Published in 2012, Veikou’s book *Byzantine Epirus* is one of the few recent analytical monographs dedicated to the region. It is the product of the authors’ PhD research, summarising five years of fieldwork, and remains to date one of the latest archaeological books entirely focussing on Epirus, regardless of period and context.

The book is divided in five parts (part I: *study of a changing landscape*; part II: *material culture*; part III: *habitation*; part IV: *the case of Middle Byzantine Epirus*; part V: *sites inventory*), followed by three appendices, a bibliography, two indexes and insightful illustrations. This case specific and time precise study of Southern Epirus and Aetoloacarnania from the 7th to 12th centuries AD provides an alternative to past grand narratives, suggesting different pathways of landscape research, tailored to the peculiarities of the region.

The reasoning behind the geographic and temporal limitation is well explained in part I of the book, together with some methodological considerations. Veikou advocates for a focus in the importance of local narratives and the different qualities of medieval lived spaces. To an extent she follows the line of the few previously made interdisciplinary surveys in the region, to contribute to the archaeological knowledge of Epirus, a region that is relatively unknown compared to other Greek provinces.

The chapter on the geology and geography of Byzantine Epirus reflects on the ways land-change due to seismic activity and fluvial sedimentations might affect archaeology. She uses the method of an *extensive non-systematic survey* to identify new sites and to offer an understanding of the physical and tectonic factors that shaped the environment in which Middle Byzantine communities acted.

In the second part of the book, the focus shifts to the material remains, divided into four relevant categories (1. architecture: building typology and use, building construction, conclusions; 2. dedicatory inscriptions; 3. monumental art and sculpture: opus sectile, marble inlay, mosaic, frescoes, architectural sculptures; 4. artefacts: ceramic and tiles, metalwork, glass, lead seals, numismatic finds). The typology of building construction and the chronology of the masonries stand out from the first part. The discussion on masonries emerges from the standpoint that there are no strict morphological rules in Byzantine architecture, thus every building must be interpreted contextually (p. 112). Veikou distinguishes 11 types of masonry and six additional feature categories in her material, which help her nuance the dating of those buildings. This sort of categorisation is transferable and might be adapted by researchers trying to relatively date features in their own contexts, in other parts of Epirus and beyond.

Because of methodological constraints related to the *extensive non-systematic survey*, Veikou uses material culture as an attestation for the use of sites in given periods without excluding the possibility of their use in other
periods, for which no evident material culture was found during survey.

The third part of the book is a synthesis drawing upon conclusions from the earlier parts, combining topographic features, change due to non-anthropogenic processes and evidence from material culture. She also addresses aspects regarding the historicity of the landscape. She argues that a settlement pattern for the Middle Byzantine period develops outside -or in the margins of- alluvial deposits. The new sites are not placed in isolated locations and gradually the Early Byzantine sites are abandoned. The wide distribution of religious buildings suggests equally wide land-use and habitation patterns in the landscape. She identifies three traits that are more important to the choice of sites than altitude, being protected hills with flat tops, abundance of water resources and the ability to overview the surrounding areas. Those characteristics resemble the Hellenistic pattern, and, in many sites, she identifies resettlement of locations that were in use during that period. Accordingly, she notices extensive reuse of building material dating back to the Hellenistic, or even the Classical, period.

Different methods of communication (inland routes, mountain paths and fluvial connections) are considered, providing food for thought for researchers focussing on different periods of Epirot archaeology. With a combination of material evidence and historical accounts, Veikou stresses the importance of fluvial transportation, as many of her sites are located alongside fluvial routes. She also addresses the ways archaeology may contribute to the understanding of agricultural and pastoral production and argues for the need to consider landscape as an archaeological problem quite separate from the material remains of human activity.

The image of Byzantine Epirus as a backward and demographically inconsistent region is refuted and a complicated picture of interaction and wide human occupation is offered instead. The method of extensive non-systematic survey allowed the identification of patterns regarding the adaptation of human populations into the landscape and the careful correlation of archaeological data with primary sources (part III, chapter 2) offers an inspiring analysis. Furthermore, this type of survey is compatible with the state of current research in Epirus, since in many cases what is still needed is to discover more sites, following Veikou’s example.

Veikou provides a multifaceted account that offers a fresh insight to Byzantine Epirus. Her analysis is valuable not only to specialists in Byzantine archaeology but to scholars interested in the region of Epirus or landscape archaeology. Furthermore, it is a handbook that should be available to every library with an interest to the history of the region, although its price might be a restraining factor.

The conclusion that further research is needed is expressed by the author (p. 357). This observation is hanging above Epirus like a spectre and can be argued for most periods of Epirot archaeology. Given the circumstances, the methodology of her research is a well-fitted choice. The reader is left with the belief that the foundations for a further systematic research on Byzantine Epirus are laid by this book and efforts as such bring Epirus up-to-date with the context of neighbouring regions.

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