late antique and far less medieval than anyone had expected'.

But Hayes issued his clarion call to publish ever more stratified groups, and the contributors and editors of *Le forme della crisi* have done him proud. This new work shows how much things have moved on in two decades. The book (wisely, a single volume) is divided into six sections covering the central Italian provinces — Le Marche, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Lazio, Abruzzo and Molise. The longer chronological span allows comment on some earlier material, essential background for throwing into greater relief changes in the later period. Suddenly Umbria, virtually absent in *Ceramica*, bursts into view with no fewer than 11 papers; Molise, with one sole paper in *Ceramica*, now has six. The importance of these central areas should not be underestimated: they occupy some of the most strategic areas of the divided post-Roman world; the broader crisis of Late Antiquity and the specific power struggle between Byzantines and Lombards are played out here every bit as much as in Rome or Naples.

There is a spread of regional papers, but most are the crucial, single-site groups that Hayes called for — essential building blocks for any overviews. Similarly there are no separate sections on finewares and amphorae (though their value is generally noted) since, with a few exceptions of very late material and far flung areas, there is less to gain from continued, detailed publication. Instead, energies are diverted to new areas, such as distinctive local and regional wares, including red painted ware, burnished ware and Combed Slipped Ware. The last (with a name coined by Helen Patterson and myself), previously poorly known, now sees wider distribution, with a major group including complete examples reported from the city of Spoleto. There can be no firm

conclusions yet: it is clear that the Lombards, once settled in Spoleto, did not have production of Combed Slipped Ware as their main priority (assuming it was they who made it) — but its presence means *something*. Instances like this, taken together, help us, as Patterson says, to raise ‘questions of cultural and historical importance through the ceramic record’.

If forced to raise constructive criticisms, then clear and uniform maps of site locations would have been useful: some papers give the site name then the two-letter Italian province code — not helpful for the (hopefully many) non-Italian readers. Drawings are sometimes reproduced poorly or at too small a scale — coarseware illustrations at less than 1:3 yield little, while 1:5 can only be a basic guide sufficient for already known material such as imported fineware.

Paolo Delogu, summing up, shows how much has been done, by taking the fight forward to the next stage: ‘...diventa essenziale fare più luce sui secoli successivi al VII–VIII ma anche il IX, che sembrano poco caratterizzati’. Hayes’ call has been heard and, as this invaluable volume reveals, well answered.

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*Castles and the Anglo-Norman World. Proceedings of a Conference Held at Norwich Castle in 2012.* Edited by John A Davies, Angela Riley, Jean-Marie Levesque & Charlotte Lapiche. 22 × 29 cm. xxv + 302 pp, 273 colour and b&w pls and figs. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2015. ISBN 978-1-78570-022-4. Price: £48.00 hb.

This substantial volume is the product of a 2012 conference held at Norwich castle under the auspices of a project on ‘Norman Connections’. Characterised by broad coverage and the presentation of fresh perspectives from new primary research, it centres on the archaeology and history of castles across the Anglo-Norman world, viewed within their multiple contexts and enriched by input from landscape history, architectural scholarship and heritage and museum studies. English and French scholars present 18 full papers, following an Introduction by the four editors and a thought-provoking Foreword on ‘Living in the twelfth-century cross-channel empire’ by David Bates that explores issues of multiculturalism and mutable identities in the late 11th and 12th centuries.

There are three papers on Norwich castle (Elizabeth Popescu, Brian Ayers and T A Heslop), and case studies of Colchester (Peter Berridge) and Rochester (Marc Morris), while Pamela Marshall provides a masterful synthesis of current thought on the multiple uses of donjons. Roland B Harris presents the results of a new programme of dendrochronological sampling, petrographic analysis and documentary research to shed light on the earliest phases of the White Tower of London. For such a supposedly well known structure, it is remarkable how this programme provides clear evidence for a previously unsuspected break in construction, probably starting c 1079–83, that is unlikely to have been less than seven years in duration and which has important implications for our understanding of the role of Bishop Gundulf of Rochester in the building project.

For Normandy we have an analysis of Falaise (Charlotte Lapiche and Benoît Panozzo) and two papers on Caen (Jean-Marie Levesque and Pascal Leroux on the castle as a whole, and Edward Impey and John McNeill on its great hall). These castles are mainly large royal, ducal or episcopal fortifications; there is rather less on the earth and timber castles that were arguably the most typical signature of Anglo-Norman lordship in the landscape. An exception is an informative, scoping paper by François Fichet de Clairfontaine on the current state of research in lower Normandy, which takes account of almost 800 fortified sites of the 10th–13th centuries and charts an impressive catalogue of mottes and ringworks that have seen serious archaeological intervention. Elsewhere, Pierre Bouet discusses the numerous visual representations of castles and non-defended buildings such as halls on the Bayeux Tapestry, exploring how its creators drew on iconographic convention while having precise knowledge of architectural reality. Jon Gregory and Robert Liddiard discuss the setting and visibility of donjons using GIS-enabled viewshed analysis; they shrewdly explore the difference between visibility and prominence to reveal that builders did not necessarily choose the most visible sites, but rather locations providing opportunities for display.