Ray Laurence, *Roman Archaeology for Historians*, Routledge Publishing House, 2012, 192 pages, ISBN 978-0-415-50592-5

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Ray Laurence is professor of Roman history and archaeology at the University of Kent, United Kingdom. Since joining Kent in 2010, he has been Head of Classical and Archaeological Studies and is currently Director of Research and Enterprise for the Faculty of Humanities. His book, Roman Archaeology for Historians is part of the series 'Approaching the Ancient World' edited by Richard Stoneman.

The volume starts with the list of illustrations (pp.VI-VIII), followed by the preface (pp. IX-XIV), 11 chapters (pp. 1-163), bibliography (pp. 164-184) and an index (pp. 185-192). It also contains 40 black and white illustrations and plans included in the chapters of the book.

Chapter 1 brings forth *Questions of Evidence*: the use of evidence resulted from consulting ancient text and archaeological data. The archaeologist and the ancient historian both try to analyze their evidence separately however these can actually intermingle, as seen from the example of Josephus' description of Caesarea and how it helps the diggings there. However, problems occur when the ancient writers speak about things that happened a long time before them: the example of Plutarch and Appian presenting Tiberius Gracchus' reforms. As the author points out there is a need to "re-contextualize the textual evidence so that it can address questions of long-term history" (p. 12)

The second chapter of the book is entitled *Dialogues of Academic Difference. The Present Past of Roman Studies*. Ray Laurence tries to present here, from an English perspective, how the attitude of intellectuals towards archaeology and ancient history did not change much from the turn of the 20th century to present day. The chapter presents how archaeology was viewed in the Edwardian age, giving the examples of Thomas Haverfield and Edward Ashby, how British archaeology was regarded in Italy in the late 20th century – the author briefly presents the work of Martin Frederiksen. Going back to Roman Britain he makes a comparison between the Journal of Roman Studies, Britannia and Journal of Roman Archaeology. The third part, entitled The rise of theory, presents the influence and development of the Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (TRAC) and Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG). The last part of the chapter focuses on Roman archaeology in the 21st century. The author notices that now more than ever we see a fragmentation of Roman archaeology, due to geographical, institutional and theoretical reasons which "can only be addressed through direct collaboration to produce a fully engaged synthesis of a key subject" (p. 23).

The third chapter discusses going *From topography to Archaeology. Revealing the Roman Forum*. The author evaluates how archaeological projects impact our understanding of Roman *fora*. He starts by examining how texts help in topography, moving forward to examining archaeological investigations from the Forum Romanum in Rome and other *fora*. He discusses the stratigraphy and pavement of this forum, the other examples coming from Segobriga, Terracina and Velleia: they contain evidence that such spaces were
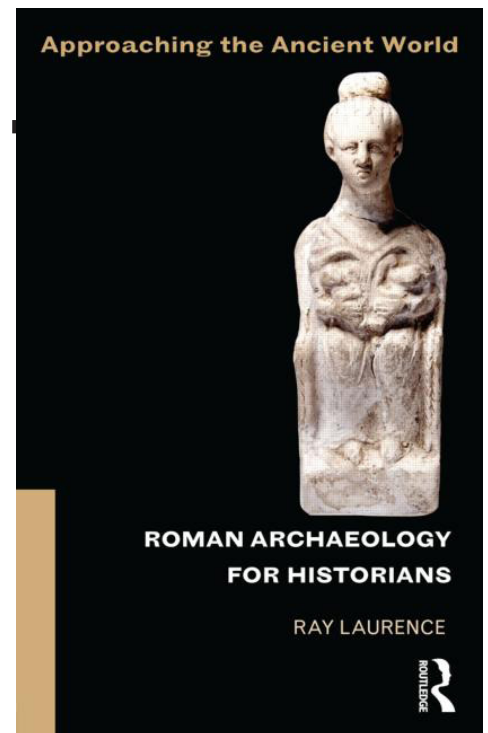
"marked" by the persons who had built them – inscriptions found in situ or by accident are proof of this. The chapter ends with the question of What is a forum in light of this archaeological research? Going over the examples, we can see that the *fora* were not empty spaces, instead they contained inscriptions displaying the name of the person who paid for them. This tests the idea of Vitruvius that activities in the forum were contained in a rectilinear space. As Laurence points out they were rather taking place "in a square place that he associated with the Greek *agora*" (p. 40).

