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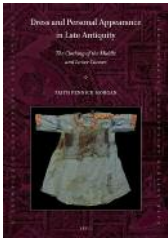
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REVIEWS



Faith Pennick Morgan, *Dress and Personal Appearance in Late Antiquity. The Clothing of the Middle and Lower Classes*. 2018. Boston: Brill. Late Antique Archaeology (Supplementary Series), Vol 1. 243 pages. ISBN: 978-90-04-35346-6.

By late antiquity, the Romans can no longer be seen as the “toga’ed race”, either figuratively or literally. With the explosion of studies on every aspect of the 3rd to 7th centuries AD, we are growing to understand many of the radical social, intellectual and ethnic changes of our period. Yet Morgan’s monograph on late antique dress is virtually unique. Roman imperial clothing styles have been analysed and documented, most notably in *The World of Roman Costume* (eds J.L. Sebesta, L. Bonfante, Madison-WI, 1994) and – with comments on evolution in late antiquity – within *Roman Clothing and Fashion* (A.T. Croom, Stroud, 2000), but for specific focus on the late period we have relied on shorter publications on particular aspects of dress. In *Dress and Personal Appearance in Late Antiquity*, Morgan presents a comprehensive account of the clothing worn by men, women and children of dif-

ferent classes across the 3rd to 7th centuries AD, well-illustrated with more than 100 colour plates. In spite of the title, she addresses elite as well as middle and lower class dress. She demonstrates that the standard “outfit” of late antiquity was a long sleeved tunic worn with mantle or cloak, and, for men, leggings or trousers. She also addresses footwear, headwear, hairstyles, bags and belts, mantles and cloaks, children’s and servants’ garments, indications of status, symbolism, mourning and religious wear. This overview draws on both previous scholarship and new investigation of a wide variety of written and visual sources, but the core body of evidence is 144 extant garments or fragments in museum collections, illustrated and described in detail in a series of appendices.

A considerable part of the book (chapter 3) is dedicated to apotropaic elements of clothing. Chapter 4 examines the “life of clothes”: construction, washing, mending, reuse and second hand clothing, mostly based on the close examination of clothing finds. The heart and most intriguing aspect of the work is the clothing reconstructions presented in chapter 5. Rather than reconstructing clothes on the basis of visual images in mosaics, sculptures etc., Morgan has set out

to make near-exact copies of found garments (therefore of course biased to Egyptian finds). Parallels outside Egypt are drawn through use of texts and pictorial images, also reproduced. The measurements, fabric, weight, cut, sewing and decoration have been reproduced and then the garments modelled on men, women and children of various ages - in one case, even a baby doll! These are presented in charming photos, alongside photos of the original garments, which bring the reality of late antiquity to life.

Chapters 1 and 2 (which is somewhat vaguely titled "Late antique society") could have been more tightly edited, as the material tends to be repeated in different parts - mourning clothes are described twice under the headings of "Religion and Dress" and "Colour", for example. Much of the initial overview in chapter 1 is repeated in chapter 2, and the long digression on curse tablets and magical beliefs would sit more comfortably in the chapter on apotropaic practices.

There is a brief but very helpful glossary, as well as discussion on the ambiguity and fluidity of terms and the difficulty of assigning specific designs to many ancient words; and 11 line drawings illustrate weaving and other production techniques.

The history of ordinary people - so often invisible - is explored through their items of clothing, which surprisingly seem to have included jewelry and to have differed little from those of the upper classes in style although not in quality and quantity. While the price of the book will preclude individual purchase by many, this is an invaluable volume for libraries and Morgan has made a unique contribution to our sense of life in Late Antiquity.

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Enrico Cirelli, *La ceramica di Cencelle nel Medioevo. I materiali rinvenuti negli scavi dell'École française de Rome (Settore III, 1994-1999)*. 2017. Rome: Collection de l'École française de Rome, 539. 186 pagine. ISBN: 978-2-7283-1284-9.



Il sito di Cencelle viene fondato nell'854 sotto il pontificato di Leone IV con il nome di *Leopolis*, per raccogliere la popolazione dispersa da alcune decine di anni nei territori limitrofi, a seguito della distruzione nell'813 ad opera dei musulmani del porto e della città di *Centumcellae*, l'odierna Civitavecchia, per altro mai del tutto abbandonata.

