

# The Vultur Project: An archaeological investigation of the Vulture zone of the Lucanian Frontier as a sphere of pre-Roman cultural interaction and Late Roman stability (excavation and survey)

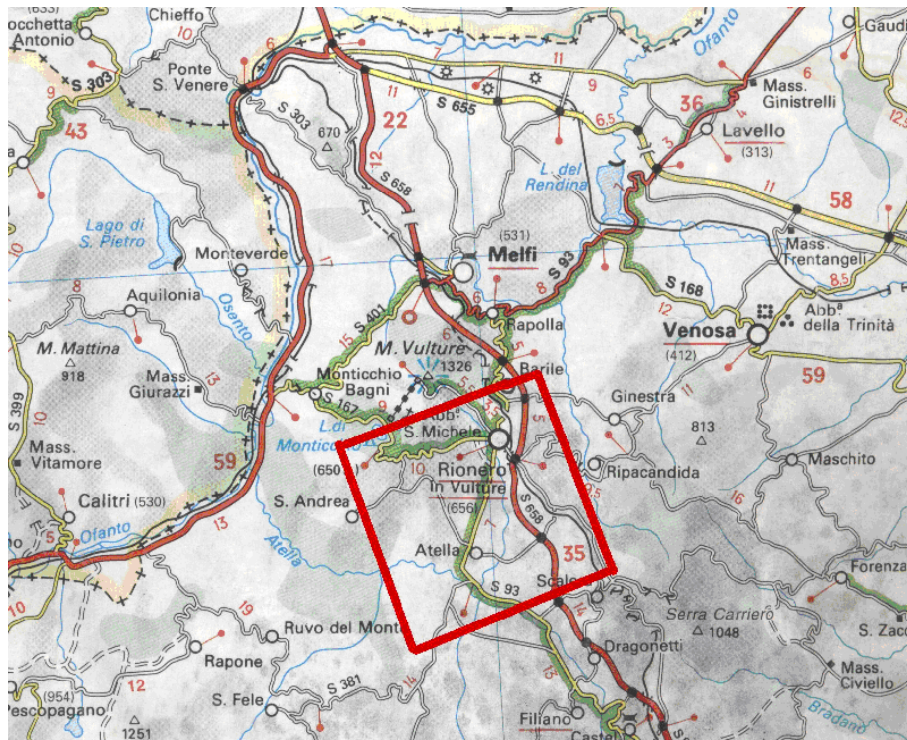
## ABSTRACT

The following describes a five-year program of archaeological research with various Universities (including Ben-Gurion University, Israel; University of Alberta, Canada; University of Sydney, Australia). The project will be based upon a focused regional survey, which has been designed to augment an existing campaign of excavation. The project seeks to illuminate diachronic land-use patterns and shifting negotiations of settlement distribution in a zone which acted as a frontier between multiple cultural groups, under a uniquely wide range of sociopolitical conditions through an unusually long period.

### Introduction

The project centres on the region of northern Basilicata, on the southern slopes and adjoining valley of the Vulture volcano, in the comuni (municipalities) of *Rionero in Vulture* and *Atella*. The project will be primarily based upon survey work, but excavation will also be conducted at a Roman villa and Basilica between Rionero and Atella, and a Lucanian necropolis at Rionero. Over four years it is estimated that two months of each year dedicated to survey and excavations conducted with the Soprintendenza per archeologia di Basilicata.





It will be observed from the above maps that the zone of the Vulture-Melfi was a natural topographical frontier between the plains of northern Puglia and the mountains of Basilicata, known in antiquity as Lucania. In the Early Iron Age, these topographical divisions coincided with the territories of the ancient Daunian civilisation of northern Puglia/northern Basilicata, and the so-called Peuketiantes, or Northern Lucanians (in fact a pre-Lucanian people). In approximately the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the arrival of the Lucanians (an Osco-Samnite group) in the mountainous region transformed the cultural composition of the frontier, such that Lucanian infiltration into the zone may have resulted in the formation, centred upon the highly fertile valley of the Vulture, of a frontier membrane of some liquidity between Daunia and Lucania. Roman conquest in the third century BC imposed a veneer of homogeneity that resulted in several hundred years of stability and tranquillity, which appears to have continued without significant interruption into the Late Roman period. Even the Gothic Wars of the 6<sup>th</sup> century do not appear to have left traces of destruction. After this date, it is possible that the area briefly became a frontier zone again, between the Lombard Duchy of Benevento and a southern Italian foothold maintained by the Eastern Roman Empire.