Chapter four of the book is entitled From the City to the Country. Archaeological Excavation and Field Survey. The author briefly presents the economic models proposed for the Roman Empire by Michael Rostovtzeff and Moses Finley and concludes: "Roman historians have often manipulated the archaeological record to produce conclusions that are often a reflection of their own ideological positions in the present." (p. 44). The remainder of the chapter focuses on examples of excavated villas around Rome: the villa from Boscoreale, the villa of Livia from the Prima Porta and another villa located three miles north of Rome. These examples are used to highlight how our perception about city-country (rural area) has changed: in the 20th century city and country were seen as disparate entities while now the two are converging into an "urban process" (p. 58).

The next chapter moves From Italy to the provinces. Imperialism and cultural change. Laurence debates here some of the key points of Romanization, relating them to historians, from the perspective or Roman Britain, "a province on the periphery of the Roman Empire but at the very centre of the debate over the nature of Romanization." (p. 59). Going from Moses Finley's *Ancient Economy* to Martin Millett's *Romanization of Britain* the author presents briefly how the concept of Romanization evolved. For the latter Romanization is "a two-way process of acculturation" (p. 60), possibly initiated even by natives of the province. Laurence also points out the key variables set out by Millett about this process: speed of conquest and demilitarization, speed of integration of the native elite, the level of urbanization of the existing society, the level and direction of trade and the development of agriculture. The discussion then moves to Rome as a world empire, based on Wallerstein's world system analysis of the modern world. Agency and power relations are analyzed next: the "repressive nature of the Roman Empire" (p. 65) is discussed here. According to Antonio Gramsci the ruling class maintain their power at all costs after obtaining consent of their social inferior while for Forcy and Mattingly the agency of the empire lies in the hands of the army and of the elite. With regards to Resistance and post-colonial discourse archaeological finds are used as examples: the lighting from oil lamps was not used in Britain, this being true for other typical Roman cultural forms. Laurence next asks And what happened to the economy, concluding that 'very little actual work has been conducted on the archaeology of the Roman economy." (p. 69). Approaches to the Romanization of Britain in the 21st century are analyzed next: the author goes over the historiography of the subject from the last 20 years, concluding that "the issue of cultural change is not black and white but a series of gray shades that vary according to context that affects both sides of the

rejected categories of Roman and indigenous." (pp. 72-73).

Chapter six presents The Archaeologists' Roman Towns. The discussion is focused on laying out lines of research into Roman cities, from simple descriptions to patterns of behavior. The author interprets Roman towns and their public spaces from all over the Empire: Colchester, Pompeii, Perge, Minturnae etc. Open spaces – forums, amphitheaters – are connected with violence: in Pompeii, the amphitheater was a place where Sulla's opponents were executed while the Coliseum emerged after the civil war of 69. Laurence discusses next the urban experience: it is similar because cities "were sacred sites that shared a similar language in the form of the architecture of theatres, fora, amphitheaters, statues" (p. 81). The concept of urban change is exemplified with references to the city of Perge, in Pamphylia (*e.g.* an arch dedicated by Plancia Magna in her own name, the absence of statuary representing human males, except emperors, at the city entrance) while Spatial archaeology and the Roman city are discussed in connection with Pompeii. The position of thresholds to doors, nature of road surfaces, traffic-flow, studies of wheel-ruts all help in creating a "space syntax" (p. 90).