L'École française de Rome, sotto la direzione di François Bougard, insieme all'Università La Sapienza di Roma, dal 1994 al 1999 ha intrapreso indagini archeologiche presso il settore III della città, pubblicandone i risultati in numerosi lavori. Lo studio di parte dei materiali ceramici era già stato affidato all'autore per la sua tesi di laurea e in seguito pubblicato in una serie di lavori dal 1996 al 2016.

Questo nuovo volume di Enrico Cirelli sulla ceramica di Cencelle nasce con uno scopo differente dalle precedenti pubblicazioni sull'argomento, anzi rende queste imprescindibili premesse per sviluppare nuove e più approfondite argomentazioni.

La trattazione si apre con un inquadramento storico, che consente di situare la descrizione dei contesti analizzati. L'isolato III, ben delimitato da strade in pietra trachitica, è un quartiere residenziale connotato anche da tracce di attività artigianale, in particolare legate alla lavorazione del ferro e della ceramica. Le evidenze stratigrafiche mostrano che l'occupazione prevalente si concentra tra la metà del XIII e la fine del XIV secolo, per giungere agli inizi del XV secolo, ma vi sono materiali ri-

feribili anche alla seconda metà del IX secolo.

Il fulcro del lavoro è certamente il capitolo centrale (Capitolo 2, I reperti ceramici), dove trovano spazio le descrizioni delle diverse classi ceramiche rinvenute: ceramica a vetrina pesante, maiolica arcaica, ceramica dipinta sotto vetrina, ceramica invetriata verde, graffita arcaica tirrenica e altre importazioni dal Mediterraneo, ceramica comune, ceramica dipinta in rosso o bruno, ceramica comune da cucina e ceramica invetriata internamente, ciascuna analizzata nelle diverse forme. Ogni classe è corredata di approfondimenti sulla tecnologia di produzione e sulla morfologia delle forme che sostanziano e qualificano il catalogo dei reperti, dei quali viene sempre offerto sia il disegno archeologico, sia un apparato fotografico molto efficaci.

Tuttavia la cifra di questo volume è senz'altro rappresentata dal metodo di lavoro, che ha previsto la campionatura di tutti gli impasti e dei tipi di rivestimento e la loro analisi, sia macroscopica (microscopio a 20 ingrandimenti), sia su sezioni sottili per identificare le possibili aree di produzione. Questo dato, unito alla quantificazione degli individui appartenenti alle diverse classi ceramiche consente all'Autore di rielaborare i dati in tabelle e grafici e di incrociare il numero degli individui di ciascuna tipologia con le fasi cronologiche e i gruppi di impasto.

Nelle conclusioni vengono messi in luce i risultati di questo tipo di analisi, che non solo attestano la presenza a Cencelle di attività produttive artigianali all'interno dell'abitato, ma testimoniano anche l'esistenza, accanto ad un nucleo di piccoli proprietari terrieri, di un ceto mercantile artefice di una vivace attività commerciale.

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Susan Oosthuizen, *The Anglo-Saxon Fenland*. 2017. Oxford: Windgather Press, 156 pages. ISBN: 978-1-91118-808-7



There's an increasing interest on the so called marginal landscapes. Marshes, woodland, mountains have long been neglected by archaeologists, whose main interest used to be to find things more than to understand processes. This book is not just one more to add to the list. It is not merely a book following the prolific tradition of British landscape archaeology.

It is structured in seven chapters. The first two (*the Wide Wilderness; One of the Loneliest Places of Country*) are a rebuttal of the concept of wilderness. Convincingly, the author confutes the prejudice that civilization and population density have to do with the proximity to towns and fertile alluvial plains. She demonstrates that the Fens have been intensively settled and exploited even in the post-Roman and early-Saxon periods, notwithstanding their fragile environmental settings. The third chapter (*Cultural Identity in the Early Medieval Fenland*) faces one of the most sensitive topics debated by researchers in the last thirty years. The author suggests that the focus should shift from the concept of migration as an exceptional event, to the rate of people periodically on the move. This is a challenging new perspective that will raise a lively debate in the forthcoming years.

