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Michele Silani,

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Section: Book review

MICHELE SILANI

Review of: Frank Vermeulen, Gert-Jan Burgers, Simon Keays and Cristina Corsi, eds. 2012. *Urban Landscape Survey in Italy and the Mediterranean*. Oxford: Oxbow.

The archeological research promoted in Italy and in general in the Mediterranean Basin by various European academies, such as the British School in Rome, the Belgian Academy, and the Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut in Rome, has a long and fortunate tradition. Often the collaboration and comparison between European and Italian researchers in particular have led to some very innovative aspects of archeological research and brought about profound renewal in terms of methodology. The volume curated by Frank Vermeulen, Gert-Jan Burgers, Simon Keay and Cristina Corsi is an excellent example of this tradition. It is a project promoted by, besides the schools, academies and institutes cited above, the Department of Archaeology of Ghent University and by the Universidade de Évora (CIDEHUS) as part of the Programme 'People' 2008 and the Project RADIO-PAST (Radiography of the past) dedicated to integrated, non-destructive approaches to understand and promote complex archeological sites. The book contains a wide range of case studies carried out in the Mediterranean and grouped by themes into two different sections.

Part 1 is subdivided into three sections dedicated to Pre-Roman site-planning, towns in a 'transitional phase', and the Roman approach to townscapes. The first section includes a contribution dedicated to the analyses of some Case Studies on Proto-urbanization in Central and Southern Italy and another paper dedicated to Urban Landscape Surveys on the Salento Isthmus (Italy). The second section presents some research done in various areas of the Mediterranean such as the Upper Aterno Valley and Paestum in Italy, Thespiiai and Tanagra in Greece, and Ephesus, Hierapolis and Sagalassos in Turkey. The third section presents the cases of Aquinum, Teanum Sidicinum, Herculaneum, Pompeii, Suasa, Classe, Pisae, Portus Pisanus, and Vada Volterrana in Italy, of Ammaia in Portugal and of Burnum in Croatia.

Part 2 addresses the issue of inter-urban relationships with a paper about the Urban Networks in Roman Italy and some projects about the interpretation problems of the Murege Plateau in the archaic period, surveying in Northern Picenum and the forms of urbanism in the Ager Faliscus.

The book is introduced by the editors and the concluding notes are by Neil Christie and Filippo Coarelli. In general, the introduction focuses on some important issues useful for the reading of the rest of the book. One fundamental aspect is the exhortation to use technology to better understand the history and archeology of the urban phenomenon in the various sites investigated rather than using technology simply for the sake of using it. Particularly illuminating in this regard is the final contribution which focuses, not without critical insights, on some of these fundamental methodologies. In particular, Filippo Coarelli calls upon us to go beyond the division among researchers working in archeological research in the field and those that dedicate their studies to the historic interpretation of data.