

archaeological examples of burial practices in this era and those who wish to engage with the scholarship of an unparalleled figure in the study of the Chinese Bronze Age.

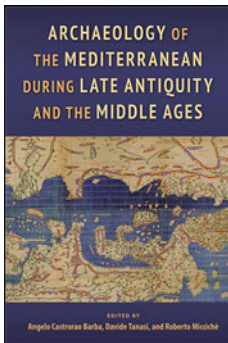
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ANGELO CASTRORAO BARBA, DAVIDE TANASI & ROBERTO MICCICHÈ (ed.). 2023. *Archaeology of the Mediterranean during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida; 978-0-8130-6969-2 hardback \$95.



The fall of the Western Roman Empire did not bring the end of this world, but rather a change. This volume is part of the recent growing interest in academia in what happened next, from the fifth century AD and onwards. The editors of the book organised a conference session in 2019 called ‘After-life of Ancient Urbanscapes and Rural Landscapes in the post-Classical Mediterranean (AD 400–1300)’. This session and its papers, many of which are published as chapters in the current volume, are part of an attempt to drive against what the editors define as a ‘Classical-centric’ or ‘Roman-centric’ vision (p.2). While the title of both the conference and the book use the general geographical term ‘Mediterranean’, the

case studies in the latter are more geographically focused and could be defined as encompassing the Mediterranean Islands, or as Greece and the central Mediterranean. The volume comprises two sections: the first is dedicated to Greece and the second focuses on Malta, Corsica, Sicily and Southern Italy, the latter of which is not mentioned in the Introduction.

The section on Greece is composed of five contributions. The first is by Natalia Poulou on the finds of several sites dated to the sixth–ninth centuries on the Aegean islands and Crete, with a special focus on numismatic finds. The second part of this chapter deals with typological problems in ceramic identification, which is especially important because of the

supposed lacuna of archaeological finds from the period of the seventh–eighth centuries AD, and the lack of clarity and agreement on the topic. Poulou offers evidence that more sites continued to exist in the said period than previously perceived. An explanation about the extent of this continuity would have been welcome, especially as it is clear that even if continuity was discovered in multiple places, it does not mean that the number of sites, as well as their size and the population, did not decrease. The second chapter is on Crete during the same period and debates the usage and accuracy of archaeological surveys. Here, Scott Gallimore stresses that more recent surveys are more accurate due to better knowledge on the ceramic typology of the period. While there was continuity in certain types of settlements, such as fortified ones, Gallimore does not indicate whether a decrease in population occurred. It would have been useful if he re-examined the older results and provided exact numbers on how many sites had finds from the sixth–tenth centuries that were missed by the original surveyors, so that the extent of the inaccuracy of older surveys is clear. The third chapter, by Amelia Brown, focuses on the reuse of buildings, especially the conversion of temples into churches in Athens.

A contribution by Effie Athanassopoulos provides a glimpse into the twelfth/thirteenth-century landscape archaeology of southern Greece. The author stresses the need to further develop and use landscape archaeology as well as to connect Greek medieval research to global medieval archaeology. The last chapter in this section focuses on the Latin conquest's impact in the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries. Grant Schrama explores Latin colonial influence through the fortresses and churches they built, as well as the combination of local and Latin style in the architecture and art of the period.

The second section covers Malta, Corsica, Sicily, and Southern Italy in eight chapters and is longer than the section on Greece. The first of these (Chapter 6) depicts the boom in the construction of churches in Corsica during the fifth and sixth centuries, claiming that the area reached its zenith during this time. The authors Gabriele Castiglia and Philippe Pergola offer interesting and alternative interpretations and ideas regarding some of these sites. Chapter 7 discusses Malta, and David Cardona includes a thorough historiographic-archaeological assessment of tombs and burials as representative of religious influence on the island while focusing on the Roman and Byzantine periods. This interesting analysis of past research shows its merits and value and the author offers important alternative interpretations and comments. The eighth chapter stays in Malta but despite the title, which promises the concise and restricted view on epigraphic evidence for Islamic presence in the town of Rabat, Matt King offers a far more extensive approach by presenting the historiography of the research, while also exploring some of the medieval texts on the topic.

The ninth chapter is the first of four dealing with Sicily. Rosa Lanteri delivers a very impressive gazetteer of all known villas, or probable villas, in the region of Syracuse in the Roman period. The tenth chapter stays with the same topic of Roman villas but highlights the most impressive one found on the island: the famous villa at Piazza Armerina. Michael J. Decker does not study the villa in its heyday but instead focuses on what occurred afterwards and how it was used later. Furthermore, he asks what changed in the vicinity of the villa, thus providing a fresh look at a site that has received so much attention and is well published. The eleventh chapter, authored by Angelo Castorao Barba and his team, is a report of a newly found and unpublished site of the settlement of Contrada Castro. The contribution explores the finds at the site, spanning from the sixth century BC to the eleventh century AD.

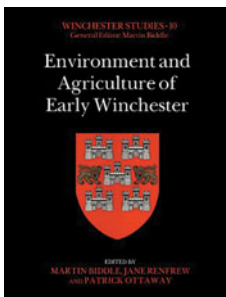
The twelfth chapter also focuses on something newly discovered and extends the time span covered by the volume. Davide Tanasi explores the reuse of a Bronze Age cemetery in Cozzo del Pantano in the region of Siracusa, long after it was used for burials. This reclaim is believed to be from Classical Antiquity to the Late Medieval period. It allows an interesting glimpse into archaeological fieldwork and explores the use of several techniques, but also highlights the limitations of the archaeological discipline. As the suggested date of reuse can often only be guessed due to lacking sufficient finds and, in most cases, there is no datable material at all and only general observed evidence that change and reuse occurred. The final chapter is very different from the others, yet also touches on the need for methodology, chronology and especially a common language in the research. Here, Santino Alessandro Cugno and Franco Dell'Aquila explore the Arched Blind Niches in Medieval Rupestrian architecture in Southern Italy. They examine several churches that were carved into caves, and the techniques and the fashions of their different niches, and offer several explanations about their construction, alongside an attempt to reorganise the terminology.

To conclude, this volume is diverse and interesting but, as often happens in such publications, the diversity means that the content is slightly different from what the title promises. In this case, its time span is broader, while geographically it is more limited. A better title would have been 'Essays on Greek and central Mediterranean archaeology from the Classical to the Medieval period'. In any case, the volume offers an interesting addition to the debate regarding what occurred after Rome fell as it brings forward new material, reanalyses the old, and strives for common language and methodological improvements in this field and period. With its many interesting topics and periods, readers will find it useful, which make it a must in the library of every university.

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MARTIN BIDDLE, JANE RENFREW & PATRICK OTTAWAY (ed.). 2018. *Environment and agriculture of early Winchester*. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-180-32-7066-1 hardback £75.



Winchester is one of the most comprehensively excavated historic towns in England, with archaeology providing a valuable insight into its development from the Roman capital of the *civitas* of the Belgae to power base of the West Saxon kingdom. While there were important interventions in the decades immediately following the Second World War, the most extensive excavations of the walled city were those led by Martin Biddle between 1961 to 1971. Over this 11-year period, four sites at Cathedral Green, Lower Brook Street, Castle Yard and Wolvesey Palace were investigated in detail and more limited excavation was