

Archaeology of Public Estates



About Access Archaeology

Access Archaeology offers a different publishing model for specialist academic material that might traditionally prove commercially unviable, perhaps due to its sheer extent or volume of colour content, or simply due to its relatively niche field of interest. This could apply, for example, to a PhD dissertation or a catalogue of archaeological data.

All *Access Archaeology* publications are available as a free-to-download pdf eBook and in print format. The free pdf download model supports dissemination in areas of the world where budgets are more severely limited, and also allows individual academics from all over the world the opportunity to access the material privately, rather than relying solely on their university or public library. Print copies, nevertheless, remain available to individuals and institutions who need or prefer them.

The material is refereed and/or peer reviewed. Copy-editing takes place prior to submission of the work for publication and is the responsibility of the author. Academics who are able to supply print-ready material are not charged any fee to publish (including making the material available as a free-to-download pdf). In some instances the material is type-set in-house and in these cases a small charge is passed on for layout work.

Our principal effort goes into promoting the material, both the free-to-download pdf and print edition, where *Access Archaeology* books get the same level of attention as all of our publications which are marketed through e-alerts, print catalogues, displays at academic conferences, and are supported by professional distribution worldwide.

The free pdf download allows for greater dissemination of academic work than traditional print models could ever hope to support. It is common for a free-to-download pdf to be downloaded hundreds or sometimes thousands of times when it first appears on our website. Print sales of such specialist material would take years to match this figure, if indeed they ever would.

This model may well evolve over time, but its ambition will always remain to publish archaeological material that would prove commercially unviable in traditional publishing models, without passing the expense on to the academic (author or reader).



Archaeology of Public Estates

Origins of Economic Growth
in a Mediterranean Region
(9-11th Century)

Giovanna Bianchi

Access Archaeology





ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD

13-14 Market Square

Bicester

Oxfordshire

OX26 6AD

United Kingdom

www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978-1-80583-042-9

ISBN 978-1-80583-043-6 (e-Pdf)

© Giovanna Bianchi and Archaeopress 2025

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owners.

This book is available direct from Archaeopress or from our website www.archaeopress.com

Historical Archaeologies Series

The Historical Archaeologies Series (HAS) is a monograph series in the Archaeopress Access Archaeology imprint for studies that explore past societies, considering long-term perspectives, with a particular focus on the archaeological study of literate societies.

The collection is interested in the historical dimension of archaeological research, exploiting perspectives such as microhistory, multiscale analysis, comparative studies, multiple temporalities, deep landscapes, etc. The multiproxy analysis of historical societies is also a key concern, considering not only the extensive use of archaeological sciences, but also more ‘traditional’ sources in a critical and inclusive way. The archaeological study of written records and the documentary study of the archaeological record, overcoming the scholarly disjuncture between disciplines, are among the perspectives that will be enhanced, together with conceptually and theoretically informed approaches. There is also a keen interest in topics, geographies, and initiatives emerging in the periphery of mainstream archaeological research. The series intends also to open avenues to younger scholars and groundbreaking research, covering worldwide geographies.

The Historical Archaeologies Series will comprise:

1. Thematic studies that offer a comprehensive review of the most important current problems in archaeology in a long long-term perspective, in particular the archaeological study of medieval, modern, and contemporary periods.
2. Original research monographs between 60,000 and 200,000 words. Monographs should follow the standard format of an archaeological paper. Papers will be submitted to a double-blind peer review process.
3. Collective books centered on relevant topics related to historical archaeologies.
4. Innovative and experimental proposals aimed at overcoming the limits of current historical archaeologies.



Contents

Contents	i
List of figures.....	iii
Acknowledgements	xvi
Foreword by Richard Hodges	1
Introduction	3
Chapter I - The Pecora river valley and the royal court of <i>Valli</i>	8
1.1 Chronological history of research in a plain	8
1.2 The Vetricella site and the plain between the 8th and first half of the 10th century	12
1.3 Changes between the second half of the 10th and first half of the 11th century	26
1.4 Loss of function and abandonment.....	42
1.5 Reconstructing the geographical and economic organization of a royal estate	43
1.6 To sum up	49
Chapter II - The Cornia valley and the royal court of Cornino	52
2. 1 History of an apparently invisible royal court	52
2.2 The possible organization of the court, and its subsequent break-up	65
2. 3 Other public properties: Gualdo del Re and inland areas.....	69
2. 4 To sum up	78
Chapter III - The Grosseto Area	82
3. 1 The formation of the new landscapes (7th-9th century)	85
3. 2 Between the 10th and 11th centuries	92
3. 3 Public lands in new (possible) historical scenarios	109
3. 4 To sum up	115
Chapter IV - The religious centres in the hinterland	117
4.1 The royal court and the monastery of San Salvatore al Monte Amiata	117
4.1.1 The monastery: from its foundation to the Ottonian era	119
4.1.2 Mining resources	122
4.1.3 Old and new protagonists in a renewed economic system.....	125
4.1.4 Anthropic landscapes	131
4.1.5 Narratives for suggested hypotheses.....	138
4. 2 The royal court and the monastery of S. Antimo in the Starcia valley	141
4.2.1 The history of the monastery	141
4.2.2 The architectural sequences.....	146
4. 3 The Canonical Church of S. Niccolò, Montieri.....	153
4.3.1 Designing a place of worship.....	159

4.3.2 A church, a brooch, and a possible hermit	168
4.3.3 Patrons and sponsors	173
4.4 To sum up	177
Chapter V - A world apart? The mining areas.....	179
5.1 Rocchette Pannocchieschi.....	180
5.2 Cugnano.....	192
5.3 Montieri.....	203
5.4 Rocca San Silvestro	209
5.5 The island of Elba	227
5.6 To sum up	241
Chapter VI - Reconstructing the complexity of the case study: clues to a puzzle	244
6.1 The actors involved	244
6.2 Landscapes	257
6.2.1 Anthropoc landscapes	257
6.2.2 Agricultural and woodland landscapes.....	266
6.3 Production and circuits of exchange	272
6.3.1 Resources and production areas	272
6.3.2 Exchange networks	281
6.4 The timing and rate of change.....	287
Chapter VII - Comparisons	292
7.1 Tuscany.....	293
7.1.1 The Valdarno.....	293
7.1.2 The Lunigiana area.....	308
7.2 The Po Valley area	312
Chapter VIII - The origins of economic growth	336
8.1 Preamble.....	336
8.2 An initial acceleration (9th to mid-10th century)	338
8.3 The beginning of the rise (second half of the 10th-first half of the 11th century).....	340
8.4 What economic system	344
8.5 The slowdown before a new rise (second half of the 11th-12th century)	348
Bibliography	351

List of figures

Introduction

Figure 0.1 - The area investigated.6

Chapter I

Figure 1.1 - The geographical area where the court of Valli was located (from Marasco, Briano 2020, 11).9

Figure 1.2 - Location of royal estates mentioned in Hugo of Arles dower (from Vignodelli 2012, 12).10

Figure 1.3 - The site of Vetricella prior to excavation (photo LAP&T, Siena University).11

Figure 1.4 - Diagram of geomorphological system around the site of Vetricella (from Susini, Pieruccini 2020, 28).13

Figure 1.5 - Geomorphological reconstruction of lagoon areas in the Cornia and Pecora valleys (from Pieruccini, Susini 2020, 162).13

Figure 1.6 - Vetricella. Left: plan of site at the end of the 2018 campaign. Right: drone orthophoto at the end of the 2018 campaign.14

Figure 1.7 - Vetricella. Period I: a) plan; b-c) possible furnaces dug into the ground; d) patches of ground exposed to heat (from Marasco, Briano 2020, 11).15

Figure 1.8 - Vetricella. Plan showing outlines of ditches, and possible metrical units of measurement adopted (from Marasco et al. 2018, 76).15

Figure 1.9 - Reconstruction of site of Vetricella at the time when the three ditches were created (Illustration: Francesco Sala).....17

Figure 1.10 - Vetricella. Period II: a) plan, with tower in centre; b), c) pictures of exploratory trenches in the infills of the middle and outer ditches. Photo B shows middle ditch in foreground, with outer ditch further away (from Marasco, Briano 2020, 12).18