The new frontier for researchers is to evaluate the degree of regional integration, whose pace can be different from place to place. A frontier region and a marshland can return different rhythms. So wisely, the author does not question the fact that there were people moving from the North Sea basin to the British isles in the 5th

century AD. But she stresses the fact that this has always happened since the prehistory and that the results of new isotope analyses fit with the available archaeological data and an intensive and profitable study on place names. They all point out at a remarkable persistence of Romano-British population in the Fenland, while proves of a military conquest of the region by newcomers is questionable. Hence, native communities of peasants and breeders used to manage a complicated grazing cycle since the Iron Age. Maybe also the Romans behaved like the Anglo-Saxons: they integrated themselves with natives without changing the general settings, because it used to work well. The remarkable analysis of place names stratigraphy proved to be helpful and it is a model to apply worldwide. It is argued that the Romans excavated some channels (the lodes), while others are convincingly attributed by the author to the early and middle Anglo-Saxon period.

The fourth chapter (*Brigands and Bandits*) comes back to the concept of wilderness to show how much sophisticated has to be the management of such a fragile environment that it is hard to conclude that it used to be sparsely settled by brigands and bandits. On the contrary, local communities need to have had a complex organisation, a long term planning capacity, a strong agreement. At the end this particular environment needs an uninterrupted, careful maintenance of the water's level. If a portion of the fens is abandoned, the environment changes drastically in a few decades, even within a similar climatic setting. People had to stay there, despite political changes, because they had to manage the environment. Something similar has been recently demonstrat-

ed by José María Martín Civantos in Sierra Nevada's water management. As Susan Oosthuizen points out, there are now several case studies all around Europe that show a sophisticated level of water management after the collapse of the Roman west and before the raise of high medieval European civilization. Finally, historiography has dismissed a persistent prejudice.

The following two chapters focus on case studies within the selected region (*Ely and the central Peat lands; Rich Hay and commons*). This allows the author to detail the general ideas exposed before with a rich set of sources and data. It is remarkable the potential level of knowledge that a multidisciplinary approach can reach.

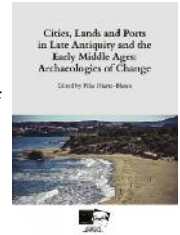
The seventh chapter is the core of the book (*Managing Commons for a Livelihood*). There's an increasing interest on bottom-up processes in literature, at least for the middle ages, without any echo of neo-Marxist thought. It is now clear that late antique and early medieval elites had no idea of how to manage even a simple cycle fallow: their only interest was the revenue. What about environments, where common rights have always been the backbone for a sustainable livelihood? The author clearly shows that these rights, though recorded later, can be backdated to the Roman period and even before. The whole picture is convincing. The livelihood in the fen depends on a large number of specific actions on the fields to grant the best pasture for the cattle. I read with much attention the great amount of things that each single commoner had to do at a precise moment of the year to let the fen be a productive environment. All these actions have not been written in a contract, neither learnt

at school. Local communities used to cooperate, because cooperation is the only way to reach the goal. A recent study on the Italian Alps on the long *durée* shows a similar set of hard skills to let the mountain and the woodland return a sustainable environment for shepherds. Thus, common rights seem to be a profitable path to walk through in the next decade. We have always focused on private ownership and on the presumed exclusive dialogue between private and public. The manifold concept of public, which is clear to a right-historian, less to an archaeologist, finds in this volume a concrete case study in the sense of rights of commons that we can trace everywhere in pre-industrial Europe. This are somehow the counter-altar to the breaks that literary sources and material culture convincingly record in the same period but in different contexts, like towns and alluvial plains. It seems that they pass through epochs and kingdoms without changes. They record a part of the story we have to take into account when we attempt to paint an overview.

A final note. The book is written in a very refined English and its plain, sequential structure mirrors the long lasting research path the author made. To reach such a degree of synthesis (the book is only 150 pages all included) is an achievement that publishers should always encourage (and researchers should always pursue). This book deserves to be read carefully not only for the rich dataset, but, mainly, for the method proposed, that can be soon applied worldwide.

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Pilar Diarte-Blasco, *Cities, Lands and Ports in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Archaeologies of Change*. 218 pages, ill. in colour and b/n. 2017. Rome: BraDypUS. ISBN: 978-88-98392-59-9.



The book *Cities, Lands and Ports in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Archaeologies of Change* contains a selection of fourteen papers presented in an international conference held in Saragossa (Spain), in autumn 2012, to reflect on, analyse and study processes of change in urban and rural landscapes between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The editor has grouped contributions into three categories mentioned within the title: urban, rural and port landscapes; each one of them opens with an introductory chapter serving as a framework within which the following contributions are inscribed.