Extensive archaeological work over the last forty years in the Melfese and Middle Ofanto valley, slightly northeast of the Vulture, has clearly indicated the wealth of the available archaeological data. It is clear, for example, that Daunian cultural materials are commonly to be found in Basilicata, from Lavello west along the Ofanto valley, and as far south-west as Melfi and Pisciol di Melfi.<sup>1</sup> From the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC there is also evidence for the expansion of Lucanians into this region, apparently co-existing with Daunians in a clearly emergent

<sup>1</sup> Tocco 1976; Bottini 1981; 1982; 1982a; 1985; Tagliente *et al.* 1991; Tagliente 1985-86; Tagliente—Bottini 1990

frontier zone in the Melfese.<sup>2</sup> Studies of the Roman presence in the region are numerous, particularly those by Alastair Small and Maurizio Gualtieri.<sup>3</sup>

However, other than the above short synopsis, few details are as yet known about the specific region of the Vulture in antiquity, though the existence of a Roman villa at Atella has already been pointed out in print by M. Gualtieri.<sup>4</sup> In recent years, my own work with the Superintendency for Archaeology in Basilicata has allowed me to work closely with the inspector and museum director at Melfi, Dott.ssa Rosanna Ciriello, and her staff at sites in the Melfese. I have directed numerous excavations at Lavello, Venosa, San Nicola di Melfi and Rionero. In the course of these works I have undertaken a problem-oriented, though unofficial and necessarily restricted, survey of the Rionero area, and have identified a Lucanian necropolis and a zone of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC burials along the ridge directly to the south of Rionero. However, the only official archaeological work in the region immediately south of the Vulture has been conducted by myself at the site of Torre degli Embrici, at the border between the comuni of Rionero and Atella.<sup>5</sup> In 2004 I excavated a large section of a Roman villa complex with Roman baths, over which was built an early Christian basilica of the sixth century. The remains of a late medieval tower with adjacent structures, for which the locality is named, stand several hundred metres away from the bath/basilica complex. The contiguity of substantial structures from such a long succession of historical periods proves the ongoing importance of the area, and raises critical questions regarding both what drew so many groups here, and how they structured their environment in the course of this shifting coexistence.

The existence of this previously undocumented wealth of archaeological evidence, coupled with the terrain to the south of the Vulture volcano – which, unlike Melfi, is undeveloped and contains only farmhouses and some factories for bottling the spring water from the area – thus presents an unparalleled opportunity for archaeological investigation in frontier studies. The region promises to be archaeologically rich, easily accessible and unusually well-preserved, ensuring the quality and representativeness of the acquired data. The surrounding regions of diverse cultural occupations are well understood, which means that the unique innovations, adaptations and cultural exchanges which take place in zones of contact will stand out immediately; we stand to learn a great deal about various centres from this particular periphery. Moreover, the transhistorical density of different cultures and civilizations in one protected region means that the Vulture may be seen as an archaeological laboratory in the field of frontier research. In addition to any particular arrangement of relations between any two or any three of the groups in question during any one period, the archaeological simultaneity of many different ‘moments’ of relation under the same set of environmental variables affords an unprecedented opportunity to study multiple frontier interactions while holding specific factors constant.

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<sup>2</sup> Tocco 1976a; Bottini 1976; 1979; 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Small—Buck. 1994; Gualtieri 1999; 1983. Also see Fletcher *et al.* 2005 for the excavations of ‘Casa del Diavolo’ at Lavello and ‘Serra dei Canonici’ at San Nicola di Melfi.

<sup>4</sup> Gualtieri 1999, 127.

<sup>5</sup> Fletcher *et al.* 2005.

## Aims

The research aims of the proposed project are as follows:

1. Intensive/extensive survey of the Rionero-Atella area in order to both identify sites of particular importance and to supply data for an analysis of settlement nucleation and land-use from the Early Iron Age to the Late Roman period.
2. Excavation of the Roman villa/baths/Basilica complex at Torre degli Embrici and preliminary excavation of the Lucanian necropolis at Rionero, with the support of the comune of Rionero. Selective excavation of tombs to the south of Rionero and identified sites from survey to determine chronology and spatial extent of said sites.
3. Study of results from a perspective of frontier analysis in terms of: Definition, linearity and movement of frontiers over time (movement, fluidity); Territoriality (what was being divided); Permeability (crossing the frontier, hot and cold frontier?); Cultural borders (Daunian/Lucanian, Roman divisions, religious divisions in Late Antiquity)
4. Publication of results.

The approach of this project will be to put frontier theory at the front and then solve it with the fieldwork. Can a frontier be defined in this zone? If this is so, was there movement of this frontier and how was the division manifested? How was the frontier defined in terms of permeability? These questions shall be situated within the framework of previous and ongoing work in this field: Barker (Molise frontier, EU Populus project), Millett (Mediterranean cities project and Greek Colonisation project).