Figure 1.11 - Location of inland mining sites.18

Figure 1.12 - NW section of artificial feeder channel where the paleochannel of the river Pecora was identified and the stratigraphic sequence identified within it, with associated radiocarbon dates (from Pieruccini et al. 2018, 21)21

Figure 1.13 - The course of the former river Pecora/Teupascio and changes to it (from Pieruccini et al. 2021) a) nearby and intermediate sections of the Pecora drainage basin; b) channel with levee upstream from the main calcareous tufa barrier (“La Cascata”); c) the gully cut within the calcareous tufa barrier (“La Cascata”); d) artificial transversal levee in “Padule di Moreta” (white line with circles).....21

Figure 1.14 - a) Illustration with triangles shows main site contexts found during recent multidisciplinary surveys around Vetricella; b) location of magnetometric surveys (from Dallai et al. 2018b, 100).22

Figure 1.15 - Location of archaeological sites found in multidisciplinary surveys in the plain datable to 9th century (based on Marasco 2014).23

Figure 1.16 - Photo with Scarlino Castle (Rocca di Scarlino) on the right, overlooking the plain below, where the marshland lay.24

Figure 1.17 - Vettricella. Period 4.1: a) phase plan; b) archaeological evidence inside the central tower, with marks left by recent farming activity; c) the mortar mixer and the large post-holes for stakes supporting the probable palisade around the tower; d) levels of mortar around the tower (from Marasco, Briano 2020, 14).	26
Figure 1.18 - Vettricella. Period 4.1: part of the mortar facing of the inner ditch, with patches of the later stone infill.....	27
Figure 1.19 - Vettricella. Period IV.1: Occupation strata in the tower during excavation. In the foreground is one of the corner post-holes inside the stone basement of the tower, later systematically robbed, part of the foundation trench for which can be seen in the foreground (nEU-Med archive photo).....	27
Figure 1.20 - Vettricella. Some fragments of goblets (from Castelli 2020, 73).	28
Figure 1.21 - Vettricella. Area plan, showing cemetery area in green (from Viva 2020, 106).	29
Figure 1.22 - Vettricella. Cemetery area: male burials in blue, female burials in red, burials of sub-adults (below age of 5) in green. Part of possible perimeter of religious building in yellow (from Viva 2020, 109).....	30
Figure 1.23 - Examples of ‘small amphoras’ with incised wave decoration (from Russo 2021, 642).....	33
Figure 1.24 - Distribution of ‘small amphoras’ and other types of pottery made from clays sampled in the area between Monterotondo Marittimo and Roccastrada. It is clear that Vettricella has the greatest variety of articles in relation to the raw materials used (from Ponta et al. 2020, 230).....	35
Figure 1.25 - Vettricella. Examples of horse trappings. Most of the finds date to the 10th-11th centuries, but some (eg. SF 178) can be dated to the earliest phase of the site (from Agostini 2020, 39).	36
Figure 1.26 - Location of archaeological sites found in multidisciplinary surveys datable to 10th-11th centuries (in yellow), and contexts already present in previous century (in green) (based on Marasco 2014).	39
Figure 1.27 - Vettricella and the court of Valli as it appeared in the late 10th-early 11th centuries (Illustration: Francesco Sala).	40
Figure 1.28 - Market in red the hypothetical size of court of Valli.	44
Figure 1.29 - The cathedral of Massa Marittima.	45
Figure 1.30 - Panoramic view of the valley below Massa Marittima. In the background, slightly to the left, the bay of Follonica and the coastal plain where Vettricella stood. In the middle, the outline of the island of Montecristo, to the right of it the lower parts of the promontory of Piombino-Populonia, and on the far right, also in the background, the outline of Monte Capanne, on the island of Elba.	47

Chapter II

Figure 2.1 - The promontory of Populonia.	52
Figure 2.2 - An overview of the modern-day area where the Cornino estate stood, showing places mentioned in the text.	53
Figure 2.3 - The Piombino plain. The remaining part of the former wetlands, now a WWF oasis.	53
Figure 2.4 - Geomorphological reconstruction of the lagoon areas in the Cornia and Pecora valleys (from Pieruccini, Susini 2020, 162).	55

Figure 2.5 - The black line, superimposed on the Catasto lorenese (1821), Project Castore Regione Toscana e Archivi di Stato Toscani, shows the route of the Via Aurelia, while the numbers indicate the position of the following sites referred to in the text: 1 Franciana; 2 Casal Volpi; 3 Vignale Vecchio; 4 Vignale Nuovo; 5 Vignale (former Roman villa); 6 Carlappiano; 7 Torre del Sale (reworked map, taken from Dallai et al. 2018a, 30).	56
Figure 2.6 - Aerial photo of Vignale excavation (Archive Uomini e Cose a Vignale-Unisi).	56
Figure 2.7 - Vignale. The large room in the villa with the mosaic.	57
Figure 2.8 - Vignale. Detail of mosaic floor (Archive Uomini e Cose a Vignale-Unisi).	58
Figure 2.9 - The site of Carlappiano showing (in blue) the magnetometry anomalies, test borings, and trial excavations (from Dallai et al. 2018a, 34).....	60
Figure 2.10 - Carlappiano. Orthophoto of excavated areas at the end of the 2016 campaign, and their location within the anomaly (from Dallai et al. 2018a, 35).....	60
Figure 2.11 - Carlappiano. Schematic reconstruction of the salt-works (illustration by Mirko Buono; from Dallai et al. 2018a, 48).	61
Figure 2.12 - Populonia, Acropolis: plan of areas investigated archaeologically, showing areas where traces of early medieval frequentation were found (from Gelichi 2016, p. 364).....	64
Figure 2.13 - Castello di Vignale Nuovo. Left: detail of the walling of the church outside the outer walls. Centre: part of the church's southern transept. Right: a section of the outer walls, presumably corresponding to the late 13th century reconstruction.....	67
Figure 2.14 - Location of the bishop of Lucca's court of San Vito al Cornino, Casalappi and Calzalunga, and of the Gualdo del Re area, showing sites referred to in the text.....	71
Figure 2.15 - The valley below the village of Frassine, where part of Gualdo del Re stood. To indicate how close it was, the arrow in the background marks the site of Castiglion Bernardi, with its nearby alunite quarries.	71
Figure 2.16 - Modern-day thermal phenomena at località Lagoni Rossi, not far from Gualdo del Re.	72
Figure 2.18 - Orthophoto of 16th century furnaces excavated at località Monteleo (nEU-Med Archive).	72
Figure 2.19 - On the right, the hill where Castiglion Bernardi stood, now the site of an Enel electricity pylon; alunite quarries visible on far left.....	72
Figure 2.17 - Detail of Buca dei Falchi alunite quarry, at località Monteleo.	72
Figure 2.20 - Panoramic view of Monterotondo Marittimo.	75
Figure 2.21 - Bird's-eye view of Rocca degli Alberti, showing excavated areas.	75
Figure 2.22 - Rocca degli Alberti (Monterotondo M.mo, GR). Plan of excavation area: the black lines indicate the hilltop enclosure walls.	77
Figure 2.23 - The Cornino estate, showing its possible size (marked in red), and other important nearby sites.	80
Figure 2.24 - Location of general areas of public properties in the coastal zone and hinterland.....	80

