on various aspects of the Roman economy that is all too often ignored in Britain and North America.

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ROMAN RURAL SETTLEMENT

S. L. DYSON: *The Roman Countryside*. Pp. 128, maps. London: Duckworth, 2003. Paper, £10.99. ISBN: 0-7156-3225-6.

R. FRANCOVICH, R. HODGES: *Villa to Village. The Transformation of the Roman Countryside in Italy, c.400–1000*. Pp. 127, map, ills. London: Duckworth, 2003. Paper, £10.99. ISBN: 0-7156-3192-6.

These two books are further contributions to the attractive and readable Duckworth's Debates in Archaeology series, described on the back covers as 'short volumes, each devoted to a theme which is the subject of contemporary debate in archaeology . . . designed to be accessible to students and serious scholars alike'. The texts in the series are about 40,000 words long (maximum), and illustrated with relatively few figures, targeted to be short but authoritative discussions. The latest two are strong additions to the series and read well as a pair, because though *The Roman Countryside* has examples from throughout the Empire and *Villa to Village* deals only with Italy, the former makes full use of Italian material and together they deal with one of the major themes of Mediterranean landscape history and archaeology: the nature of rural settlement in classical antiquity, and its eventual replacement by the system of medieval villages that still provides the dominant fabric of the Mediterranean rural landscape today.

The first chapter of *The Roman Countryside* concentrates on the villa: after a historical survey of villa studies, the principal features of the *villa maritima*, *villa suburbana*, and *villa rustica* are described and illustrated, mostly with classic examples from Italy such as the Villa of Tiberius at Sperlonga, the Villa of the Quintilii, Piazza Armerina, Settefinestre, the San Rocco/Posto villas, and smaller ones such as those the author excavated at Buccino. The chapter ends with a short review of past debates on the rôle of the villa in the Roman economy in the writings of Michael Rostovtzeff, Robin Collingwood, and Moses Finley. The second chapter describes the contribution of archaeological field surveys to mapping the Roman countryside, with examples of rural landscapes taken principally from Italy (South Etruria, Ager Cosanus), Spain (e.g. Ager Tarraconensis, Guadalquivir valley), and North Africa (Kasserine), and mining landscapes from Spain and Britain, with production and trade also reviewed from the evidence of pottery production sites. The third chapter continues the theme of rural settlement with the contribution of aerial photography (e.g. for studying centuriation), but then focuses more on the evidence of settlement archaeology and palynology for the nature of agricultural systems, animal husbandry, olive cultivation, and so on, using examples taken from throughout the empire. The fourth chapter discusses the extent to which Roman values were accepted or resisted in the countryside, using the evidence of religious structures in particular. The last main chapter describes the transformations to the Roman countryside that happened with the transition to the early Middle Ages.

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That chapter introduces the main theme of *Villa to Village*, the nature of the transformations to the Italian countryside in the period A.D. 400–1000, that is, between the collapse of the Roman settlement system and the emergence of the medieval hilltop village. Both Riccardo Francovich and Richard Hodges have written individually on this theme, particularly in the context of their separate excavations of a series of major early medieval settlements, but this book had its origins in their discussions over the final publication of their joint excavations of the hilltop medieval settlement of Montarrenti near Siena in Tuscany. The principal argument of *Villa to Village* is that the origins of village settlement in Italy significantly pre-date historical models based on the tenth century 'foundation dates' of most villages. The first chapter summarizes the development of the 'Roman villa to medieval village' debate by historians and archaeologists. The second chapter deals with the demise of the Roman settlement system in the fifth and sixth centuries, based on regional surveys of rural settlement and high-quality excavations of key villas such as Matrice, Settefinestre, San Giusto, San Giovanni di Ruoti, Torrita di Siena, Monte Barro, and Mola di Monte Gelato. Using the evidence of critical recent excavations such as Castel San Donato, Montarrenti, Poggibonsi, and Scarlino, they argue that peasant households cooperating as villages then established the first hilltop settlements in the later sixth or early seventh centuries (Chapter 3). By the later eighth and early ninth centuries, they suggest in Chapter 4, we can discern *curtis* forms of manorial settlement at these and other sites that, like the Santa Cornelia *domusculta* in South Etruria and the abbey of San Vincenzo al Volturno, indicate that systems of lordship were already developing that presaged the emergence of seigneurial power and the feudal landscape by A.D. 1000. The final chapter (Chapter 5) summarizes the sequence.

The books provide very useful overviews of complex literature by experts in their fields. They are both testimony to the vitality of Roman and medieval landscape and settlement archaeology in recent decades (in the case of *Villa to Village*, with a notable contribution by the authors, their students, and collaborators) and its contribution to forwarding our understanding of major historical themes. The main weaknesses are in the use of illustrations and referencing, which are inconsistent between the two volumes. The themes discussed by Steve Dyson in *The Roman Countryside* would have been more effective if they had been supported by some well-chosen illustrations of the kind that are a considerable help to the reader following the arguments of *Villa to Village*. Referencing is also somewhat capricious, with points of detail sometimes fully referenced but pages-long discussions of key sites such as Settefinestre missing any reference in the text to the bibliography. There is a comment at the beginning of the bibliography that it presents the material the author found useful in writing the book together with articles and books that will introduce the reader to current research, but without further guidance it seems a lot to ask the reader to get on with reading the 300+ references cited, from Agache to Woolf, to find out that it was Andrea Carandini who excavated Settefinestre! Text and supporting bibliography are much better integrated in *Villa to Village*. These two books provide stimulating studies for professional scholars already reasonably well acquainted with the material being used, but there needs to be more consistency in approach if the admirable Duckworth Debates in Archaeology series is to be as accessible to students and general readers as the series editor (Richard Hodges) wishes.

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