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S. Key and L. Paroli (EDS), *PORTUS AND ITS HINTERLAND: RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH* (Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome 18). London: British School at Rome, 2011. Pp. xvi + 320, illus. isbn 9780904152609. £65.00.

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the Empire's socio-economic conditions, though the rate of production varied. The authors propose that cities were an effective mechanism for extracting resources from the flow of goods and services moving around the Empire, but that the efficiency of the extraction and its local impact were determined by a range of factors. These include the degree of connectedness with the transport network, the distances between cities, the distance from Rome itself, demographic fluctuations, and the changing priorities of the wealthy élite. Varying combinations of these factors help to explain disparities in the rate of urban development, and of shrinkage and abandonment during Late Antiquity.

The macro-scale approach is refreshing, particularly because it often lies beyond the scope of single-authored research publications. The authors set urbanism in a wider context by examining its relationship with other indexes of economic and social development — trading patterns, the development of *collegia*, the spread of inscriptions, and the emergence of provincial *equites* and senators — and find convincing correlations between them. This in turn allows them to articulate some interesting new ideas: for example, that the construction of walled circuits in second-century Britain reflects localized spending priorities, rather than being an early sign of insecurity (297–8). Their decision to omit any detailed discussion of artisanal activity, though, perhaps weakens the connections which they are able to draw between empire-wide and local economics. While the authors recognize the local impact of élite patronage, loans and spending projects, little is said about the smaller-scale economic opportunities afforded by densely-populated and well-connected urban centres. These economic attractions could have been explored further, and this might have helped the authors to explain the persistence of some urban centres in Late Antiquity, despite profound changes in élite spending priorities.

But what of the students at whom this book is chiefly aimed? After six years of teaching Roman urbanism myself, I am certain that undergraduates will find this book invaluable. Above all, future essays will surely be the richer for its up-to-date accounts of some really informative sites which have nevertheless not traditionally been prominent in the literature: Minturnae, Falerii Novi, Mérida, Timgad, Thugga, Amiens, Jublains or Silchester. Nor are these examples offered in isolation, but adeptly woven into the debates outlined above, providing clear, practical support for the authors' theories about Roman urbanism. Key conceptual issues such as the relationships between cities and cultural change, or individual agency and collective identity, are effectively explained, with useful accounts of changing scholarly perspectives. And the technical issues which must be grasped before the big picture can be understood — such as the differences between *coloniae* and *municipia* — are generally well covered.

Yet some explanatory details are overlooked. It is striking that the word '*civitas*' occurs several times, but (unlike *coloniae* and *municipia*) is never defined or included in the index. Given the importance of *civitates* in the West, and the many which are discussed, this should surely have been tackled explicitly. Indeed, more could have been done to clarify the general nature of the ancient city-state model and its conceptual and administrative importance. Again, phrases like 'city and hinterland' and 'central places' are common, while some references to the organization of newly-conquered peoples into civic units are made (e.g. 24–6). But the issue is never quite tackled head-on: and given that in my experience it is one that students find difficult to grasp, this seems regrettable. A better approach might have been to include a glossary dealing with some of this technical and conceptual vocabulary, to ensure fuller and more consistent coverage. Nonetheless, the explanatory framework on offer here is certainly a vast improvement on anything previously written for this audience. I can only hope that Cambridge University Press have already commissioned a similar volume for the Eastern Empire.

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S. KEAY and L. PAROLI (EDS), *PORTUS AND ITS HINTERLAND: RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH* (Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome 18). London: British School at Rome, 2011. Pp. xvi + 320, illus. ISBN 9780904152609. £65.00.

Portus and its Hinterland arises from a workshop held at the British School at Rome in 2008, whose aim it effectively reflects: to present the results of the *Portus Project* (a collaborative venture between

the British School at Rome, the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Ostia (before its change of name in 2009) and the Universities of Southampton and Cambridge) within the context of the research undertaken by other institutions like the École Française de Rome and the Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée or the interventions of the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma (sede Ostia).

The introduction provides a summary of the chapters of the book and an enlightening overview of the problems that arise when working in *Portus*. It is a vast archaeological area that is threatened in some parts by building development (the increasing urbanization of Fiumicino and the extension of the Leonardo da Vinci airport forced some of the excavations mentioned in the article by Morelli and colleagues), and where the scarcity of published archaeological material makes the re-interpretation of some of the buildings difficult. It is not all doom and gloom though: workshops like the one held in Rome in 2008 show how collaboration between research groups and an interdisciplinary approach can contribute enormously to the development of our knowledge on sites of this magnitude. The articles of the book cover a wide selection of topics that reflect the different research methods used on several of the iconic buildings of the area like the so-called Palazzo Imperiale or the Basilica, such as traditional archaeological excavation, geophysical survey and core sampling. It hence provides a good overview of the current research undertaken in the area and challenges previous interpretations of the development of *Portus*.