Chapter III

Figure 3.1 - The area of Grosseto, referred to in this chapter.	83
Figure 3.2 - Possible extent of lagoon in the Early Middle Ages, showing system of dunes (in white) (from Arnoldus-Huyzendveld 2007, 57).....	83
Figure 3.3 - Panoramic view from Rocca di Castiglion della Pescaia, overlooking the plain where Lake Prile once stood.	84
On the left can be seen the Diaccia-Botrona wetland area.....	84
Figure 3.4 - Location of sites referred to in the text.....	84
Figure 3.5 - Panoramic view of archaeological site of Roselle (from Celuzza, Cygielman, 2013b, 26).....	86
Figure 3.6 - Castiglion della Pescaia. The Rocca can be seen in outline in the foreground.	89
Figure 3.7 - Plan of church of S. Pietro, highlighting masonry parts of the church dating to the second half or early 8th century (in dark grey) (from Vanni 2005, 23).	91
Figure 3.8 - The foreground shows the Salica valley, Loc. Vigna Nuova. In the background, on the left, stands Poggio di Moscona, with the Mosconcino hill on the right.....	93
Figure 3.9 - Plan of valley at Loc. Vigna Nuova, with features identified by means of remote sensing surveys (from Campana 2021, 42).....	93
Figure 3.10 - To the right Poggio di Mosconcino, among the olive trees, the arrow points to the remains of the church's bell-tower. On the left, on Poggio di Moscona, the Tino fortification (Poggio di Mosconcino).....	95
Figure 3.11 - The remains of the large church on Poggio di Mosconcino (from Cirigliano 2020).....	95
Figure 3.12 - Plan of the Tino di Moscona (from Mangiavacchi 2015).....	96
Figure 3.13 - Exterior view of the Tino di Moscona.....	96
Figure 3.14 - Interior view of the Tino di Moscona.	97
Figure 3.15 - Detail of north-west interior section of the Tino di Moscona, showing coexistence of differing masonry techniques, featuring smaller and larger stones laid in courses of varying regularity.	98
Figure 3.16 - Detail of interior masonry of the Tino di Moscona, showing differentiated masonry techniques. The lower and upper sections are divided by two courses, forming a sort of levelling band. Also visible in the lower and upper sections are two different construction phases.	98
Figure 3.17 - Examples of masonry techniques found in the Grosseto area in the 12th century. Above, the masonry technique adopted on the right-hand side of the church of S. Pietro in Grosseto (from Gabbrielli 2007, 261). Below, the technique used in the tower of the Aldobrandeschi castle at Sassoforte, Grosseto (from Fichera 2009).....	99
Figure 3.18 - Details showing range of different masonry techniques in the Grosseto area and further north, linked to similar masonry techniques present between the late 10th and early 11th centuries. Above, left: nave of church at Loc. Torre di Donoratico (LI). Above, right: the outer walls of the same site. Middle: outer walls of mining site of Rocchette Pannocchieschi (GR). Below, left: the masonry technique of the six-apsed church at Loc. Canonica, Montieri (GR). Below, right: the technique present in the facade of the abbey church of San Salvatore al Monte Amiata (SI).....	101
Figure 3.19 - Details showing range of different masonry techniques in the Grosseto area and further north, linked to similar technical circles present between the late 10th and early 11th centuries.	

Above, left: detail of masonry technique used in the walled circuit that ran along the hilltop from the Tino di Moscona. Above, right: a remnant of the outer wall of the mining village of Cugnano (GR). Middle, left: the older defensive wall of the village of Rocca San Silvestro (LI). Middle, right: the outer wall of the site at Località Torre di Donoratico (LI). Below: the technique in the nave of the church at the site of Poggio Cavolo (GR)..... 102

Figure 3.20 - Plan of Grosseto's old town centre. Above: the black dots indicate the presence of archaeological stratigraphy between the 7th and 9th centuries. Below: the location of 10th-12th century archaeological sequences (from Citter 2007c, 433). 104

Figure 3.21 - Poggio Cavolo site plan (from Farinelli et al. 2008, 172). 107

Figure 3.22 - Church of Poggio Cavolo. The later cistern and tower structures are visible on the right (from Farinelli et al. 2008, 179). 107

Figure 3.23 - Remains of the three crucibles found at Poggio Cavolo (from Farinelli et al. 2008, 187). . 108

Figure 3.24 - The river Ombrone, showing part of the hamlet of Istia di Ombrone (on left). Right: detail of the masonry technique of the older outer walls of Istia d'Ombrone 108

Figure 3.25 - The area in red indicates where public/royal properties in the area of Grosseto and Roselle may have been concentrated. 110

Chapter IV

Figure 4.1 - Panoramic view of north-west side of Monte Amiata..... 118

Figure 4.2 - The Monte Amiata area. Locations referred to in the text..... 119

Figure 4.3 - The monastery of San Salvatore (Abbadia San Salvatore)..... 120

Figure 4.4 - Diagram of main roads to which Monte Amiata was connected, by means of back roads.. 123

Figure 4.5 - Monastery of San Salvatore: plan of church showing the various building phases (from Cambi, Dallai 2000, 195)..... 126

Figure 4.6 - Monastery of San Salvatore, features that emerged in the excavation of the chapter house (from Cambi, Dallai 2000, 203). 126

Figure 4.7 - Monastery of San Salvatore. The facade of the church of San Salvatore..... 127

Figure 4.8 - Monastery of San Salvatore: the crypt. 128

Figure 4.9 - Panoramic view of the old town centre of Arcidosso. The summit of Monte Amiata is visible behind, to the right..... 131

Figure 4.10 - Arcidosso. In the foreground, the great defensive tower incorporated in the Rocca Aldobrandesca. The photo also shows the wall elevation in which the main entrance to the building was located..... 132

Figure 4.11 - Arcidosso: Rocca Aldobrandesca. CGI reconstruction of its original appearance (from Nucciotti 2010, 515). 132

Figure 4.12 - Panoramic view showing the belltower of the Lamula parish church (circled), and hilltop tower of Arcidosso (in background), with access side facing the church, and the road that is thought to have connected the two sites..... 133

Figure 4.13 - The parish church of Lamula as it appears today, after renovatation of its facade..... 134

Figure 4.14 - The hill where the site of Castel Vaiolo stands and, in the distance, the low-lying plain

adjoining the area of Roselle (from Nucciotti 2007, 665).....	136
Figure 4.15 - Some of the basins cut into local rocks and boulders (from Pruno, 2018).....	137
Figure 4.16 - To the right: the abbey of S. Antimo. Upper left: the small town of Castelnuovo dell'Abate.	139
Figure 4.17 - The zones in which the properties of Sant'Antimo were distributed (from Frati 2008a).	142
Figure 4.18 - S. Antimo: panoramic view of abbey church.....	143
Figure 4.19 - Monte Amiata viewed from apses of abbey church.....	143
Figure 4.20 - Plan of abbey church. The part now used as a sacristy is circled, with plan of crypt beneath shown alongside (from Canestrelli 1912).	144
Figure 4.21 - The interior of the so-called 'Carolingian crypt' (from Gabbrielli 2008).	145
Figure 4.22 - The abbey cloister. On the left, the facade of the sacristy, with the chapter house building alongside it.....	147
Figure 4.23 - Detail of the masonry technique (with large dressed blocks) in crypt below sacristy. Note absence of breaks in the wall at the point where the doorway is situated, showing that the doorway leading to the sacristy's facade is contemporaneous with this room.	147
Figure 4.24 - The apsidal section of the abbey church. The oldest apse, in phase with what is now the sacristy, is circled.	148
Figure 4.26 - Exterior of aisle of abbey church, abutting the facade of the sacristy, and next to it the interior parts of the chapter house.....	148
Figure 4.28 - Elevation of facade of sacristy and chapter house, showing sections thought to belong to the original phase (in red) (based on an illustration in Frati 2008b, 75, drawing by A. Angeloni.)	148
Figure 4.25 - Detail of apse.....	148
Figure 4.27 - The facade of the sacristy, on the side facing the cloister.....	148
Figure 4.29 - Photo of south side of church prior to 1961-65 restoration, showing sacristy (circled) which at the time was much higher, and with pitched roof. (Fondazione Monte dei Paschi, Archivio Malandrini CM-052-03652-POS, from Gabbrielli 2020, fig. 9).....	149
Figure 4.30 - The facade of the former chapter house.....	149
Figure 4.31 - Comparison between masonry techniques, showing earliest apse at Sant'Antimo (first on left), the Montieri church (middle), The abbey church of San Salvatore al Monte Amiata (right).	152
Figure 4.32 - Location of Montieri and monasteries of S. Antimo and San Salvatore al Monte Amiata.	153
Figure 4.33 - Location of the Canonical Church with respect to the hamlet of Montieri.....	154
Figure 4.34 - The modern-day hamlet of Montieri, with the hill ("Poggio") above it.	154
Figure 4.35 - The Canonical Church. The presumed mine entrance.....	154
Figure 4.36 - The site as it appeared in its various phases of investigation. From top to bottom: at the start of fieldwork, and after three seasons of excavation (photos: University of Siena archive).	155
Figure 4.37 - The site at the end of the final excavation season (photo: P. Nannini, SABAP-SI).	155
Figure 4.38 - Site plan, showing excavated areas.....	156

