The precise course of the Perimeter earthwork raises questions about its intended function. It encloses an area of inhospitable wetland and, most significantly, it excludes the higher ground of Henah Hill, which overlooks the 'fortified' interior of the site. When viewed alongside the great size of the enclosed space, these considerations question the defensive value of the earthworks and point towards other hypotheses: delimiting a space for special gatherings, symbolism in relation to religious functions or a practical role linked to the management of animals, the latter perhaps supported by the presence of peripheral earthworks, such as the Scots Dike, which runs for over 10km to the River Swale.

The volume also correctly emphasises the unusual importance of goods imported from the Roman world during the decades before Britain was annexed as a province. For example, an assemblage of luxury tablewares of mid first-century AD date, including an exceptional vessel made of obsidian, is considered to have been a diplomatic gift and a sign that Stanwick was a place of an indigenous authority.

The overall site interpretation draws on comparisons with 'royal' sites in the south of Britain, such as Colchester, St Albans and Silchester. Comparable archaeological evidence, including complex and extensive earthworks and prestige goods, supports the textual accounts for the presence of an elite actively involved in the growing role of Rome in Britain, leading eventually to military occupation. These comparisons support the plausible hypothesis that Stanwick was 'Cartimandua's capital', latterly serving as a client and buffer for the area directly controlled by Rome to the south—a situation finally brought to an end by Roman military operations during the AD 70s.

The volume questions the reconstruction of social and political power amongst the Brigantes on the basis of the ancient textual sources. Instead, the archaeological data show that regional societies at this time experienced accelerated development including significant population growth, the diversification of settlement types and an increase in long-distance contacts, at least partly connected to Roman expansion. The emergence of extensive sites—sometimes designated by British archaeologists under the oxymoron of the 'territorial *oppidum*'—their lack of evident defensive function, their strong association with royal dynasties and their late date, make these sites distant relatives of the continental *oppida*. At the very least, they express the same irreversible trends recognisable within other indigenous societies at the time of Roman expansion.

Following Wheeler's work, this volume represents the second sustained attempt to understand one of the major prehistoric sites of northern England. Yet one cannot fail to wonder what a third project would discover, as it is evident that the research of the 1980s, carried out with limited means, has not exhausted the subject. Such future work might include landscape regression analysis, for which LiDAR has great potential, as suggested by the single LiDAR image included in the current volume—rich in information but little exploited, probably because of its late availability (2012). Other techniques might include extensive geophysical survey; again, limited application has already yielded excellent results. One can also wonder about the palaeoenvironmental potential of the central wetland of Mary Wild Beck, and Bayesian modelling could certainly integrate a wider spectrum of chronological indicators such as Roman finewares. Finally, the remarkable conservation of the archaeological remains examined at The Tofts urges future archaeologists to expand the 1200m^2 excavated during the 1980s in order to explore a larger sample of Cartimandua's capital.

Vincent Guichard
BIBRACTE—Centre archéologique européen, Glux-en-Glenne, France (Email: vg@bibracte.fr)

David J. Breeze. *Bearsden: a Roman fort on the Antonine Wall*. 2016. xxxii+405 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; 978-1-90833-208-0 hardback £30.

For a short time during the second century AD, the frontier at the north-west extremity of the Roman Empire lay 150km north of Hadrian's Wall, stretching between the Firth of Clyde and the Firth of Forth: the Antonine Wall. This volume concerns the results of excavations at one of the forts, located towards the western end of the wall. The fieldwork at Bearsden was conducted between 1973 and 1982, so this report has been a long time coming—but

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it has been worth the wait. It is a splendid and comprehensive publication that has greatly benefited from recent developments in analytical techniques, particularly in relation to bioarchaeological remains and artefactual evidence. Its 400 or so pages are lavishly illustrated in colour with extremely well-produced and clearly labelled plans, photographs, and artefact and reconstruction drawings.

The volume follows a standard excavation report format, commencing with a brief summary of previous work at the site and an overview of the excavations of the fort's structural components. Of particular note is the well-preserved bath house located in an 'annexe' on the east side of the fort; the annexe appears to have been constructed at the same time as the fort and is divided from it by a turf rampart. These initial chapters are followed by the specialist reports, comprising over half of the volume, and include chapters on soils, stone, brick and tile, pottery, glass, intaglios, metalwork, coins, bone and leather. The chapters on mortaria and archaeobotanical and archaeozoological remains are especially noteworthy, providing important information about how the fort functioned, how the garrison was supplied and on the identity of the unit stationed at Bearsden. For example, the chapter by Hartley on mortaria demonstrates that these ceramic vessels were manufactured in the vicinity of the fort, but that they can be attributed to a potter, Sarrius, who had workshops hundreds of kilometres to the south in the Midlands. Similarly, McLaren's report on the infrared analyses of charred material adhering to potsherds identifies the presence of imported durum wheat. These specialist reports are followed by a discussion that draws out the full significance of the results and interpretations presented in the preceding chapters; it also includes two sections on the spatial distribution of specific artefact types across the fort site and on functional aspects of the artefact assemblages.

There is insufficient space here to give proper credit to all the varied aspects of this valuable volume, so I will briefly outline the two—to my mind—most significant parts of the report: the analyses of the plant remains and of the artefact assemblages and distributions.

