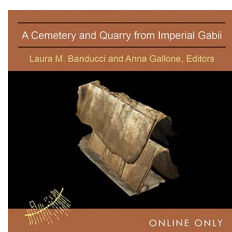


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LAURA M. BANDUCCI & ANNA GALLONE (ed.). 2021. *A cemetery and quarry from Imperial Gabii* (*Gabii Project Reports* 2). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; 978-0-472-99906-4 eBook, Open Access.



The book under review is one of the final edited volumes of the *Gabii Project*, a collaborative project between the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan and the *Soprintendenza Speciale Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio di Roma* (SSABAP Roma). It is an Open Access, online only publication that follows the model of the first volume (Opitz *et al.* 2018) and can be downloaded as an epub file from: <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11885571>. The volume comprises six chapters, together with a preface and series introduction.

It is suitable for both the general and specialist reader and begins with an accessible introduction offering an overview of the results, the ‘Story of Gabii’, in lay terms. Leaving aside the rather nondescript chapter titles—the chapter containing the archaeological phasing is titled ‘More’; while specialists’ reports are in the slightly more appropriately entitled ‘Details’ chapter—structuring the narrative from general to more detailed provides a naturally increasing depth of information and offers a perfect structure for the volume.

As the volume is one of several planned as part of the project, the methodology and part of the published material repeats that published in volume 1 for Area B (Opitz *et al.* 2018). The presentation of the entire sequence in Areas A and B, however, is understandable and helpful to the reader, making this book as useful as a standalone reference as it is as a volume in the series. The published material in this volume details the entire history of Gabii, from its beginning *c.* 900 BC to its abandonment by the third century AD, revealing the area to be peripheral, Roman ‘non-urban’ quarters in the later periods. My own specialism, pre-Roman archaeology, is expertly detailed by Banducci and Gallone. The extremely interesting Imperial tombs within the assumed urban area, where burials were not usually allowed, are similarly well-presented by the same editors and contextualised both within their immediate locale at Gabii, and within Latium more widely.

As with earlier publications from the project (e.g. Mogetta 2020), this volume applies the theoretical, heuristic idea of House culture to interpretation of the Iron Age burials. This theoretical framework allows for a more complex social reading of the role of infant burials than approaches which simply emphasise differentiations in social hierarchy and conspicuous consumption in death. This adds interpretative complexity to the description of the earlier periods.

A considerable section of the publication is dedicated to finds from the excavations. The omission of artefact weight in the pottery section is unfortunate, as is the lack of systematic use of comparisons of proportions of functional forms between features—an increasingly

common best practice. I would have liked to see drawings of the small finds; some of the finds are illustrated by scans of the hand drawings, the quality of which leaves a lot to be desired. The zoological, macrofaunal and skeletal material are presented in great depth by Alhaique, Motta *et al.* and Killgrove, respectively.

While there must be good reasons for choosing the epub format over pdf, probably connected with illustrations and 3D models, I missed being able to use familiar technology and not having to download additional software in order to read offline. In addition, even if most figures did not lose their quality when zoomed in, there are a few poor-quality exceptions. There are also some pagination issues, with titles appearing on different pages to the related text. The 3D model took a long time to load and its possibilities are not immediately clear, even with a help menu. Compared with the reading experience of *Élite burial practices* (Mogetta 2020), a volume derived from the same project, I prefer the traditional book format. That said, this is a free-to-access publication, the stated aim of which is that interaction with the online material is part of engagement with the interpretation of Gabii.

The text makes good use of hyperlinks to allow the reader to cross reference between different sections, tables and other material. This is one of the advantages of the online format. Photographs are embedded in the 3D model and do not always appear in the text, and while plans are presented with the text, the reader needs to toggle between viewer and text on different tabs to move between the two. The reader who is better practised at using online content will get the most out of this volume. It presents a laudable research strategy, but this form of digital presentation still requires a little refinement for seamless use.

Technical frustrations aside, the contents of the volume are solid, demonstrating excellent knowledge of cutting-edge research on the subject matter. The text is well-written and pleasant to read. This reviewer found the interactive maps more useful than the 3D model; the presentation of stratigraphic units in the digital format and the 3D model, however, is very effective and the photogrammetric models of the tombs provided real added value. The volume is an excellent contribution that will hopefully also stand the test of time in the world of rapidly changing technologies.

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