Chapter seven focuses on Military and Civilian: Re-interpreting the Roman Fort at Vindolanda. There is from the beginning a clear difference between the two categories: this is true for how they are seen in Roman law, in social situations – the soldier could wear a sword and sword belt – etc. Gender and space are analyzed first. The idea that forts were the exclusive domain of soldiers is the first to be challenged, with the *vici* being the place of interaction between civilians and soldiers. Archaeological evidence from Vindolanda proves otherwise: a large number of shoes of different sizes and styles, some typical for women and children, were found here. Studies of jewelry found in the fort and in the *vicus* support this: women and children did live in the fort. Such is the case of one commander from the 2nd century, Flavius Cerealis who lived with wife Sulpicia Lepidina and children, whether their own or belonging to slaves. Laurence then asks Are forts cities? Seasonality and demography at Vindolanda. If forts are a form of Roman urbanism, some resemblance of the public features must exist, such as bathing and washing. In the case of auxiliary forts, such facilities are reserved for the commanding officer and his family only because they are Roman citizens and thus have a higher status. In conclusion, there are similarities between the auxiliary fort from Vindolanda and a Roman city but there are also differences. Soldiers, Latin and Romanization are analyzed next. The case of a unit of Batavians stationed in the fort is put forward, with the obvious question of how did they live in such forts, given that in their homeland features associated with Romanization are not encountered. Their usage of the Latin language is also discussed: seal boxes containing letters from soldiers serving on the front to their families were discovered in Netherlands and there is evidence for a line from Virgil's *Aeneid*. The demographic and economic impact of the Roman army is also brought under scrutiny: the army has the capacity to produce goods for its own consumption but it still interacts with economy of the province through its purchasing of different goods (wine, olive, *fibulae*, fine pottery etc.). Two economic models are seen: one is Finley's primi-

tivist economic model, the other is developed by Lo Cascio who sees the army as an economic accelerator. Communities of soldiers and civilians are seen in the end of this chapter through a new prism: they are frontier communities, with the accent not placed on stressing the separate identities of their members.

The next chapter is entitled Peopling the Roman Past: Do the Dead Tell Tales? In the first part, Skeletons and childhood, the focus in on social history based on the study of skeletons from cemeteries. Can skeletons offers us absolute data? How can we view the dead infant/child placed in the grave by adults? How can we differentiate infanticide from death of fetuses at birth? Looking at Ostia's and Portus' cemetery population 2000 skeletons can be brought into the discussion but only 800 were identified with a full set of bones. Such a large sample can shed light on living conditions in the cities and this is what Laurence points out: he analyzes studies about their height, their health (noting anemia and deficiency in vitamins B_9 and B_{12}, teeth problems, the presence of malaria) and their diet. As Laurence points out they also "formed the basis for the first ever data-led study of migration to Italy" (p. 119). Cultural diversity and migration to the towns of Roman Britain are analyzed next. Two studies conducted by Hella Eckardt are used by Laurence: one included the study of isotopes of oxygen and strontium on 45 individuals from Winchester while the other included the study of the same isotopes in the context of a mass grave from Gloucester, perhaps connected to the Antonine Plague: both studies brought forth evidence for migration. Images of people: people and images focuses on how all these different people represented the human form and includes the case-study of Regina, a freed slave, whose tomb was found at South Shields. Mobility and cultural change has been influenced by the new studies on skeletons; migration is greater than what originally believed. People circulated along with ideas and their conceptions about how things should work (p. 126). To quote Laurence "for towns to flourish over the long term, migration contributed to their continuing existence and growth." (p. 127)