The 60-odd page report by C. and J.H. Dickinson on the plant remains is predominantly concerned with waste that was emptied from the latrine into the outer east ditch of the fort, and which provides a wealth of information on the plant-based diet of the fort's occupants and on the importation of foodstuffs from Rome's other western provinces. The report also highlights the uses of other plant materials, from the probable use of moss for personal hygiene in the latrine to the types of wood used in the construction of the fort. The discovery of one fragment of non-native silver fir (*Abies alba*), associated with the headquarters building, is interpreted as a remnant of a wine barrel or a writing tablet, but could equally have come from a piece of furniture such as a chest; pieces of wood attached to hinges from doors and furniture from the *Insula del Menandro* in Pompeii were reportedly mostly *Abies alba*.

The analyses of artefact distributions, by Allason-Jones, and of artefact assemblages, by Giles, are particularly significant aspects of this volume, not least because of the much lamented dearth of such sections in previous reports on Roman excavations. Their analyses illuminate, for example, the evidence for the preparation and consumption of food in the barrack-blocks, with Allason-Jones noting the presence of mortaria fragments in every room of the barracks. Allason-Jones also observes the prominence of evidence for drinking in the bath house, serving to emphasise the sociality of bathing for Roman soldiers, and the lack of brooches and other items of personal adornment when compared with other forts. Giles compares functional categories of artefacts at Bearsden with those from other forts in northern Britain, providing a fresh approach to the analysis of artefact assemblages, although some of her functional categories lack explanation (e.g. 'Utilitarian'). I would have liked more intra-site analyses of entire artefact assemblages in order to compare the use of each building within individual forts and to integrate these two types of analyses better.

One of the important questions for the original excavation and for this volume concerns the identity of the military unit that was stationed there. On the basis of the layouts of the barrack-blocks, the author and many of the contributors seem convinced that the garrison for which Bearsden was constructed was a 64-strong cavalry unit. Yet there is little evidence to support this assumption. The analyses of plant remains, insects and parasites provide almost no evidence for waste from the stabling of horses, and nothing that cannot be explained by the presence of the odd pack animal. Of course, such waste could have been cleared and deposited outside the fort. But apart from one decidedly modern-looking horseshoe, there is no evidence for horse harnesses and other

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such equipment, despite a wealth of metal artefacts. The interpretation of this fort as the base for a cavalry unit is founded on a structuralist approach to the interpretation of building forms that is not backed up by any material evidence.

This quibble should not, however, detract from the importance of the volume. It is an extensive and valuable primary resource featuring many important analyses and discussions with wider implications for Roman studies, including explanations for the presence of North African-type pottery on the northern frontier, for the shipment of pottery from southern Britain and grain from Spain, and for the lack of artefactual evidence in the headquarters building and lack of any evidence for an external settlement around the fort. Yet one question on which I did not find any discussion still nags—why did these forts have annexes?

Penelope Allison
School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester, UK (Email: pma9@le.ac.uk)

Andrea Augenti. *Archeologia dell'Italia medievale*. 2016. 332 pages, numerous b&w illustrations. Bari: Laterza; 978-88-581-2230-3 paperback €35.

In April 1965, votes were passed at the 13th *Settimane di Studio sull' Alto Medioevo*, an annual conference of historians, held at Spoleto, that indirectly led to the founding, nine years later, of the Italian periodical *Archeologia Medievale*. Championed by the French historians Georges Duby and Jean-François Lemarignier, and supported by the archaeologists Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevado and Withold Hensel, as well as General Giulio Schmiedt, the assembled historians at a congress devoted to agriculture and the rural world voted to support: (1) the teaching of medieval archaeology within Italian university programmes, and (2) the use of topographic methods based upon cartographic and photographic resources. At a stroke, from this rarefied Umbrian gathering, medieval archaeology in Italy leapt beyond the fetishism of the monument that manacled (and that still to some extent does) the intellectual direction of classical archaeology, its much older sister discipline in the Mediterranean. By this measure, the value of material culture in its topographic context was catapulted into a historical discourse. Fifty years later, Andrea Augenti has written a major overview of Italian medieval archaeology, effectively replacing Sauro Gelichi's short textbook published 20 years ago (Gelichi 1997). The primary achievement of this new book is to make the reader reflect upon both the achievements of the past half-century and to look to the future.

Augenti's elegantly illustrated book focuses primarily upon the early Middle Ages in central and northern Italy. The later medieval archaeology of towns and the countryside, and the archaeology of the islands, notably Sicily, are treated cursorily. Unlike the British textbook on the same theme (Gerrard 2003), the historiography is also brief. Instead, Augenti prompts the reader with a series of helpful pages illustrating the complex sequence of territorial geographies of medieval Italy. Five chapters then review the archaeology of the city and the countryside, of monuments, of cemeteries, and of production and commerce. The final two chapters reach out to historians and art historians, reflecting ultimately on how medieval archaeology in Italy has contributed to major historical themes, and on its future prospects. And those prospects start with an understanding of the role of material culture in the creation of medieval society. Augenti is correctly impressed by the promise of scientific techniques such as DNA and isotope analyses, and he recognises the potential of archaeology as an instrument for pursuing public archaeology in a country that boasts great 'medieval' towns and villages.

Augenti has been assiduous in providing a parallel visual narrative using a vivid miscellany of images. Not for him Italian archaeology's fetishism with poorly labelled and often self-referential GIS maps and 3D computer reconstructions. Instead, he has championed clear plans, often in sequence, and plenty of (the now defunct) Studio Inklink's sumptuous site reconstructions. These illustrations, accompanying Augenti's cogent prose, provide an admirable introduction to the main achievements of medieval archaeology since its unlikely birth through the votes of the Spoleto historians.

Delving beyond the elegant presentation, it is the historical analysis that will come to define this book. Augenti cites the British anthropologist Evans-Pritchard (1976: 263): "anyone can produce a new fact, the thing is to produce a new idea". So,

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