Regardless, the associated pitfalls and interpretive scope of the method are outlined frankly by the authors, making the study informative for those applying the technique to other assemblages. In this case, the results are most illuminating in relation to the chronological sequencing of material, but some spatial clustering of amphora sherds was also identified, around the stables and the main road. One wonders whether this was for surface consolidation—some practices are seemingly timeless, for in the week prior to reviewing this book, I was told by a builder that he was collecting broken domestic tiles to lay across ground used daily by horses. Correspondence analysis often verifies patterns that are readily apparent, or tells us what we can already discern by other means, providing 'confirmation'; patterns in archaeology frequently prove mundane, as human practice often is too.

That this volume is largely published in English doubtless reflects the nature of the collaborative international scholarship involved; perhaps too this could result in a wider readership. The choice to publish in English leads one to reflect on the lack of similar publications on amphorae from individual British sites. It is true that Britain received fewer amphorae at certain times than sites on the European mainland and generally shows less variety than seen even at sites in close proximity across the Channel. While reports on amphorae have formed large parts of general works on Roman pottery in Britain (e.g. Davies *et al*. 1994; Monaghan 1997), an exception remains Paul Sealey's (1985) report on the Sheepen amphorae. Sealey's volume, published as a British Archaeological Report, was ground-breaking: thorough in terms of typological reporting and sophisticated discussion, including the provincial and international context; these, likewise, are characteristics of the present study, which itself is brought to us by Archaeopress: the successor to British Archaeological Reports. One cannot but ponder why, given this lead and the inspirational work of David Peacock and David Williams, there are not more such studies of collections from Britain. Continuing with 'British contrasts', it has for some time been striking that the prominent regional and local production of amphora types (and evidently the wine, fish sauce and possibly preserved fruit they contained) in Gaul and the Rhineland is something for which we still have only tantalising suggestions from Britain in terms of pots, vineyards, ale production and fish-processing remains. Fresh exploration of *Britannia* may prove rewarding.

The consumers at the Kops Plateau received an unusual variety of amphora-borne products, varying over time, alongside wider economic trends and the changing occupants of the site. Insights from this study include the high proportions of imports from the Eastern Mediterranean (including the Cam. 189, probably a fruit container, a form then copied in the Rhine hinterland) and riverine fish products from the Lyon region. Questions arise given the distances, variety and costs involved—was this administered supply? Were the consumers especially wealthy? Was there an ethnic dimension to supply through the presence of personnel accustomed to such commodities? The authors suggest the probable routes by which amphorae from different sources arrived at the Kops Plateau, while their assessment of the regional situation shows some contrasts between military and civilian sites. The discussion of these and other matters makes for essential reading for those interested in Roman-era economics and the functioning and character of the wider Roman system in the early decades of empire. Carreras and van den Berg have overseen the publication of a work of great value.

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Jan Schneider. *Ländliche Siedlungsstrukturen im römischen Spanien. Das Becken von Vera und das Camp de Tarragon—zwei Mikroregionen im Vergleich* (Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 22). 2017. vi+214 pages, numerous colour and b&w

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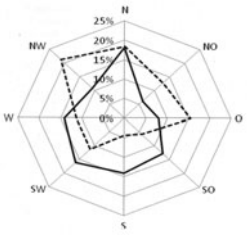

In recent decades, Roman archaeology in Iberia, as in other regions, has focused on the investigation of systems of rural settlement in order to elucidate their environmental, geographical and cultural contexts, as well as their chronological development. Most of these studies concern individual landscapes or specific research topics, and so comparative studies offer the opportunity to improve recognition and understanding of both regional particularities and overarching trends. In this monograph, based on his PhD research, Jan Schneider takes three previously surveyed regions on the Mediterranean coast of Spain and its hinterland—the Vera River basin, the *Camp de Tarragona* and the Upper Almanzora region—in order to investigate Roman settlement patterns between the second century BC and the seventh century AD. He implements a variety of archaeological, geographical and statistical methods facilitated through the use of a geographical information system. It is an approach that is useful for processing large quantities of information, although the significance of the results still depends directly on the quality of the underlying data.

As the author makes use of 'legacy' data—that is, sites and surveys previously published by Spanish colleagues—he does not discuss in this volume the methodologies and other details of the original fieldwork, such as the specific areas surveyed or the individual sites and finds discovered. Yet these are all fundamental considerations that provide essential information for any critical evaluation of the reliability of the datasets. As a result, questions about modern land use and the effects of vegetation or building activities on the distributions of archaeological sites, for example, remain unanswered. This omission, however, partially reflects the incomplete information provided in the original survey publications. This makes full critical evaluation of the datasets impossible, although Schneider attempts to address this problem with, for example, tables showing the periods of occupation for each site. He also provides graphs of the diagnostic pottery types grouped into 25-year time spans; in contrast, the analysis and discussion of change over time is based on a chronological framework divided into centuries. In practice, an approach based on periods characterised by specific developments, such as settlement expansion or abandonment, would make it easier to compare between the surveys and facilitate a more nuanced overarching comparison.