The first two articles cover the geological research done separately by Giraudi and Goiran as well as by a group of French researchers in the basin of the port of Claudius, with the aim of identifying the ancient sea levels. These studies permit the identification of Ancus Marcius' foundation in Ostia and pinpoint the entrance to the harbour and location of the island and lighthouse, thus challenging the theory proposed by Testaguzza in the 1960s. The entrance of the port of Claudius is also a central point in Morelli and colleagues' article, but there using different research methods to Goiran.

The following articles focus on the excavations and material evidence (pottery and coins) recovered at the Palazzo Imperiale, the Antemurale and the Basilica. The so-called Palazzo Imperiale was excavated by the *Portus* project directed by Professor Keay between 2007 and 2009 following the geophysical survey done between 1998 and 2004. The article gives a description of the fieldwork, followed by historical interpretation of the excavation's results. It presents the long life-span of a building that was designed following the example of the *villae maritimae* and was probably used as a residence by some of the higher officials of the *annona*. Zampini's article on the pottery recovered at the Palazzo Imperiale is short but illustrative of the situation of the pottery studies in the area. The author not only presents the evidence from the *Portus* project excavation (mainly African amphorae from Africa Tripolitana with a small number of tablewares) but also compares it with the evidence from other contexts with a similar chronology in Rome (Meta sudans, Forum of Caesar and Monte Testaccio), Ostia, and the field survey in the *Portus* area. The comparison highlights that the main parallel with the evidence recovered in the Palazzo Imperiale is in fact the Monte Testaccio where within the African material the Tripolitanian amphorae are also predominant; although there is no table to show this as is provided for the rest of the sites. In Ostia also the African amphorae are the main class during this period but they come from Africa Proconsularis. As the author points out, the pottery evidence suggests a high degree of specialization in the rôle of the sites but it is still too early to confirm this theory. Nevertheless, what comes to mind is the increasing involvement of Africans in the grain supply in Ostia during the second and third centuries A.D. studied by Cebeillac-Gervasoni. Whether and how we can relate both sets of evidence only further research will tell.

Earl and colleagues' article on the computer techniques used for the Palazzo Imperiale is indicative of how new technologies allow us to reconstruct ancient buildings. It is also particularly relevant in sites like *Portus* where due to its size, traditional archaeological excavations do not always allow an understanding of the site in full. Nevertheless the subject is complex and needs the introduction on the technology used; this makes the article longer than the rest and slightly unbalances the unity of the book, as does the fact that two of the articles of this section (Earl and Paroli) start with very similar introductions on the excavations in the *Portus* area.

The next two articles focus on the Antemurale located in between the basin of the harbour of Claudius and the one of Trajan, a revealing site on which to conduct an archaeological excavation to understand the development and changes undertaken during these two key periods in the history of the harbour facilities, the transition between the Julio-Claudian and Trajanic periods and its renewed importance during the fourth and sixth centuries A.D. The Paroli and Ricci article

focuses on the archaeological excavation; this is fleshed out with study of the ceramic evidence in Di Santo's article.

Di Giuseppe's article presents the study on the pottery recovered in the Basilica during the excavations conducted by the Soprintendenza in 1991 and 1997. The evidence here is more varied than in the Palazzo Imperiale but the African pottery is the more dominant. The three articles on the pottery provide a good comparison between the evidence in Ostia and *Portus* (and Rome), providing evidence for the fact that the two sites had very differentiated rôles during the Roman period and so we no longer have to see *Portus* as dependent on Ostia.

The last three articles study the area of *Portus* from a topographical perspective. Germoni and colleagues present the results of a geophysical survey conducted by the *Portus* project team in 2008 and 2009 that will carry on until 2012. This survey is a continuation of the work done by the same team in the eastern area of *Portus*, whose results were published in 2005. The beneficial results of a geophysical survey are undeniable in vast areas like *Portus* and the new campaigns have helped to identify further storage and other buildings. The article is fleshed out by a good introduction on the surveys that preceded this one and by a gazetteer that will be very useful for future researchers.

Serlorenzi and Di Giuseppe's article on the survey undertaken in the area further up the Tiber works admirably as the final chapter. It exemplifies what the rest of the research on *Portus* and its hinterland achieves: to increase our knowledge on the area of *Portus*. In this case the discoveries on the salt works complement the literary sources and undoubtedly improve our knowledge of the production of such an important commodity for Rome.

Portus and its Hinterland is an important publication because it successfully (and quickly) publishes the results of the research undertaken by several research teams and is another step towards understanding the organization of the supply to Rome as well as its maritime façade. As the editors write in the introduction, *Portus* cannot be understood without Ostia, the Tiber and Rome. Let us hope that future workshops will also include the research currently being undertaken in Rome by the Soprintendenza Speciale per i beni Archeologici di Roma in the Testaccio neighbourhood, the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome in the Porticus Aemilia, and the ongoing excavations in the Monte Testaccio by the University of Barcelona. It is in this wider context where *Portus and its Hinterland* becomes essential.

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