Figure 4.39 - Examples of late medieval multiple, stone-lined burials found in the internal area of the Canonical Church (photos: University of Siena archive).....	157
Figure 4.40 - Building annexed to the church, Area 1000, Room I. The burial later incorporated within the church annex before and after excavation. One can see the stone-lined grave, and, above in each photo, the two fragments of the large stone slab that sealed the tomb.	157
Figure 4.41 - Building annexed to the church. Marked in red is the curve of the apse below which, in section, one can see the stratigraphic levels deposited after the grave was created. Also visible is the low wall added to the former apse, but not bonded to it.	158
Figure 4.42 - Plan of church and annex, showing internal apse, to emphasize the close similarity in size with the measurements of the church apses.....	159
Figure 4.43 - Above: the apse inside the annex. Below: detail of foundations of one of the apses in the church.	160
Figure 4.44 - Sampling the layers of earth brought in to raise the ground level, prior to the foundation of the church.....	161
Figure 4.45 - The holes associated with the burial of the brooch, during excavation. The brooch is starting to appear in the hole in the bottom left photo.	161
Figure 4.46 - Table showing types of essences, and their amounts, found in the anthracological remains in the fill of the hole containing the brooch (from Buonincontri et al. 2015).	162
Figure 4.47 - Reconstruction of the church (3D modelling by Daniele Ferdani; from Ferdani, Bianchi 2015).....	163
Figure 4.48 - The interior of the church in various phases of excavation. Top left: the layer cut by the hole to enter the brooch, which is still shown filled in in the photo. Right: one of the fill levels. Bottom two photos: the remains of the paved floor. The photo on the right, at the top, the two apses where the raised presbytery area stood.....	164
Figure 4.49 - Photogrammetrical survey of exterior of long side of church annex, with stratigraphical analysis in which USM 207 indicates possible doorway, and USM 203 shows its fill.	165
Figure 4.50 - Comparison chart with plans (not to scale) of churches in Croatia and Dalmatia. Below: comparison between plan of Montieri church and its annex, and plan of St. Michael, Pridraga (drawings to scale).....	167
Figure 4.51 - The Church of Holy Trinity, Split.....	167
Figure 4.52 - The Montieri brooch. Below right: reconstruction by Alessandro Pacini of the fastening system (photo of brooch by SABAP-SI, from Bianchi et al. 2015).....	169
Figure 4.53 - The large fissure in the rock seen from the interior of the Canonical Church.	173
Figure 4.54 - Reconstruction of the possible shelter above the Canonical Church (reconstruction by Mirko Buono, Giulio Poggi, from Poggi, Buono 2018).	174
Figure 4.55 - An atmospheric view of the church, following one of the frequent snowfalls.	175
Figure 4.56 - Monte Volterraio on the right, with Volterra on the left, in the distance.....	177

Chapter V

Figure 5.1 - Location of site of Rocchette and other sites referred to in this chapter.	180
Figure 5.2 - Aerial photo of hilltop area of site of Rocchette Pannocchieschi (Siena University photographic archive).....	181
Figure 5.3 - Rocchette Pannocchieschi. Plan of site showing the four dolines, and the excavation areas (from Bruttini 2014, 434).....	182
Figure 5.4 - Rocchette Pannocchieschi. View of inner northern face of doline C during vegetation clearance (Siena University photographic archive).....	183
Figure 5.6 - Rocchette Pannocchieschi. left: plan of hilltop area showing Period I features (from Grassi 2013a, 40). Right: reconstructed view of the hamlet in this phase (Studio Inklinc Firenze).....	183
Figure 5.5 - Reconstruction of castle of Rocchette Pannocchieschi in 14th century (illustration: Daniele De Luca).	183
Figure 5.7 - Rocchette Pannocchieschi. The hilltop defensive wall showing the part interpreted as the oldest outer wall (in red) (from Bruttini 2014, 435).....	186
Figure 5.8 - Rocchette Pannocchieschi. Left: remains of reduction furnace. Right: reconstructed view of furnace (illustration Studio Inklinc Firenze).....	186
Figure 5.9 - Plan of Rocchette Pannocchieschi, showing the structure possibly to be interpreted as a storage facility (2), and reduction furnace (3) (from Grassi 2013a, 47).....	187
Figure 5.10 - Rocchette Pannocchieschi. Top right: plan of hilltop area showing the two new possible rooms, called A and B. Below: remains of outer walls of homes in the borgo below, with a reconstruction of how they appeared (from Grassi 2013a, 53).....	188
Figure 5.11 - Rocchette Pannocchieschi. The defensive wall, showing its former course (in red), and what is interpreted as a later reconstruction of it (in blue) (from Bruttini 2014, 443).	189
Figure 5.12 - Rocchette Pannocchieschi, Area 3000. View of the two buildings dating to the first half of the 11th century, during excavation (University of Siena archive).....	190
Figure 5.13 - Cugnano. Plan of site showing excavated areas (highlighted) (from Bruttini 2014, 365).	192
Figure 5.14 - Cugnano. Location of main mining deposits attested by archaeological surveys (from Bruttini 2014, 359).....	193
Figure 5.15 - Cugnano. Plan of Area 3000 showing early medieval post-holes (from Grassi, Quirós Castillo 2005, 49).....	194
Figure 5.16 - Cugnano. Part of the defensive ditch, found in Area 1000, after removal of its infill (University of Siena archive).....	194
Figure 5.17 - Cugnano. Site plan, showing structures relating to the period prior to the late 10th century (based on Bruttini et al. 2009, 307).....	195
Figure 5.18 - Cugnano. Cut 1, after removal of part of its infill (University of Siena archive).	197
Figure 5.19 - Cugnano. Cut 2, after removal of part of its infill (University of Siena archive).	197
Figure 5.20 - Cugnano. Cut 3, after removal of part of its infill (University of Siena archive).	197
Figure 5.21 - Cugnano. Site plan, showing the late 10th-early 11th century defensive wall (highlighted), and structures dating to the same phase (based on Bruttini et al. 2009, 307).	199

Figure 5.22 - Cugnano, view of one of the best preserved sections of the late 10th-early 11th century defensive wall.	200
Figure 5.23 - Ficarella. The red arrow indicates the direction of travel of the presumed landslide.....	201
Figure 5.24 - Ficarella. Section showing the conoid (below, delimited by the red line) consisting of earth, rocks, and gravel.....	201
Figure 5.25 - The borgo of Montieri with the Poggio above (photo: Jacopo Bruttini).	202
Figure 5.26 - Montieri. The Le Fonderie building, and its location in the borgo (top right) (from Bruttini 2014).	203
Figure 5.27 - Poggio di Montieri, showing all archaeomining features (from Trotta 2013-14).	204
Figure 5.28 - Montieri, Fosso del Nibbiaio: the circle indicates one of the reduction furnaces found...	205
Figure 5.29 - Montieri, località Canonica: site plan. The circles show the findspots of ancient pottery finds; the arrow shows the cut for the possible defensive ditch.	205
Figure 5.30 - Reconstruction of Montieri castle in 13th century (illustration by Daniele Ferdani, from Ferdani, Bianchi 2013).	207
Figure 5.31 - The Rocca today, seen from the muster point for visitors to the Park. Top right: a photo from the same viewpoint during the period of the archaeological excavations.	210
Figure 5.32 - Geological map of territory around Rocca San Silvestro (from Francovich 1991, 24).	211
Figure 5.33 - The medieval Manienti mine, in a reconstruction by Studio Inklink Firenze, (Parchi Val di Cornia archive).	212
Figure 5.34 - Aerial photos of the castle (from Arrighetti 2017).	212
Figure 5.35 - Survey of castle, using 3D Laser Scanner (from Arrighetti 2017).	213
Figure 5.36 - The open space accessed from the main entrance to the castle.	213
Figure 5.37 - The seigneurial area after the 2017-18 restoration, showing access way (in foreground) and the small hilltop tower (above).	216
Figure 5.38 - Site plan showing the areas explored, and their respective numbering (from Boldrini et al. 1997, 103).	217
Figure 5.39 - Reconstruction of the castle in the 13th century (illustration by Paolo Donati).	218
Figure 5.40 - Location of places of origin of sparse glaze pottery, dated using the thermoluminescence technique.....	219
Figure 5.41 - Rocca San Silvestro. The masonry technique used to build the late 10th-early 11th century defensive wall.	220
Figure 5.42 - Rocca San Silvestro, Areas 9000-9250: plan of the excavation areas, and section (below) (from Francovich 1991, 59).	223
Figure 5.43 - Rocca San Silvestro. The remains of the reduction furnace (from Francovich 1991, 60). ..	224
Figure 5.44 - Rocca San Silvestro. Reconstruction of the iron reduction facility excavated in Areas 9000 and 9250 (illustration by Studio Inklink Firenze, Parchi Val di Cornia archive).	224
Figure 5.45 - Rocca San Silvestro. Plan of Area 9700, showing the forge (top right) with the stratigraphy connected to its phase of use (from Francovich 1991, 60).	225