For each individual region, Schneider analyses aspects both diachronic (chronological development of settlements, duration of occupation) and synchronic (settlement size, function, status), as well as environmental factors (altitude, aspect, soil quality), distance to cities and communication routes such as roads, rivers and the coastline, access to natural resources and the agricultural potential of land for the cultivation of cereals, olives and vines. In turn, the analyses of the individual regions are then compared. In discussing the many resulting graphs, the author reveals some of the methodological problems of dealing with 'legacy' data, and reveals—often unintentionally—the extent to which any such detailed analysis remains dependent on the quality of the original datasets.

It is possible, for example, to discuss the size of surface artefact scatters on a general level, but, without more specific data, it is not feasible to evaluate how site size may have changed over time. Similarly, consideration of the classification, or status, of individual sites is necessarily reliant on the interpretation of the original surveys and therefore uncorrected for differences in the intensity of fieldwork in each region. As a result, the analyses are conducted at the macro scale, and more detailed evaluation of the interconnections between different types of site is not undertaken. This general level of analysis is reflected in the treatment of non-settlement sites, such as cemeteries, which are discussed very briefly and without any further information, and so the volume misses the opportunity to identify the potential cultural particularities of individual regions. Also undiscussed are excavated sites and other areas that have been subject to more intensive investigation, which could provide more detailed information about rural settlement structures, their layout, use and economic potential.

The statistical analysis reveals that geographical factors such as altitude, aspect and soil quality had limited effect on preferred settlement location, whereas the land around most sites was ideally suited for the cultivation of cereals, olives and vines. The long continuity of occupation detected at many

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sites, particularly in lowland areas, may therefore reflect the sustained agricultural exploitation of the landscape; archaeobotanical and archaeozoological studies could provide important additional information about changes in cultivation practices and economic organisation over time as parts of real interdisciplinary research.

Working with an imperfect dataset, Schneider has succeeded in recognising inter-regional similarities and differences in Roman rural settlement patterns, as well as in reconstructing general chronological developments that correspond with trends across the wider Western Mediterranean. The author presents a wealth of analyses and results, although on the whole, they remain mostly descriptive and generalising. The research aims squarely at the investigation and interregional comparison of settlement histories on the macro level. As a result, the author is able to answer the broad-scale research questions that he sets out to address, but, as much of local detail is left invisible by the chosen scale of analysis, he is unable to draw out further specific aspects of the data. As the author himself emphasises, the outcome of this research, and particularly its comparative approach, should be understood as a methodological evaluation intended to encourage further interregional studies of other parts of the Iberian Peninsula, and beyond, in order to document and explain the diversity of rural landscapes across the Roman world.

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Elizabeth Fentress, Caroline Goodson, Marco Maiuro, Margaret Andrews & J. Andrew Dufton (ed.). *Villa Magna: an imperial estate and its legacies: excavations 2006–10* (Archaeological Monographs of the BSR 23). 2016. xx+516 pages, 34 colour and 295 b&w illustrations, tables. London: British School at Rome; 978-0-904152-74-6 hardback £90.

So dominant has Hadrian's sprawling villa near Tivoli been in our imagining of the rural retreats of Roman emperors that it is easy to forget that some 30 such sites lie within the orbit of Rome. Little was known of Villa Magna, 60km south-east of Rome, before the meticulous research described in the present volume was launched in 2006. It is one of those rare Roman sites where literary sources can throw direct and illuminating light on the archaeology. In the early 140s AD, the young Marcus Aurelius wrote three letters to his teacher, Fronto, mentioning that he was staying with the imperial court (it was the early years of Antoninus Pius' reign) at the time of the autumn vintage in a villa near Anagni, and that they 'dined in the pressing room', where they happily heard the banter of the 'rustics' treading the grapes. Extraordinarily, the excavators at Villa Magna (the name is recorded on a marble inscription, reused in the later church on the site) found, through a stroke of luck, the precise location of this scene. An emperor dining 'in' a pressing room sounds improbable, but the location of a bath-suite and associated rooms sumptuously appointed in marble (including a large exedra on the central axis with a view across a room of sunken wine storage jars, or *dolia*, to a treading floor) matches perfectly with Marcus Aurelius' description. There was no trace of dining couches (which may well have been movable furniture, not a permanent fixture), nor would the space have ever been interpreted as a dining area were it not for the literary passage; but the excavators' conclusion must surely be right. It throws interesting light on the Emperor's 'theatrical' use of agricultural production as propaganda; and the presence of imported polychrome marbles from Chios and Sparta, used for paving even in the floor of the *dolia* room, provides a touch of luxury unique in Roman wineries.

Much else was learnt of Villa Magna in the course of this work, thanks to geophysical research, field survey and excavation. Overall, the Roman villa covers 6.2ha (less than 6 per cent of the size of Tivoli's 107ha): brick stamps show that it was first completed in its present form by the ever busy Hadrian. The main residential palace, joined by a road to the winery, lies some 250m to the north. Its outline is known from geophysics, but it was barely touched in the project described here. Under the Emperor Severus, in the early third century AD, infrastructure was improved with the addition of a showy fountain (*nymphaeum*), a large bathhouse, additional cisterns and a two-storey, barrack-like building, situated on the approach road on the eastern side of the complex. While

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