The first section starts with Sánchez's general outline of the main changes in Hispano-Roman urban landscapes. The extent to which such process of change and continuity discretely occurred beyond pre-conceived models – and away from the traditional paradigm of crisis – is subsequently thoroughly analysed by specific case studies from different regions. Different scales of analysis adopted in each contribution are worth noting: from Ruiz Bueno's macro-regional, to Biemann's mid-regional, to Perich's local, to Turković and Maraković's micro-local levels of analysis. Altogether, they provide a more complete understanding of the multiplicity and diversity of 'changes' and 'continuities' and their chronological developments within associated contexts.

The current role of play on rural landscapes is introduced by Christie, whose paper could have opened the whole book due to the variety of tendencies, issues, questions and future directions addressed through different case studies. At a provincial scale, Andreu Expósito and Olesti Vila's paper investigates provincial limits and land surveying in Late Antiquity; in spite of their brief concluding remarks, the strength of their paper lies in the exhaustive analysis of literary evidence, in relation to epigraphical data, in order to establish a preliminary basis for future studies on land configuration. At a similar scale, but mainly based on archaeological evidence, Zeman is able to trace late antique and early medieval changes to the early Roman period and the initial lives of villas analysed, providing an alternative vision of change – within continuity. A different reality is argued, however, by Pérez-Aguilar, whose Darwinian and thermodynamic point of view, regardless of the consistency of his discourse, leads him to propose a model of abrupt change in two different territories in Western Baetica. Finally, at a very local level, Gutiérrez Pérez demonstrates the slow process of changes – and continuities – taking place in the late antique villa of Olmeda (Pedrosa de la Vega, Palencia) through the study of *terra sigillata*. Port and maritime landscapes are at the core of the final section of the book, introduced by Ramallo et al. with a state of play in the Western Mediterranean world, between the centre and the peripheries. Changes in late antique trade are at the basis of the approaches in this section of the book, from regional to local scales, demonstrated through different case studies from the centre to the edge of the Mediterranean

world. As stated by Christie, the contributions in this section, in line with similar studies emerged in the last decade, highlight aspects traditionally disregarded by researchers, such as coastal and island landscapes (p. 91).

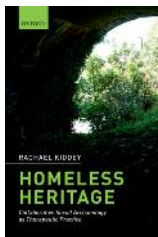
On the whole, this volume presents an array of good illustrations, in both black and white and colour, though there are several images which are lacking quality in detail; in addition, some of the plans/maps/reconstructions lack essential information such as the north arrow or scale; some papers present minor typos in both abstracts in English and content in Spanish and some authors refer to tables not provided in the paper (e.g. Biemann's paper). In addition, the volume contains some blank pages that make its reading more difficult.

Overall, the book succeeds in presenting an updated state of play on changes and continuities between late antiquity and the early Middle Ages; it also opens new paths in research in a field extensively debated in the last two decades.

This volume contributes impressively to scholarship in providing a complete and discrete set of contributions at different levels of analysis across different territories. In doing this, a common issue in archaeological studies in the classical, post-classical, and medieval worlds, that of the study of a phenomenon across scales, is consistently surmounted, enlivening, as stated by Diarte-Blasco at the very beginning of the book, "the discussion about this crucial period of transformation in the ancient world" (p. 7).

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Rachael Kiddey, *Homeless Heritage. Collaborative Social Archaeology as Therapeutic Practice*, 2017. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 217 pagine. ISBN: 978-0-19874-686-7.

Era il 10 dicembre 1948 quando a Parigi si aprì la firma della Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti Umani, che all'articolo 27 evidenzia il diritto per ogni individuo di prendere parte alla vita culturale della comunità. Cinquantasette anni dopo, nel 2005, la Convenzione di Faro del *Council of Europe* ampliava questo concetto fornendo agli Stati membri un quadro teorico-legislativo riguardante la partecipazione di ogni cittadino alla definizione, protezione e valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale, in cui inquadrare le politiche culturali nazionali. Quanto questo diritto trovi effettivamente compimento è ancora spesso da dimostrare, ma ciò è ancora più incerto quando si tratta degli individui tradizionalmente esclusi dalla società, come ad esempio le persone senza fissa dimora. Rachael Kiddey ha preso sul serio questo diritto e il suo lavoro, pubblicato in questo volume, lo dimostra tangibilmente. Di più, l'ambiente creativo e collaborativo costruito con pazienza e tenacia dall'autrice è servito come pratica terapeutica nel traumatico ambiente dei senzatetto di Bristol e York (UK).

