other media, such as theatrical plays and educational materials. Similarly, public engagement with Merovingian material culture, frequently destined to reside in local museums or appear on the private antiquities market, was denied. This problematic integration of a Germanic role in French national heritage was to have a lasting impact, one later exploited by the nationalist ambitions of German scholars during the 1930s and 1940s.

Alongside a well-developed core argument, several additional features make this a refreshing study: a perspective privileging an analysis of the cultural milieu, rather than focusing on notable individuals; the use of a broad range of contemporary sources providing an evocative insight into 19th-century French society; and a nuanced examination of French antiquarianism. Written in an engaging style and complemented by period illustrations and photographs, this is not only essential reading for specialists but will also provide an enjoyable and illuminating read for non-specialists alike.

GUILTI VOLLOKO (University of Sheffield)


Focusing on data from central Spain and specifically from the provinces of Madrid and Castilla y León, this latest volume in what is already a hugely informative series combines both synthesis and analysis. The 11 authors are drawn from both academic circles (The University of the Basque Country) and from two major commercial units and is thus an intelligent sharing and debating of recent findings from rescue archaeology and of the character of the archaeological record available. Eleven rural sites of Visigothic-period and early medieval date (4th–10th centuries AD) are considered, these detailed in the long Section 2 (pp 65–258) in a standardised format (eg on context, site organisation, structural data, material culture, bioarchaeological finds, chronology, interpretation), with good illustrative support (though some photos for La Cárcava were blurry). Importantly, many of these sites saw extensive excavations — notably the full settlement and cemetery at Gómez (San Martín del la Vega), covering 30,000 m², and nearly 70,000 m² at El Pelicano; elsewhere excavated coverage was between 3,000–10,000 m². Given that most of the sites discussed were fairly short-lived, some only 5th–6th century, some 6th–7th century, but few extending into the 10th/11th (good sets of CA14 dating were employed) — detailed and secure statements can be made on form, economics and contacts. Gómez, for example, emerges as a loosely planned, undefended site comprising 10–12 domestic/family units (showing little status differentiation) in plots of c 44 × 80 m, with a cemetery set between the western and eastern house groups; units comprised a house with stone footings, 3–5 annexes (often sunken-featured huts) and up to 5 grain silos or storage pits. The latter are distinctive to all these sites, of bulbous form and set generally alongside the house exterior or occasionally inside; at Gómez nearly 100 silos were traced, a small number of capacity c 6,670 litres, and most between 1,000–3,000 litres. These, plus ceramic and metal finds, millstones, fauna data and the burials inform strongly on the communities and their livelihoods. Sections 3–6 duly provide important assessments of the collective themes of funerary practice and ritual; building types; faunal profiles; land use and crops. The results are then carefully and clearly discussed in Section 7’s interpretative essay by Vigil-Escalera Quirado and Quirós Castillo who look also at contacts, land organisation and, equally importantly, the ends of these compact village communities (few, as noted, see Islamic period use). Highly recommended.

NEIL CHRISTIE (University of Leuven)

Archéologie de l’espace urbain: (Collections ‘Perspectives Villes et Territoires’). Edited by Élisabeth Lorans & Xavier Rodier. 22 × 29 cm. 355 pp. 229 colour and b&w pls, figs and tables.
While the title suggests a volume exploring the archaeology of the urban form in France, this strong collection of papers — deriving from a 2012 conference and populated by a rich array of field practitioners, research directors, specialists, conservationists, doctoral students — does much more, offering in particular overviews of new finds, evolving methodologies and revised thinking. The emphasis is firmly on French urban sites, with examples including Marseille, Paris and Reims; the conference venue of Tours, the focus of much fascinating and well-published urban archaeology, features three times; while a rather nominal third ‘external’ paper (out of 34) consider Damascus (Syria), Angkor Thom (Cambodia) and Barcelona, and MacPhail uses both English and French examples for compactly discussing dark earth. Core to the whole is the modelling of urban spatial and social evolution, across short or long spans, ancient, medieval and/or modern; heritage issues are not central, although recording and synthesising the urban resource and questioning the impacts of rescue archaeology are noted by various authors (eg Joly for Chartres, Fondrillon et al for Bourges and Guiffre et al for Toulouse). Many papers employ the ‘chrono-chorematic approach’ — a graphic modelling of key phases of site evolution and of urban functions and viewing these against theoretical types (chorotypes) — to help better explain forms and processes. This modelling is outlined by Deschay and Djaman-Tian (see online papers at <http://maplemandagne.fr/doc/cinem.html>) but applied explicitly to Bordeaux, Le Mans and Reims from Roman imprints to pre-industrial modern cities (note that while the volume’s colour illustrations help, the graphics definitely need consulting on screen). The models work best when archaeological data are good, although rarely are they good for all periods. Similarly for approaches centred on GIS (papers on Barcelona, Bordeaux and Paris). There are intriguing offerings here also on visual analytics, terminologies (words used to define space in Angers), traditional time divisions (Lefebvre interrogates periodisations in the Atlas historiques des villes de France), land plots, water management (in Paris), networks (in the Nimes territory) and medieval ceramic supply systems. En route we gain insights into urban roots (Vagnay and Krausz on oppida), Roman planting (Berthelot et al claim the insulae in Reims among the largest in the Empire), early medieval monastic urbanisation (Marot on Tours) and medieval to early modern efforts at merging settlement units at Clermont-Ferrand (Gréou). This is a busy, but very rewarding volume that will certainly stimulate interest and ideas for all scholars dealing with towns, space and urban theory.

NEIL CHRISTIE (University of Leicester)


This up-to-date and very complete survey of the archaeology of medieval Spain from the 12th to the 16th centuries represents, as far as I know, the very first work of its kind, and one that probably could only have been written now given how the last decade has, archaeologically speaking, been a kind of ‘golden age’ for Spain’s Middle Ages, with dozens of new discoveries combined with new studies at key sites. Notable is the originality of the book’s structure: even if the chapter titles correspond to ‘classical’ themes (state of research, rural and urban settlements, housing, technology, trade, castles, religions and death), each subject receives two subchapters, dealing respectively with Arab Al-Andalus and the Christian kingdoms, thereby enabling easy comparison between both political areas. To my knowledge, this approach is extremely innovative, since in Spain these periods and powers have generally been studied separately, with minimal crossover.

Another interesting component of the book’s structure comprises the regular ‘box’ features, integrated within chapters by dealing with ‘special topics’, whether particular archaeo-