Figure 5.46 - Island of Elba seen from Piombino. In the foreground are the hills of the mining area of Rio Marina and Rio Elba (photo by L. Barsotti).....	227
Figure 5.47 - Island of Elba and its location with regard to the coast.....	228
Figure 5.48 - Evidence of medieval archaeometallurgy on the island. The red circles indicate areas rich in iron oxide mineralizations (based on Corretti 1991, 25, pl. II).....	229
Figure 5.49 - Above: panoramic view of part of the island's eastern mining district, showing Monte Serra and Monte Strega (from Monni 2020-21). Below: plan of metallurgical atelier on Monte Serra (from Martin 1994).....	230
Figure 5.50 - Island of Elba. The church of S. Giovanni in Campo.	231
Figure 5.51 - Island of Elba. The church of S. Stefano.	232
Figure 5.52 - Island of Elba. Location of the villas referred to in the text, and of the cave of S. Cerbone (based on Pagliantini 2019, 219).	233
Figure 5.53 - The mainland sites where, in early medieval archaeological sequences, traces of hematite from Elba have been found.....	234
Figure 5.54 - Island of Elba. The church of S. Pietro in S. Piero in Campo. Facade and side of church...	237
Figure 5.55 - Island of Elba. Plan of church of S. Pietro in S. Piero in Campo (from Moretti, Stopani 1972, 43)	238
Figure 5.56 - Island of Elba, church of S. Pietro. Left side of the church, showing the outline of the macro-phases. Modern and contemporary interventions are shown in red; the 12th century reconstruction is shown in light blue.....	240
Figure 5.57 - Island of Elba, church of S. Pietro. Detail of upper portion of left side, at the point where the masonry bonded to the 12th century half-pilaster rests on the masonry below.	240
Figure 5.58 - Island of Elba, church of S. Pietro. Interior of church, with recessed apses blocked up by a later wall.....	240
Figure 5.59 - Left: plan of church of S. Piero in Campo showing possible perimeter of the earlier original church (in red) (based on Moretti, Stopani 1972, 43). Right (to same scale): plan of the church with two apses at the site at Torre di Donoratico, showing the older building (in red) consisting of a single nave (based on Notardonato 2004, 35).	241
Figure 5.60 - Centre: the remains of the apse of the church at località Torre di Donoratico. Top right: detail of the church's masonry technique. Bottom right: detail of masonry technique at church of S. Piero in Campo. Top left: detail of internal half-pilaster at the Donoratico church. Bottom left: the half-pilaster on the outside of the nave of the church of S. Pietro.	243

Chapter VI

Figure 6.1 - Location of sites referred to in the text.....	247
Figure 6.2 - Location of sites referred to in the text.....	256
Figure 6.3 - The Torre di Donoratico site between the late 10th and early 11th centuries (illustration by Mirko Buono).....	260
Figure 6.4 - Remains of mortar mixers. Left: the three mixers found at the Torre di Donoratico site. Right (from top to bottom): the two mixers at Vetricella, and the one at Rocca Alberti, (from Bianchi, Collavini 2018).	263

Figure 6.5 - The hilltop site of Campiglia Marittima in the early 11th century (from Bianchi 2004, illustration by Studio Inklink Firenze). The stone-built defensive wall was added by the illustrators despite the absence of physical evidence for its existence.....	264
Figure 6.6 - Schematic drawing of coppiced wood, and a photo of a wood with the same characteristics in the Chianti area.	267
Figure 6.7 - The course of the river Pecora. The red circles show areas with evidence of fires. The yellow circle shows the zone where some of the clearest cases of erosion of, and cuts in, the calcareous tufa are found, such as in the photo (bottom right).....	268
Figure 6.8 - Section of Pecora paleochannel showing stratigraphic sequences and relative radiocarbon dates.....	270
Figure 6.9 - Location of main resources in relation to public-owned areas (shown in red).	273
Figure 6.10 - Map showing circulation of iron from extraction sites to processing sites.	273
Figure 6.11 - Left: diagrams of provenance areas of raw materials in relation to functional groups of pottery analysed. Right: the presence, in the areas analysed, of pottery products made using the sampled clays (adapted from Ponta et al. 2020).....	278
Figure 6.12 - Location of findspots of ‘small amphoras’.	280
Figure 6.13- Location of areas where early medieval maritime ports stood: 1) port of Falesia; 2) portus Scabris/Portigliani; 3) possible landing-stage at entrance to former Lake Prile; 4) possible landing-stage at mouth of river Ombrone.	282
Figure 6.14 - Provenance zones for objects and knowhow found in case study area.	286

Chapter VII

Figure 7.1 - Location of sites in the Valdarno area referred to in the text.	292
Figure 7.2 - The royal courts in the Valdarno mentioned in Hugh of Arles’ dower (AD 937) (adapted from Vignodelli 2012).....	293
Figure 7.3 - Villa dei Vetti, plan of the excavation areas (from Cantini 2017, 10).....	295
Figure 7.4 - San Genesio: The pieve with cemetery, and the production areas (from Bianchi et al. 2019, 332).....	296
Figure 7.5 - Ports, pottery production areas, and pottery movements in the Valdarno in the 10th century (from Cantini et al. 2015, 245).	297
Figure 7.6 - San Genesio: the site between the 11th century and the third quarter of the 12th century (from Cantini et al., 72).	298
Figure 7.7 - Distribution of imported pottery. Above: between second half of the 8th and 10th centuries. Below: between 10th to 11th centuries. The circle shows the area referred to in the text (adapted from Meo 2018).....	301
Figure 7.8 - Scopetulo: plan of hilltop area with structures found during archaeological excavation (from Cantini et al., 2016, 132).	302
Figure 7.9 - Torre Grossa di Salamarzana: internal elevations with stratigraphic analysis (adapted from Santi 2015, 302).....	304

Figure 7.10 - Santa Maria a Monte: plan of structures found by excavation (from Redi 2008, 227)	306
Figure 7.11 - The royal courts in northern Tuscany mentioned in Hugh of Arles' dower (AD 937),	307
highlighting the court of Agullia (adapted from Vignodelli 2012).	307
Figure 7.12 - Monastery of San Caprasio, Aulla. Schematic plan of the monastery, with parts investigated archaeologically shown in grey	308
(from Boggi, Giannichedda 2021, 15).	308
Figure 7.13 - Church of San Caprasio, Aulla. Foreground: the remains of the two earlier apses with the gypsum sarcophagus in the centre. Background: the late 10th to early 11th century apse.....	309
Figure 7.14 - Location of the site of Brina (SP) in relation to Aulla.....	309
Figure 7.15 - Site of Brina (SP). Plan of hilltop features relating to the 10th-11th century transformation (from Baldassarri, Parodi 2011, 72).	310
Figure 7.16 - Location of sites referred to in the text.....	312
Figure 7.17 - The royal courts in Hugh of Arles' dower (AD 937) located in northern Italy (adapted from Vignodelli 2012).	313
Figure 7.18 - Cascina Torre (Frugarolo, AL). Left: plan showing the modern-day constructions, and location of exploratory trenches. Right: photo of masonry, showing use of pebbles, dating to the late 10th-early 11th century phase (adapted from Bougard 1991).....	314
Figure 7.19 - Marengo (AL), aerial orthophoto and Lidar renderings of farmstead identifiable as the former caput curtis (from Zoni 2021).	315
Figure 7.20 - Crocetta S. Agata Bolognese (BO), plan of late 10th-11th century phase (from Gelichi et al. 2014a).	317
Figure 7.21 - Novi di Modena. Site plan showing location of exploratory trenches, and features that can be inferred from analysis of aerial photographs (from Campagnari et al. 2018; by kind permission of the Ministry of Culture-Superintendency for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the city of Bologna and the provinces of Reggio Emilia and Ferrara, no unauthorised reproduction for profit, including indirect financial gain).....	317
Figure 7.22 - Aerial photo of site where the castrum of Triforce stood (from Grandi 2010).	318
Figure 7.23 - Funo, Argelato (BO), plan of excavation showing the main medieval features (from Negrelli et al. 2018).	320
Figure 7.24 - Nogara (VR). Left: site plan, showing interpretation of features. Right: remains of 9th-10th century buildings	321
(adapted from Saggiaro 2019).	321
Figure 7.25 - Schematic plan of site of Bovolone (from Saggiaro 2010).	322
Figure 7.26 - Piadena (CR). Left: plan of early medieval site. Right: the 10th-11th century building ...	324
(from Zoni 2021, adapted from Brogiolo, Mancassola 2005).	324
Figure 7.27 - Castellazzo di Taneto. Left: possible fortification perimeter. Right: orthophoto of the tower (adapted from Storchi, Pansini 2018).	326
Figure 7.28 - Castellazzo di Taneto. The chess pieces found during excavation (from Storchi 2019). ...	326