Il progetto, fortemente interdisciplinare, ha utilizzato e mescolato fruttuosamente i metodi di archeologia, etnografia, antropologia e museografia, applicandoli alla società contemporanea.

Probabilmente il più significativo aspetto del lavoro è la descrizione della gestione della pratica partecipativa. I senzatetto sono stati trattati alla pari dell'autrice, che infatti li

chiama "colleghi", pienamente in linea con quanto postulato dall'approccio collaborativo. Si è realizzato dunque un sistema nel quale i senza fissa dimora non erano oggetto di studio, ma soggetto. La partecipazione effettiva non si è limitata ad attività "pratiche", come ad esempio la mappatura dei loro luoghi, la realizzazione di alcuni piccoli scavi e la pulizia dei reperti, ma ha compreso anche attività teoriche, come ad esempio l'interpretazione dei reperti, ambito in cui l'esperienza dei senzatetto è stata preziosa, o comunicative, come la docenza in seminari e conferenze, la realizzazione di articoli (co-firmati da tutto il gruppo di ricerca senza distinzioni lavorative o sociali) e la co-ideazione di mostre basate su quanto ritrovato nel corso degli scavi. Proprio le attività successive allo scavo sono state quelle più fruttuose. Ad esempio, l'autrice racconta di come durante il lavaggio dei reperti uno dei senzatetto abbia trovato l'ambiente adatto per raccontare la propria esperienza. O di come la realizzazione della mostra abbia creato nuovi ponti sociali, avvicinando personalità normalmente conflittuali (un poliziotto e i senzatetto) e mettendo in discussione la normale percezione della popolazione verso la condizione dei *clochard*. Un altro interessante aspetto, solo incidentalmente menzionato, è di come la sola visita della mostra abbia innescato in altri senzatetto la voglia di partecipare, anche in modo marginale, al progetto, ad esempio aggiungendo annotazioni alle mappe esposte.

I capitoli finali (9 e 10) offrono una riflessione critica del metodo applicato e dei risultati raggiunti, evidenziando l'inadeguatezza delle politiche attuali contro il fenomeno dei senza fissa dimora. Secondo l'autrice, uti-

lizzare un approccio di *Applied Heritage* ("the process of undertaking collaborative cultural heritage work with marginalized groups as an explicit form of therapeutic social intervention", p. 167), può aiutare ad avvicinarsi a situazioni e patrimoni "scomodi", offrendo punti di vista alternativi rispetto alla visione corrente, per la costruzione delle politiche sociali. In questo campo l'archeologia, il cui metodo impone un'indagine e una comprensione analitica delle relazioni tra le evidenze materiali con una visione di lunga durata, offre un'occasione unica per ottenere una nuova prospettiva sulla situazione attuale e dare suggerimenti, anche pratici, per il miglioramento delle politiche.

Pur non nascondendo le difficoltà cui è andata incontro (ad es. gravi problemi di dipendenza da alcool e droghe, passato di abusi, perdite familiari e distacco da se stessi, tra le altre difficoltà psicologiche e fisiche) e l'impossibilità di recuperare tutti i suoi colleghi (ormai amici), la Kiddey evidenzia i benefici pratici della partecipazione al progetto e un breve paragrafo nelle conclusioni, posto come nei film appena prima dei titoli

di coda, ci racconta cosa è accaduto ai protagonisti della storia dopo la fine del progetto, evidenziandone fattivamente i risultati terapeutici. Una minoranza è ritornata a vivere per strada, ma molti hanno cercato di superare le loro dipendenze, ottenere una casa e un lavoro, offrendo poi il proprio aiuto sia per ulteriori progetti di recupero dei senzatetto, sia per progetti culturali.

Soprattutto, ciò che maggiormente colpisce di questo volume è lo stile: fresco, diretto, avvincente. La frequente trascrizione dei dialoghi tra l'autrice e i suoi colleghi senza fissa dimora ci trasporta, a tratti come un romanzo, nelle situazioni divertenti, avventurose o anche drammatiche, commoventi o toccanti, vissute durante la realizzazione del progetto.

È un volume che trasuda umanità e speranza per il futuro in ogni sua pagina, pur senza perdere la capacità critica e autoriflessiva dell'impatto teorico e pratico del progetto archeologico.

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