

Jeremy Armstrong and Aaron Rhodes-Schroder, eds, *Adoption, Adaption, and Innovation in Pre-Roman Italy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023). Online, 282 pp., €110.00, ISBN: 9782503602332.



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*Review*

In *Adoption, Adaption, and Innovation in Pre-Roman Italy*, Jeremy Armstrong and Aaron Rhodes-Schroder examine 'how and why the cultures of pre-Roman Italy changed the way they did with the goal of highlighting how we might understand cultural change and exchange within the wider Mediterranean world' (p. 21). To accomplish this, the editors have brought together myriad contributors across fourteen chapters, each of which rejects the traditional narrative of hierarchical cultural transfer from Greece to the Western Mediterranean. The first chapter, written by Armstrong and Rhodes-Schroder, outlines the need for this volume. While this introduction lays out the faults of previous accounts of cultural change and borrowing in pre-Roman Italy, a fuller discussion of the conceptual and theoretical errors extending from early modernity on, aside from the occasional reference to secondary literature on the topic, would have fit well here. Nicola Terrenato's chapter theoretically reconstructs how radical political change occurred in a quite conservative Iron Age central Italy. Franco De Angelis' chapter collects evidence for Italian viticulture before Phoenician and Greek practices were brought to the peninsula. Marine Lechenault's and Kewin Peche-Quilichini's chapter counters the narrative that pre-Roman Corsica was devoid of culture prior to Roman domination through examination of material remains. John North Hopkins' chapter examines the Ficoroni cista's complex aesthetic heritage, which left the vessel without a clear cultural designation. Charlotte R. Potts' chapter

compares temple designs in Archaic Etruria and considers reasons for their apparent Greek influence. Rhodes-Schroder's chapter establishes an Etruscan preference for certain forms of Greek pottery and argues that their mythic imagery was adapted into Etruscan funerary practices. Peter Attema et al.'s chapter analyzes the contents of various burial sites in Crustumerium to identify the cultural networks in which the inhabitants participated. Amanda K. Pavlick's chapter applies multiple approaches to determine the cause of terracotta roofing in Archaic central Italy. Gijs Tol's chapter revises the conventional account of the ruralization of southern Latium, relying on ceramic evidence from Antium and Satricum. Camilla Norman's chapter contends that distinctive religious practices were shared between Daunia and the Hallstatt culture based on surviving material evidence. Keely Elizabeth Heuer's chapter identifies isolated heads as a shared visual motif in Etruscan and southern Italian iconography. William M. Balco's chapter interprets the favoring of Greek commensal ware by various Elymian groups as an expression of self-determination. Chapter fourteen, by Attema et al. (though a different set of contributors from chapter eight), reviews a broad collection of pottery from Archaic southern Italy to determine the nature of indigenous production and borrowing from Greek workshops.

Contributors take different theoretical and methodological approaches and productively interact with one another in this volume. Some chapters, such as Terrenato's, attempt reconstructions of the social and political conditions in pre-Roman Italy that 'can only be conjectural' (p. 34). Others, such as Potts', focus more on drawing conclusions about culture from material evidence. Chapters including Balco's

occupy an intermediate position, using available material and theory to draw conclusions about Western Sicilian culture. Contributors often cite each other and make special note of their fellow contributors' work, which gives the volume a certain cohesion. At times, contributors will push back on concepts employed by others. Hopkins, for example, maintains that the Ficoroni cista does not truly belong to a central Italian *koine*, or common cultural group, nor serves as evidence for such a *koine*, although the concept is more favorably treated in chapters one, eight, and fourteen (p. 80). The occasional disagreements in the volume represent healthy scholarly disputes and suggest that there is still much work to be done to settle a contemporary understanding of pre-Roman Italian cultural change.

The volume features a generous supply of images in monochrome and full color, including pictures of artifacts, line drawings, architectural drafts, site plans, maps, and charts. Standout images are the drawing of the drum of the Ficoroni cista and the diverse collection of depictions of heads in Heuer's chapter (pp. 74, 193–219). A handful of visuals could be more refined. The monochrome map on p. 165 is hard to read, given the difficulty of distinguishing the gray legend elements from the gray of the map (the previous map in the same chapter, however, is in full color). The network diagrams featured on pp. 127–31, especially those with the most nodes, are difficult to parse given their complexity.

