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Villa Magna. An Imperial Estate and its Legacies. Excavations 2006-10. (Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome, 23). Edited by E Fentress, C Goodson & M Maiuro, with M Andrews & A Dufton. 22 x 29 cm. xix + 516 pp, 34 colour pls and figs, 295 b&w pls and figs, 21 tables. London: The British School at Rome, 2016. ISBN 978-0-904152-74-6. Price: £90.00hb.

Villa Magna was a Roman imperial winery, is 'known from the letters of Marcus Aurelius' (7), and continued to dominate its region into late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. It was therefore, as Liza Fentress readily admits, hardly typical, and if its archaeology and history are key to understanding 'the *longue durée* of central Italy' (1), they do so from a particular perspective – that of those who wielded power.

Fentress and her team situate Villa Magna in the context of an efflorescence of grandiose villas around Rome in the early part of the 2nd century AD. The evidence for viniculture there sits rather oddly beside the villa's clear material splendour (see, for example, plates 5.6 – 5.21) until we realise that the latter provided the stage on which the emperor performed a series of rituals which connected him, though the act of wine making, to locality, fertility, and tradition. Villa Magna, Fentress argues, was the 'architectural setting for a rite that deliberately recalled the ancient ceremonies surrounding the harvest of Latium and, with it, the role of the emperor as priest, assuring the success of the vintage and the well-being of the farmers as well as the peace of the gods' (208, see also 446).

The past, through the physical remains of the villa, continued to act on the present with the 'revival' of the site in late Antiquity, when the 'cella vinaria was reconstructed as a church and a dolarium created in the substructures of the old imperial residence' (254; also 443). One of the dolia from the Roman Imperial winery was reused in this Byzantine-period structure, raising the possibility that there may have been a 'heritage premium' in new wine stored in old containers (444, 451). The power of things from the past is also manifest in their destruction, in the 'breaking up of statues and marble architectural elements' (451, also 87-88).

Throughout this volume, Fentress and her colleagues succeed in reconstructing the setting for elite power, and in exploring the basis for that power. Narratives about the powerful invariably bring to mind those they dominated and exploited (or at least they should!). At Villa Magna, as so often, ideology, ancestry and tradition legitimized that domination.

Fentress tells us that one of the aims of the project was 'train young archaeologists in an international environment' (1). There is much to be learned from this volume, not least, as countries increasingly look inwards, the benefits of this openness and generosity of spirit.

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413 words.