Figure 7.29 - Monte Castellaro di Groppallo. View of archaeological excavation following the 2011 campaign (from Ghiretti, Giannichedda 2013).327

Figure 7.30 - Monte Castellaro di Groppallo. The steatite production chain (from Bazzini et al. 2009).327

Figure 7.31 - The map (taken from Sbarra 2014) shows the sites that the Author refers to in her text. The illustration can also be used to trace the spread of coarseware production. Apart from sites near the Adriatic coast, most of the sites in the central area did indeed yield such finds.329

Figure 7.32 - Distribution of sparse glaze pottery (from Gelichi 2016).....329

Figure 7.33 - Piuro, località Mot del Castel (SO), general survey of 2019 excavation area (from Zoni 2019).332

Acknowledgements

Unless otherwise stated, all photos and illustrations are by the author.

The following illustrations are by Andrea Bardi: figs. 1.11, 1.15, 1.26, 1.28, 2.2, 2.5, 2.14, 2.23, 2.24, 3.1, 3.4, 3.25, 4.2, 4.4, 4.32, 5.1, 5.40, 5.52, 5.53, 6.1, 6.2, 6.9, 6.10, 6.12, 6.13, 6.14, 7.1, 7.14 and 7.16.

Layout: Marco Repole

Translation: Gavin Williams

Original edition: Giovanna Bianchi. 2022. *Archeologia dei beni pubblici. Alle origini della crescita economica in una regione mediterranea (secc. IX-XI)*. Firenze: All’Insegna del Giglio

This book was made possible by the European Research Council (ERC), under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement 670792), and by the Ministerial FARE Programme: the Framework for Attracting and Reinforcing Excellence in Italian research (project code R162JCCXCL).

Foreword

Parachuting and truffle-hunting in the Maremma

Richard Hodges¹

Fifty years ago, *Archeologia Medievale* established the existence of a discipline that distinguished itself in Italy from *Archeologia Cristiana*. The new discipline answered a call to arms by the French historians Georges Duby and Jean-François Lemarignier, and supported by the archaeologists, Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevedo, Withold Hensel and General Giulio Schmiedt made at the Spoleto conference dedicated to the early Middle Ages in 1965. These advocates sought to create an archaeology that was not devoted to ecclesiastical monuments and art but to settlements and their material culture². They found an extraordinary proponent in Riccardo Francovich who directed the journal, *Archeologia Medievale* from 1974³. But in hindsight, we might deduce that in 1965 Duby wanted the granular evidence of medieval life to lend colour to his wide-ranging textual studies, while Schmidt almost certainly sought an atlas of plans ranging from sites to regions. Francovich, however, with his breathtaking energy had other ideas. The son of a historian, trained in history and medieval topography, he intended to challenge historical paradigms using Medieval archaeology. He was not a truffle-hunter, in Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's sense, but devoted to using the granular evidence, as Le Roy Ladurie did, to become a parachutist that might reinterpret the origins and development of (his) medieval Tuscany⁴. Now, Giovanna Bianchi, a stellar pupil of Francovich, has written a book that far exceeds any of the expectations that existed in 1966 at Spoleto or 1974 when the new journal of record was created. This book will come to be recognized as a cornerstone of a Medieval archaeology that manages truffle-hunting with all the rigour of the so-called Third Scientific revolution⁵, while providing a parachutist's overview of not just the Maremma but of Tuscany as a *regione*, and its Medieval evolution alongside regions with more ample textual documentation in central and northern Italy.

The riches of this volume are immediately apparent. The reader need do no more than flick through the many illustrations. For the most part these are not simple images supporting the argument made in the book, but the product of interpretation and analysis, in support of a paradigm-shifting argument. Such illustrations have become a standard in north-west Europe⁶, but unusual in Italian Medieval archaeology where such resources have had a subsidiary status. The resources of the European Research Council (ERC) grant, rightly acknowledged by Bianchi, have made this approach to visual analyses possible, but of course it is the will to do this with such flair that might have won, for example, the approval of Georges Duby and General Schmiedt.

Then there is the thesis behind this ground-breaking book. It takes its direction from the excavations and research around the royal fisc of Vetricella and advances from there to a conclusion that provides

¹ Emeritus President, the American University of Rome.

² Voto per l'insegnamento di *Archeologia Medievale*, in *Agricoltura e Mondo Rurale in Occidente nell'Alto Medioevo* (Settimane di Spoleto XIII, 22-28 Aprile 1965), Spoleto, 1966, 13; see Hodges 2014.

³ Hodges 2011.

⁴ Cf. Le Roy Ladurie 1978; 1979.

⁵ Kristansen 2014.

⁶ See, for example, Blair 2018.

new thinking about Bloch's first and second feudal ages within the much-developed literature about the evolution of the Italian countryside in concert with its towns. This is truffle-hunting in a manner that would have engaged Le Roy Ladurie's micro-historical analysis. In some senses, Vettricella with its finely-tuned chronology and its remarkable material culture is an archaeological Montaignou. Bianchi takes the idea of the royal fisc of valli (the likely name of Vettricella) and advances to reconstruct the history of the valley, reaching from the Mediterranean to the Colline Metallifere with its key town, a miniature Siena, at Massa Marittima.

There then follows a second example from the Maremma, pivoted on Grosseto, again using the initial discoveries at Vettricella to shed new light on a constellation of sites investigated over the past decades by archaeologists from Siena University including Francovich. Then, boldly, Bianchi advances into the Tuscan interior to pursue her argument within a modern approach to ecclesiastical archaeology, including the recently excavated 11th-century cult site at Montieri. Finally, in this section, she reviews the riches from forty years of investigations of mineral extraction in this region, giving scale as well as shape to the villages that came to underpin the urban revolution in Tuscany. How Francovich who passed away in 2007 would have been thrilled by this chapter. Three chapters conclude this book, each taking the preceding detail and working these into a model that surely would have resonated profoundly with past masters like Marc Bloch and Georges Duby. Here is an archaeologist examining how managed redistribution as opposed to a market took shape between the mid 9th and 12th centuries, and in time, fostered the local conditions upon which the larger inter-regional commerce at emerging towns was anchored. Boldly reaching out beyond Tuscany into northern-central Italy on the eve of the turn of the millennium and after, it is more than evident that her model is not simply a Tuscan story.

Bianchi carefully confronts the prevailing thesis proposed by Chris Wickham that lords were external to the process of production⁷. On this Tuscan evidence, there can be no doubt now that the aristocracy had access to a wider range of ceramics (and other goods) but were also the architects of redistribution strategies emanating from commodity centres at places like this coastal fisc at Vettricella as well as new communes in the Maremma like Donoratico. In the end, redistribution in a proportionate way served all levels of society with places like these rural central-places becoming conceptual but not actual fore-runners of 12th-century market towns. Demand for ceramics, iron utensils and possibly glass was generated not only by the élite but also the peasantry as far as we can see from the archaeology of the range of households from this age described by Bianchi. At the same time standardization in all these materials projected for an emerging state an increasingly centralized and sustainable economy.