Unfortunately, instances of orthographic inconsistency, misspellings, and improper treatment of Greek and Latin source material appear in nearly every chapter. Terms of art, names, and borrowings are often spelled incorrectly: 'Athana Painter' for

‘Athena Painter’, ‘Palemone’ for ‘Palaimon’, ‘keramaikos’ for ‘kerameikos’ (pp. 54, 90, 104). Names of famous scholars fare no better, such as Sir James Frazer’s last name spelled as ‘Frazier’ (p. 43). Greek and Latin terms undergo the worst effacement. In the first chapter, ‘Greekness’ is cited from Herodotus as ‘τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν’, not ‘τὸ Ἑλληνικόν’ or even ‘τὰ Ἑλληνικά’ as in *Histories* 4.78<sup>1</sup>; in the very same sentence, ‘civita’ appears for ‘civitas’, even though ‘civitas sine suffragio’ stands in the same parenthetical (p. 20). Inconsistent formatting also affects technical vocabulary. ‘Koiné’ is rendered with an acute accent in the first chapter, but every other instance of the term, including its index entry, lacks the accent. Terminology borrowed from Greek and Latin is sometimes italicized, sometimes not (e.g. ‘aryballos’ then ‘aryballos’ on p. 183, ‘protomes’ on p. 213 but ‘protomes’ everywhere else). A firmer editorial hand would have enforced stylistic uniformity on the entire volume. Finally, quotes from classical sources are, at times, misleadingly interpreted. Armstrong and Aaron-Schroder cite ‘Vincabamur [*sic*] a victa Graecia’ from *Brutus* 254 and translate the quote as ‘we have been conquered by the conquered Greeks’ (p. 21). This makes for a pithy statement of Roman cultural defeat only when divorced from its context. However, the full sentence in *Brutus* reads, ‘For we were defeated by Greece, though itself defeated, in this one regard [*eloquentia*, eloquence], which either has been seized from them or at least has been imparted to us alongside them’.<sup>2</sup> Cicero, though cautious to

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<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Historiae*, ed. by Karl Hude, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908; facsimile repr. 1972), 4.78.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Quo enim uno vincebamus a victa Graecia, id aut ereptum illis est aut certe nobis cum illis communicatum’. M. Tullius Cicero, *Brutus*, in *Rhetorica*, ed. by Augustus Samuel Wilkins, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903; facsimile repr. 1989), §§1–333 (§254). Translation above is mine.

acknowledge Rome's cultural debt to Greece, staunchly defended the merits of the Latin language and Roman cultural efforts more broadly in several texts (*cf.* his exhortation to his son to proficiency in Latin as well as Greek in *De officiis* 1.1-2, as well as his assertion of Roman literary and cultural supremacy over Greece in *Tusculanae disputationes* 1.1-2). Additionally, Hopkins remarks that there are 'two equally possible' readings of the Dindia inscription on the Ficoroni cista, that 'Dindia Magolnia is the mother or Dindia the mother and Magolnia the daughter', yet the fact that 'DINDIA' and 'MACOLNIA' are both nominative and 'FILEAI' is dative seems to preclude this ambiguity (pp. 72, 76).<sup>3</sup> It is dispiriting to see that textual and epigraphic evidence, which provides an indispensable complement to the material artifacts that serve as the primary evidence for this volume, is not handled as carefully as it deserves.

*Adoption, Adaption, and Innovation in Pre-Roman Italy* is a fair contribution to a revised, contemporary understanding of pre-Roman Italian cultural change and borrowing. Despite pervasive issues with editing and treatment of ancient written sources, this volume will hopefully inspire further inquiry into this underserved area.

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<sup>3</sup> The full text of the inscription reads 'DINDIA MACOLNIA FILEAI DEDIT', 'Dindia Magolnia gave [the Ficoroni cista] to her daughter' (p. 72).



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