

whole. The difficult record has surely proved limiting in this regard, though perhaps to no great disadvantage, when such interesting stories were being played out at scale.

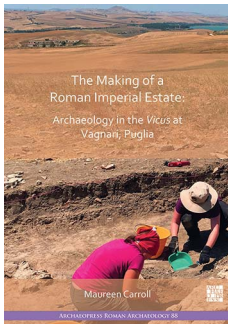
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MAUREEN CARROLL (ed.). 2022. *The making of a Roman imperial estate: archaeology in the Vicus at Vagnari, Puglia* (Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 88). Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-80327-205-4 paperback £58.



This edited book presents the results of the University of York’s excavations at Vagnari (2012–2019), located close to the route of the important Via Appia, in southern Italy. It is the final project report and the volume is presented in a ‘standard’ format, featuring introductory chapters on the project (Carroll) and the topographical and landscape contexts of the study area (Small and Wigand, respectively), followed by individual sections on the structures and phasing, and then specialist reports on the various finds and analyses carried out (e.g. material culture, environmental records). The volume features 23 chapters and six appendices comprising the inventory lists and catalogues of finds, according to their class of material.

It is not possible in the available space to discuss each chapter; instead, I focus on general points of interest that emerge from the project.

The investigations at Vagnari are of considerable historical interest for two reasons. First, the nature of the site—a Roman village (*vicus*)—is a type of settlement that has been little explored archaeologically. Specifically, this vicus lay at the centre of an agricultural estate that, from the early first century AD, belonged to the emperor. Whilst the surviving writings of Roman jurists and land surveyors contain information on villages, only a handful of these have been excavated: for example, the vicus Falacrinae, in central Italy (De Santis & Gasparini 2009) and the [vicus Augusti Laurentium](#), near Ostia (Claridge 1998). Second, Vagnari is situated in Apulia, an area that during the third and second centuries BC witnessed dramatic change, including the Roman conquest, the Hannibalic war, and subsequent conversion of property into *ager publicus* (public land of the Roman State). The project therefore offered the opportunity to investigate, archaeologically, “the impact of this annexation” (p. 7).

Over the years, other archaeological projects by Edinburgh, Foggia and McMaster universities have investigated the general area of Vagnari. The more recent work has focused on two nearby sites connected with the vicus: a modest villa at San Felice, built in the first century BC and which, in the imperial period, may have been the residence of a lower-rank imperial administrator, and, second, the village's necropolis, excavation of which has allowed isotopic studies of the human remains (e.g. Emery *et al.* 2018).

The Vagnari project set out to “gain insight into the socio-economic complexities of the estate, the role of slave and free labour and the working and living conditions of the inhabitants” (p. 3). These aims were only partly achieved due to the nature of the archaeological evidence: besides disturbance caused by modern agricultural work, the excavation revealed that, from about the middle of the third century AD onwards, buildings had been systematically dismantled and robbed for their materials. Consequently, the assemblages recovered are rather small. Nonetheless, the excavation results permit the reconstruction of a clear settlement history. There was some sort of settlement at the site in the second and first centuries BC, although it is attested only through pottery finds. Masonry structures of the first century AD were remodelled in the second and third centuries AD, first with the addition of a small winery with large terracotta vessels sunken into the ground (*dolia defossa*), then a portico building subdivided into sections by wattle-and-daub walls, and finally, a porch. A devastating fire occurred in the second half of the third century AD, followed by the stripping of furnishings and the dismantling of structures for the retrieval of useful materials.

Similar to other Roman agricultural estates, there is no evidence at Vagnari for a hyper-specialised economy, but rather a range of exploitation strategies were pursued: animal husbandry, with a predominance of sheep/goat, but also some cattle and pigs; viticulture; cereal cultivation with indications of complex crop management systems; and craft activities (e.g. lead working, tile making). The extra-regional economic exchange networks of the vicus can be only partially glimpsed, due to the residual nature of most of the finds. These contacts are evidenced by a few imported items (e.g. a *mortarium* from Campania; marble from Greece), as well as the suggestion of the possible extra-regional sourcing of particularly large animal breeds.

Above all, the project has revealed something intriguing about the management of imperial estates. The evidence comes from the fragments of *dolia* found in the second-century AD winery. Ceramic analyses reveal that the source of the clay was either northern Campania or, more likely, the area around Rome. Although the manufacture of large vessels of this type was a laborious and expensive enterprise, it was possible to produce or procure *dolia* from much closer to Vagnari than Campania or Rome; the long-distance transport of these vessels from the Tyrrhenian coast to the vicus is therefore surprising. Rather than acquiring these items on the market, it appears that the administration of the imperial estate considered it preferable to move these assets long distances between one imperial property and another, or to use *figlinae* (pottery production centres) that were part of the emperor's personal estate—especially numerous in the area around Rome.

The rapid publication of this volume after the end of the project in 2019 is to be commended, all the more so considering the subsequent pandemic and its impact on access to archives, libraries

and other resources. Indeed, some of the specialist reports note that it was not possible to conduct full-scale research on comparanda. Nonetheless, this has not affected the quality of the results. The volume is well produced and fully illustrated, with many colour images, and only a few typos and slips in the cross-references to the figures. The book will be of particular interest to scholars and research students interested in the Roman agricultural economy, the archaeology of Roman *vici*, and in details about the management of, and daily life on, an imperial estate.

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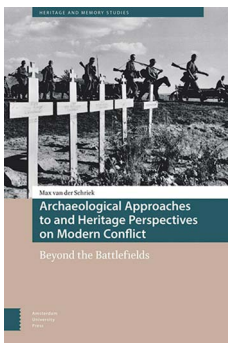
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MAX VAN DER SCHRIEK. 2022. *Archaeological approaches to and heritage perspectives on modern conflict: beyond the battlefields* (Heritage and Memory Studies 16). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press; 978-90-485-5414-0 hardback €119.



This notable volume provides insight into contemporary perspectives on archaeological approaches to, and memorialisation of, modern battlefields in the context of the First and Second World War. It proposes an interdisciplinary methodology to research the sites and landscapes of modern conflicts, with a focus on the Netherlands. Van der Schriek offers a proficient overview of these topics, starting with the development of modern conflict archaeology as a “distinctive branch within the wider archaeological discipline” (p. 77); the following chapters move on to explore specific applications and discoveries, along with some of the practical and ethical challenges. Van der Schriek points out that, in the Netherlands and other European countries, interest in modern conflict archaeology deviates somewhat from research on ancient sites. To emphasise the specific contribution of modern conflict archaeology, the