In chapter nine, Ray Laurence discusses Plants, Animals and Diet. He tells from the start that he aims at examining how historians to obtain a better understanding of landscape exploitation can use archaeological evidence. The work of Wilhelmina Jashemski on Pompeii is used as an example of pioneer work with great results. Animal bones, meat consumption and improved breeds are analyzed next: oxen and cows are favored in the northern regions of the Empire and sheep and goats in the south with the exception of Italy where pork meat remain predominant. Percentages for each group of animals is given for Italy. Also we are informed that the size of the animals has increased during the Empire as compared to the Republic. The games, town foundation and ritual deposition of animals are discussed next. Rituals for the foundation of towns are connected with *fora*: there are pits discovered filled with items "deliberately deposited" (p. 132) and a lot of them contain skeletons of animals, particularly dogs. Some interpretations had linked them to pre-Roman Britain while others connect them to Roman rituals for town foundation. Criteria for establishing we are faced with a ritual are the findings of fully articulated

skeletons, articulated limbs, whole skulls and large concentrations of bones. Such rituals tend to disappear in the early medieval period most likely due to the rise of Christianity. Next, we are presented with meat-consumption patterns in a Roman town: Winchester is chosen for this. Analysis of bones found here proves the existence of professional butchers, that inhabitants had access to a good supply of meat and differences in the pattern of meat consumption in a Roman town compared to the countryside. The next subchapter presents the Roman impact on paleo-landscapes: the creation of *villa* led to a "shift from finding cereal pollen at 50% of Iron Age sites to 75% in the Roman period" (p. 136) while the construction of Hadrian's Wall meant timber was used in large quantities and the vegetation shifted from woodland to grassland. The final discussion is about Diet: did it change with Roman annexation? Samples of skeletons from the Iron Age and Roman period provide the answer to this: there is an increase in the consumption of marine animals, an increase in dental, metabolic and infectious diseases, a decrease in trauma and a marked increase in rickets in tuberculosis (associated with the Roman period). In the Roman period, the risk of male death or disease was much higher and this was connected with more widely applied healing practices.

Chapter ten is about Looking in Museums: Discovering Artefacts. How do we know who used the objects displayed in museums? What is their life course? How can we actually interpret them? And how can visitors relate to them and better understand their use, given that the labels contain little information? The author discusses these questions here. He describes the museum experience as a visual one as visitors are not allowed to touch/feel the objects on display. Discovered artefacts also tend to be associated with certain functions or roles but that may not always be true. Worst of all, most artefacts are not even published, being available only to specialists. Laurence argues that universities could intervene here and with the help of their bodies of undergraduates in history and archaeology could help spread knowledge and awareness via simple methods such as internet or smartphone. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to a case-study of Dea Nutrix and its representations located in the Canterbury Roman Museum: the literature pertaining to it is presented but we are also given a framework for creating a new meaning for it. The chapter ends with a brief discussion about Raw materials, the landscape and sensory perception.

The final chapter of the book, chapter eleven, is entitled End Piece: a Post-Archaeology Age? Laurence refers here to the role of archaeology in the society of the 21st century, given that, at least in Britain, it is "besieged and the subject's values of conservation, collecting and recording are under threat." (p. 157). The role of TV programmes concerned with archaeology (Re-animation), the financial global crisis affecting this academic discipline and the ability of archaeology to produce spectacle are all discussed here. The book ends with a brief view on hybridization of archaeology and ancient history. To quote Laurence: "This means the strong assertive boundaries between the two disciplines are pulled apart and intermingling of the two disciplines happens, mostly not in a disciplined way, but in a less organized even post-modern format to create an intersection between two disciplinary

positions – it is a hybrid and it is evolving."

The book written by Laurence can be seen as an appeal to both archaeologist and ancient historian to stop treating each other's subject as "*hic sunt leones*". In our current post-modern age, they must work together: the archaeologist must take into account ancient texts and writers and re-contextualize their work while the ancient historian must always keep in mind when formulating ideas the discoveries of archaeology, no longer considered the "handmaiden of history". Beyond this, the book is a guide for students: it teaches them how archaeology can be used to further the advances of ancient history and how to integrate physical, material evidence in the history of the studied period. The book is centered on the history and archaeology of the Roman Empire but it is our belief that this approach can be useful for other periods as well and this makes it an important theoretical work.