As such, in this far-reaching panorama, from a parachutist's viewshed, Medieval archaeology now presents a measured paradigm that will engage historians to re-examine their textual histories about the roots of Italian communal life. Beyond this, Bianchi has provided us with a benchmark that now merits careful scrutiny alongside other regional Medieval histories for western Europe. How one wishes now for such studies of provinces in the France, Germany and the Low Countries. In conclusion, we cannot doubt that this book successfully delivers the aspirations of the founders of Italian Medieval archaeology half a century ago.

⁷ Wickham 2008; 2023, 677.

Introduction

As someone who suffers from mild vertigo, I've always been a little afraid of heights. This is probably why, if I had to choose which category of archaeologists and researchers I would prefer to subscribe to, I would definitely choose “truffle-hunters” over the “parachutists”¹.

That said, however, I would not set much store by the negative connotations that are sometimes associated with truffle-hunters, as being somewhat lost in their own little world, and generally unable to come up with an overall vision. Indeed, I believe it is essential to proceed just as they do, adopting their particular approach to research work. As long as there is an awareness that, to home in on a specific aspect of the historical reality under examination (with the aim of identifying points of general significance), one has to engage in a continual critical analysis of the available sources. Moreover, these sources must be known and assessed thoroughly, especially if they are scant and fragmentary, as may well be the case when dealing with early medieval archaeology. This minutely detailed work is only possible if one uses a magnifying glass, and selects a territory that is not too large. It must also be carefully observed, in the full knowledge that the picture deriving from our case study will be ‘only one of the possible answers, one of the possible realities, that is arrived at by means of general questions’ (Levi 2021, 72). Thus, as every skilled hunter of truffles knows, one has to know how to root through the terrain in question and, without abandoning the big picture (the preserve of the high-flying parachutist), it is a good idea to keep going back to hard facts and actual data, and keep your feet firmly on the ground.

In an effort to do just that, in the present work I enjoyed returning to that idea of slowness, that brand of long *durée*, in a research context, referred to by Sonia Gutiérrez and Carolina Doménech for El Tolmo de Minateda (Gutiérrez, Doménech 2020). It is an essential precondition for dwelling on the data, going back to it, weighing it up, and framing new questions, as well as coming to conclusions that may sometimes differ from those formulated years before.

This last part of the research and review process would not have been possible without the ERC nEU-Med project². In fact, one may say that the project itself stemmed from a need to question and check, in the light of new research, findings that had become established and consolidated, starting from the well-known Tuscan model, setting out from the places where that model was originally drawn up by Riccardo Francovich.

Indeed, the choice was made to focus the investigation in the heart of the Maremma region. Here the ERC nEU-Med project set itself the goal of understanding the mechanisms of economic growth which, in the case of Tuscany, led to the formation of communes, and to the major development seen in the 12th century. Focusing attention on an area that has been heavily investigated archaeologically in the last 40 years was essential to this undertaking. Indeed, it meant having a strong knowledge base, a necessary condition for embarking on new, original analyses of a multidisciplinary nature able to provide data that could supplement and flesh out the historical and archaeological picture already compiled. To achieve this purpose, it was initially thought that the analysis had to be focused especially on the actions carried out by the various aristocracies present in the territory, interpreted through their material manifestations.

¹ Here I refer to Le Roy Ladurie's well-known division into categories, applied to archaeological research by Hodges 1989, and also revisited in the text by Hodges, Francovich 1990, 15-17.

² The ERC Advanced nEU-Med project: Origins of a New Economic Union (7th-12th centuries): resources, landscapes and political strategies in a Mediterranean region, which took place between October 2015 and May 2021, included Richard Hodges as Principal Investigator and myself as coordinator of the research team at the University of Siena, as the project's Host Institution. In this connection, see the main publications: Bianchi, Hodges 2018; 2020, and the project's website www.neu-med.unisi.it.

Slowly, however, as research progressed, the theme of public properties became a central element in our considerations, meaning the set of properties and assets associated mainly with estates and specific rights (resource exploitation, tolls, water use, markets etc.) held by the king, or by people who held public offices (Cristoferi 2023, 397). Indeed, evidence relating to the layout and structure of sites, to materials, and to anthropic transformations in the landscape were so macroscopic, and out-of-scale compared to findings from previous field research, that we gradually realized that we were looking at the material features of fiscal administration. In Italy this aspect is rarely illuminated by documentary and archaeological sources, meaning that still today it tends to languish in a certain shadow, one that is at times impenetrable.

A recent overview of historiography relating to this kind of property, compiled by Vito Loré, to which readers are referred also for the extensive bibliography (Loré 2019), highlights the fact that in Italy only in the early 1980s did attention to this subject, on the part of historians dealing with documentary sources, return to the centre of some studies. With the start of the new millennium came an acceleration when, beginning with studies focusing on specific economic aspects of the administration of these properties, or on their connection to the patrimony of queens (Carocci, Collavini 2012; Lazzari 2012b; Collavini, Tomei 2018), scholars began to reflect on the dimension of the royal patrimony, and on the dynamics of its management. This led to a picture in which the central powers had a profile that did not fit the image of weakness that emerged in previous studies, which often concentrated mainly on the actions of the aristocracies. The volume published in 2019 (Bougard, Loré 2019), bringing together the proceedings of an important conference on royal properties, enabled a more detailed outlining of the kinds of actions of the public powers, and their consequences, in an effective comparative approach that also considered other European contexts, thereby delineating a general, up-to-date analysis aimed at the formulation of a fresh research agenda³.

In the two years that have elapsed since the original edition of this volume appeared in Italian, research on the royal fisc, and the role of the state, has benefited from significant additional contributions, and the results of new projects. I refer in particular to the partially published results of a national project focusing on fiscal estates, and the recent publication of the proceedings of a conference held as part of that project. These include important contributions having to do with royal economic management, viewed primarily through written sources (Lazzari and Tabarrini 2023)⁴.

Further thoughts on these issues can be read in a recent volume that brings together articles on various European contexts on the theme of the concept of state, in which a study of political systems and their institutional structures is closely integrated with the study of economic and social practices in administering public properties themselves (Carvajal Castro, Tejerizo-Garcia 2023).

The publication of a volume on the 10th century in several European contexts also provides further information to supplement our understanding of findings for this chronological period (Santos Salazar, Tente 2023). For the economic history of the Ottonian reign in Germany, the volume by David Bachrach, published a few months after my book appeared in Italian, constitutes a valuable source of information for a comparison with the context of the Kingdom of Italy. For an overview and a comparative analysis, the recent volume by Chris Wickham (Wickham 2023), in which much space is given to a discussion of

³ For Tuscany, two studies published between 2017 and 2019, focusing respectively on a study of regional and Lucchese aristocracies by means of written sources (Cortese 2017; Tomei 2019), have underlined with particular force the role of the central powers and of the administration of fiscal properties in the processes of the formation, consolidation and growth of aristocratic possessions in a long period stretching from the 9th to the 11th centuries.

⁴ This is the project entitled “Fiscal Estate in Medieval Italy: continuity and change (9th-12th centuries)”, directed by Tiziana Lazzari (University of Bologna), to whom I am grateful for discussing, over the last two years, some of the findings that were emerging from the project.

Tuscany and central-north Italy, offers useful food for thought as to the general conclusions that I came to when drafting the findings set out in the following chapters.

A reading of these texts has confirmed the plausibility of the hypotheses put forward in this volume, as well as the fact that it was not necessary to update the central arguments of my work in this new, English-language edition.

By contrast, when it comes to archaeology itself, research focused on rural public courts in Italy has never really taken off fully. Indeed, apart from a few exceptions, evidence relating to public estates has often been found in research projects that were too limited in scope to supply an exhaustive, overall vision⁵.

To this end, the research sponsored by the ERC nEU-Med project in the Val di Pecora and the Val di Cornia, areas that were included within two royal courts, respectively *Valli* and Cornino, and the exceptional finds made during excavation of the Vetricella site (Scarolino, GR), have given a major push towards an understanding of the workings of such political entities also from the economic point of view.

In this volume, the area of the Maremma that I identified as a case study is geographically delimited by four royal courts which, between 937 and 999, were part of the patrimony of one of the most powerful queens of the time: Adelaide, the wife of Lothair II, and later of Otto I.

