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Book reviews

S. Bell & A.A. Carpino (eds.), *A companion to the Etruscans*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2016. xxviii + 493 pp. ISBN 978-1-118-35274-8.

The last few years have seen a minor explosion in Etruscological surveys and handbooks. Gilda Bartoloni edited the *Introduzione all'Etruscologia*, a dense introductory guide that was published in 2012. The following year the expansive *The Etruscan world*, edited by Jean MacIntosh Turfa, came out, followed by Christopher Smith's *The Etruscans: A very short introduction* in 2014 and now by *A companion to the Etruscans*, edited by Sinclair Bell and Alexandra Carpino. Additionally, De Gruyter has announced that they are to publish a handbook edited by Alessandro Naso. In terms of size, Bell and Carpino's volume is positioned somewhere in the middle of the pack, being larger than the *Introduzione all'Etruscologia* and about half the size of *The Etruscan world*. It consists of 30 chapters divided into five parts plus an appendix on Etruscan art in North American museums.

- Part I: History (3 chapters)
- Part II: Geography, urbanization, and space (9 chapters)
- Part III: Evidence in context (10 chapters)
- Part IV: Art, society, and culture (5 chapters)
- Part V: The Etruscan legacy and contemporary issues (3 chapters)

Part I: *History* consists of three chapters that give an overview of the history of Etruria from the Bronze Age to the Roman period. Since many Etruscological works do not extend further back than the Iron Age, the fact that Simon Stoddart covers the entire Bronze Age in his chapter on the prehistory of Etruria is very welcome.

Part II: *Geography, urbanization, and space* consists of nine very different chapters. The topics are generally broad in nature, covering among other things physical geography, urbanization, sacred space, and relationships between the Etruscans and the rest of the Mediterranean.

Part III: *Evidence in context* discusses seven categories of evidence: skeletal remains, the Etruscan language, bucchero, textiles, wall painting, votives, and jewellery. This is followed by three chapters that are primarily devoted to the literary image of the Etruscans, covering the topics of Etruscan decadence, Tanaquil, and Etruscan obesity.

Part IV: *Art, society, and culture* consists of five chapters that deal with Etruscan art and Etruscan myth. No attempt is made to give a chronologically organized overview of the development of Etruscan art; instead the chapters are organized thematically.

Finally, Part V: *The Etruscan legacy and contemporary issues* consists of three chapters dealing with Annius of Viterbo, Etruscan forgeries, and looting in Etruria.

Each chapter has its own separate bibliography but they share an index that is found at the end of the book. The number of illustrations per chapter varies from one to six. The chapters with just a single illustration (chapters 1, 4, 5, 9, 20) could definitely have benefitted from additional ones. In the printed edition only a handful of the illustrations have been printed in colour.

The editors begin the book by stating that over the last decade there has been "a rising interest in Etruscan art and archaeology in the United States". It therefore does not come as a surprise that the book has somewhat of an Anglo-American slant and is dominated by scholars working in the US and the UK. The only archaeological site to get its own chapter is Poggio Civitate (Murlo), a well known American project in Etruria, and the book ends with an appendix on the topic of Etruscan art in North American museums. Had this book been the

only Etruscological handbook to be published recently, this Anglo-American ‘accent’ could have been a problem for the reader, but considering all the complementary publications available, it only serves to give the volume a distinct flavour.

Most of the contributors are well-known authorities in Etruscan studies and have written on areas of their expertise, resulting in contributions of generally high quality. Francesco de Angelis’ chapter on some of the methodological issues of approaching the Etruscan reception of Greek art is one of the highlights of the volume. He investigates the use of ponderation in Etruscan art and argues that there are fundamental differences between the Etruscan and Roman reception of Greek art. A number of other chapters, for example the ones in Part III, similarly deal with narrow issues, while others try to cover more ground. Claudio Bizzarri and David Soren, for example, take on a multitude of topics in the chapter ‘Etruscan domestic architecture, hydraulic engineering, and water management technologies: Innovations and legacy to Rome’. None of these topics (domestic architecture, hydraulic engineering and water management) have been treated in detail in English recently, so it is unfortunate that the treatment they receive here is very brief. For the Italian-reading audience the chapter on architecture by Gilda Bartoloni in the *Introduzione all’Etruscologia* provides a more thorough overview of that topic.

Several of the authors who contributed to this volume have chapters in *The Etruscan world* on similar topics. For example, in both books Stephan Steingräber writes on chamber tombs, Margarita Gleba on textiles, and Ingrid Rowland on Annius of Viterbo. To the credit of the authors they have clearly made an effort to write chapters that do not overlap too much, although some overlap is unavoidable. There are some topics, such as bucchero, the Etruscan language, and the Romanization of Etruria, which are treated in both books but by different authors. This could even be a good thing, as it provides students and scholars with the opportunity to compare different ways of approaching the subject in question.

There is no given way to organize a companion such as this. The first three chapters are arranged to together provide an overview of the general history of Etruria, but in the other parts of the book a more thematically oriented approach has been chosen. Some major themes are not given a specific chapter but are covered in several. There is for example no specific chapter on Etruscan religion, but the topic is instead covered from different angles in Gregory Warden’s chapter on sacred space, Helen Nagy’s chapter on votives, and Ingrid Krauskopf’s chapter on Etruscan myth.

A companion to the Etruscans does not cover every aspect of Etruscan studies, nor does it claim to. Topics that could have been included, but were not, are for example: Etruscan sculpture, pottery (other than Bucchero), and the Etruscans

in Campania. This is to be expected, as the discipline today is so large and diverse that it is no longer possible for a single volume to cover everything. This situation should perhaps cause us to rethink future handbook projects. While there will always be a need for up-to-date brief introductory works, perhaps it is time to stop producing general handbooks on the Etruscans in favour of more specialized volumes. There is clearly still very much a need for a volume that deals with the reception of the Etruscans and the history of Etruscology in a more comprehensive manner. While Annius of Viterbo is no doubt an important figure in the early history of Etruscan studies, one wonders if it was really necessary to devote a full chapter to him in both this volume and *The Etruscan world*, while not touching on the reception history of the Etruscans in the period from the 16th to the early 20th century (but see the very useful chapter by Maurizio Harari on the subject in the *Introduzione all’Etruscologia*). In-depth handbooks on topics such as Etruscan architecture, Etruscan pottery, gender in Etruria, or Etruscan funerary practices would also be more than welcome.

To conclude: this book is a must for any library that services students or researchers specializing in pre-Roman Italy, and it should be of interest to anyone studying ancient Italy. It does not replace Bartoloni’s *Introduzione all’Etruscologia* or Turfa’s *The Etruscan world*, but it does cover some things not found in these works. It includes chapters of generally high quality, some of which give an overview of existing research and some of which present new ideas. The book can without a doubt be used in teaching, but the high price (€150 for the hardcover version and €135.99 for the e-book) will probably prevent most professors from suggesting that their students buy it.

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