Even during the ERC nEU-Med project itself, I had cast an eye more than once at the territories bordering the Cornia and Pecora valleys, with special reference to those around Grosseto where, in the Salica valley, at the Vigna Nuova locality, fieldwork was under way that was revealing a material reality comparable to that found in the Pecora valley, and to the court of *Valli* (Campana 2021). Thus, in the search for further comparative analyses, a series of pointers gradually emerged which, viewed with an eye made more vigilant and open by virtue of the reconstructions in progress in the Pecora and Cornia valleys, gave me a glimpse of a new, possible interpretive key for an analysis of the findings deriving from several kinds of material sources, gathered over years of research, within a territory that seemed to share a historical trajectory similar to that of the valleys studied by the ERC nEU-Med project.

The idea underpinning this volume stems precisely from this: the challenge of analysing, using new interpretive tools, an area with a solid tradition of historical and archaeological studies, investigating the material mechanisms of public administration, and the interaction between these and local societies, ie. both the local aristocracies and the subaltern classes. This will make it possible to pursue a theme that has never before been addressed in concrete terms in detail, but which is common to several different geographical areas, and to do so by setting ourselves the following objectives:

1. identifying possible markers of areas characterized by the presence of public properties;
2. understanding their formation and management, and how they became transformed, especially by reference to material sources;
3. relating these findings to the complex history of a territory, in a long diachrony;
4. identifying their relationship to processes of economic growth.

In order to achieve these goals, in the first five chapters I have traced the history of many geographical micro-contexts, and several different sites, isolating and at times reinterpreting those which I thought stood out in the historical scenario as indicators of political courses of action associated with royal or margraval strategies. The findings made in the process served to draw up, in Chapter VI, an overall picture designed to interpret anthropic and natural landscapes that were closely connected to each other by a common fate, involving transformations, abandonments and rebirths. To lend weight to my hypotheses, in Chapter VII I compared the resultant findings to published findings for a number of

⁵ For a summary of these research studies, and their bibliography, readers are referred to Chapter VII of this volume.

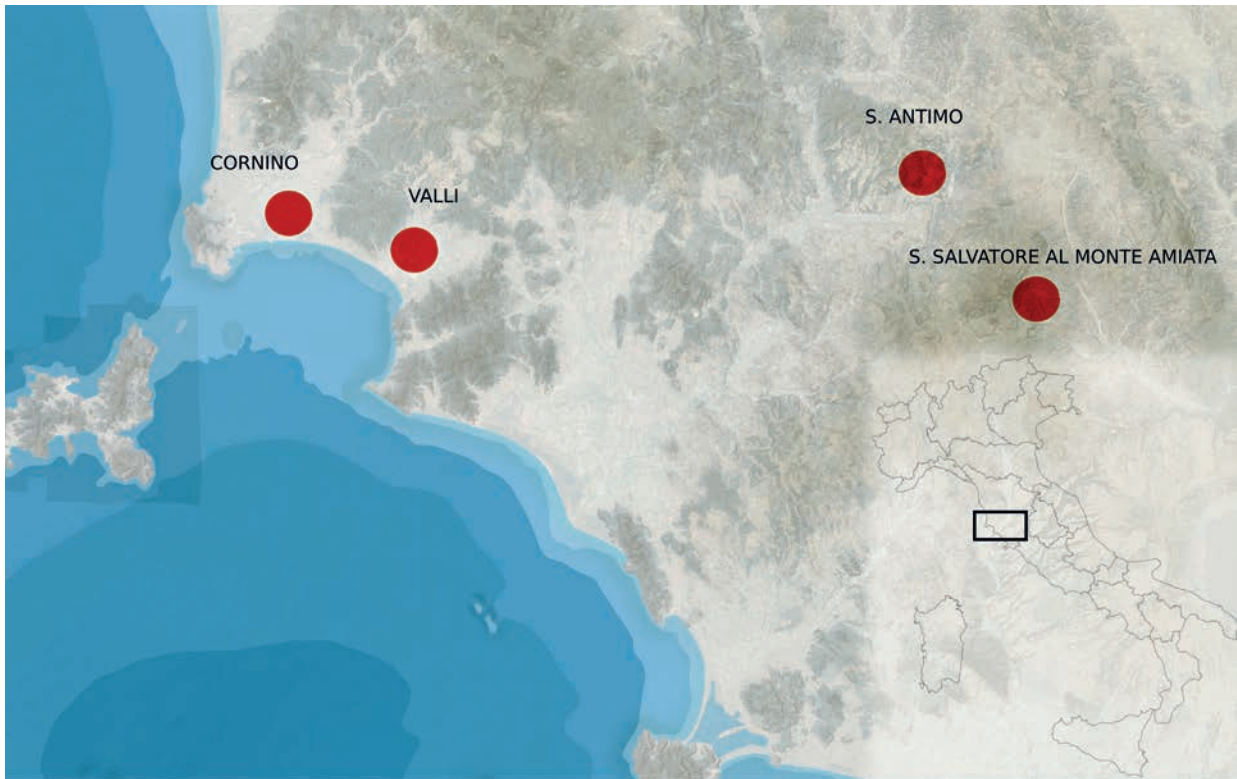


Figure 0.1 - The area investigated.

contexts in northern Tuscany, and in a central portion of the Po valley area, seeking points in common in histories that were apparently remote and disconnected from each other.

All this while being fully aware that I could not arrive at an absolute historical truth, but that I could try to identify plausible narratives to reconstruct the stages in a complex history, set out in the final chapter, as a paradigm for other territories, beyond and outside the case study, one that I hope may be able to guide new research.

To build my narration, I drew on material findings above all, and wherever possible, stemming not only from archaeological research, but also from research in other disciplines, aware that the contribution from the so-called ‘hard’ sciences, with a view to a thorough integration of objectives, is the way forward for gaining a better understanding of historical complexity.

The sources were interrogated, debated and often reread, to build a new narration. It was a laborious task in which I tried to never lose sight of the central thread, I hope successfully.

It has not been an easy task, and the fact I have managed to complete it is down to many friends and colleagues whom I would like to mention, and thank:

Richard Hodges, for having believed in the nEU-Med project, and for having joined me in this ‘adventure’, which saw him return to those places where, more than thirty years earlier, he was involved in the ‘glorious’ period of research in early medieval villages with his dear friend Riccardo Francovich;

my colleagues and young researchers, the ‘action nucleus’ of the nEU-Med project, with whom I shared in this exceptional period of research that has just ended, a period which I now view with increasing nostalgia: Alexander Agostini, Arianna Briano, Andrea Bardi, Mauro Buonincontri, Laura Chiarantini, Cristina Cicali, Simone Collavini, Carmine Lubritto, Lorenzo Marasco, Anna Maria Mercuri, Pierluigi Pieruccini, Giulio Poggi, Elisabetta Ponta, Alessia Rovelli, Luisa Russo, Francesco Sala, Davide Susini,

Serena Viva, Paolo Tomei, and Vanessa Volpi. The productive discussions I have had with each of them have truly meant a lot to me, and without their work much of this volume would not have been written; Luisa Dallai, a valuable travelling companion in all the various phases of the project, and an irreplaceable source of support in the no few critical moments along the way, as well as during the drafting of this volume itself.

Important advice and contributions to the project and, as a result, also to the construction of this book have come from many colleagues: Marie-Christine Bailly Maître, Marco Benvenuti, Marc Bompaire, Luc Bourgeois, Gaetano Di Pasquale, Alessandro Donati, Alessio Fiore, Sauro Gelichi, Michelle Hobart, Tiziana Lazzari, Michael McCormick, John Mitchell, Alessandra Molinari, Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo, Guillaume Sarah, Florian Téreygeol; Chris Wickham, Giacomo Vignodelli, and Enrico Zanini. My thanks go to each and every one of them.

Alexander Agostini, Monica Baldassarri, Arianna Briano, Mauro Buonincontri, Stefano Campana, Luisa Dallai, Roberto Farinelli, Elisabetta Giorgi, Alessio Fiore, Sauro Gelichi, Silvia Guideri, Richard Hodges, Lorenzo Marasco, Mario Marrocchi, Paolo Tomei, Luisa Russo, Emanuele Vaccaro and Serena Viva have patiently read parts of the volume, enriching them with their comments.

None of the above are responsible, of course, for any shortcomings and flaws in this work, for which I take full responsibility.

This book, the ideas underlying my research and the nEU-Med project itself, as well as my passion for my work, all this and much more, would not have been possible without Riccardo Francovich. He is ever in my thoughts, and I will always be grateful to him.