## Background

The area concerned is known as “The Vulture”, in the northern part of the Italian *Regione* of Basilicata. A virtual *terra incognita* only thirty years ago, northern Basilicata has become an area of intense research interest, particularly under the guidance of the Superintendents of the region (D. Adamesteanu, A. Bottini and M. L. Nava) and the work of teams from the University of Alberta (A. Small, M. Gualtieri). The proximity of the Vulture to the Daunian region of northernmost Basilicata, to the Ofanto valley (a conduit for trade across the Italian peninsula from Puglia to Campania) and to the Lucanian heartland in the south made it the “gateway to the mountains”, from the time of the arrival of Neolithic agricultural technologies in the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, down to the protohistoric and historical periods. The material remains of extensive settlement in the Daunian region and the Ofanto valley, as well as the remains of trade and other contacts, have been shown to have been astonishingly precocious and intense.<sup>6</sup>

Although little archaeological information has been published about the Rionero/Atella zone, there is good reason to suspect that it possessed an important settlement site during the Iron Age, and acted as a fluid frontier zone for most of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC and 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD. This may be made clear from the number of burials excavated illegally in the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The contents of those tombs, and their form, suggest Lucanian settlement in the area in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Sporadic finds (such as those made by myself at Torre degli Embrici) indicate both Peuketiantic and Daunian cultural contact in the centuries prior to

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<sup>6</sup> *Supra*, n. 1, 2.

<sup>7</sup> There are displays of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC finds from a number of looted tombs in the area of Rionero (and Torre degli Embrici) to be found at the Archaeological Museum at Budapest.

Lucanian infiltration into the zone (although it is unclear which group was dominant, if either). After Roman conquest in the 3rd century BC the Vulture underwent a number of changes; certainly from the Republican period onwards (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) baths and the large villa for intensive agricultural production (*villa rustica*) seem to have been the most common type of structure – such as those at Ruoti, Atella and Torre degli Embrici. Late Roman evidence both at Ruoti and Torre degli Embrici indicate continuity after the fall of the Western Empire and the latter suggests stability into the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The strategic importance of the Vulture, in military and economic terms, is presumably what lies behind the frequent mentions of the area in ancient and medieval literature (including Horace), mainly in terms of Venosa and Melfi directly to the east and north of the proposed zone of investigation.<sup>8</sup> The zone is very fertile in agricultural terms, and has certainly has been very productive in the past: one of the most famous wines of the south, for example, is the Aglianico wine of the Vulture. One may assume that the Vulture possessed a primate centre for the valley stretching between the volcano and Lagopesole in the first millennium BC, since unpublished archaeological traces from the area suggest a pre-Roman settlement of some importance.

The archaeological work of the last thirty years in the area has greatly benefited from the efforts of the Archaeological Superintendency in Lavello, Melfi and Venosa, while the research of the University of Alberta has uncovered a good deal of the history of Roman Basilicata.<sup>9</sup> More recently, such archaeological study has resulted in an extraordinary programme of fieldwork, museum-displays, publications, and innovative teaching programmes. Italian Regional superintendencies and archaeologists have, however, shown relatively little inclination to become involved in regional field surveys: this has been left mainly to foreign scholars, and there have been some outstanding survey projects in South Italy, particularly the University of Texas in the territory of the Greek colony of Metaponto,<sup>10</sup> the Dutch in the Brindisi region<sup>11</sup> and the University of Alberta at Oppido Lucano.<sup>12</sup>

While field survey certainly presents fewer logistical difficulties for foreign teams than large-scale excavation in Italy, there are other reasons for this situation - one of them concerns the development of archaeology in Italy, which has always had a strong component of topography, existing as a separate discipline within archaeology.<sup>13</sup> This is in many ways a regrettable situation, because while topographers have a good record of documenting standing monuments and discovering evidence for ancient centuriation (division) of agricultural land,<sup>14</sup> their research goals and methodologies for field survey exclude what is archaeologically desirable in terms of systematic prospection, recovery, identification and quantification of archaeological material found on the surface. As a result, with the possible exception of the small survey project associated with the Roman Villa at Ruoti,<sup>15</sup> there has been no systematic regional survey carried out in northern Basilicata. If we are to understand how the complex societies of the indigenous, invading, trading, and colonising peoples at this frontier - Daunians, Peuketiantes, Lucanians, Romans and Goths - developed and changed, this long-standing neglect of settlement archaeology in the region must be rectified.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Maetzke 1976.

<sup>9</sup> Buck—Small 1980; 1983; 1984; Small 1981; Gualtieri—Fracchia 1993; 1995; Fracchia et al. 1998-99; Gualtieri 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Carter 1990.

<sup>11</sup> Yntema 1993; Burgers 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Supra, n. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Robinson 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Guaitoli 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Supra n. 11.

<sup>16</sup> Burgers 1998, 17.

Burial sites and, increasingly, settlements in northern Basilicata are becoming better understood,<sup>17</sup> but a great deal remains to be understood about long-term economic, social and political structures in the region. A fundamental assumption in the problem-orientation for the project is that many aspects of the economy, demography, social development, settlement history and political development are related in a systematic way to the degree to which the frontier zone of the Vulture was incorporated within wider economic and political systems. The extent to which the Vulture was isolated from, or incorporated into, wider systems will be one of the major aims of the project. The Vulture was the gateway from the north to the mountainous region of Basilicata and to the ancient arterial of the Ofanto valley, and thus constituted a route connecting the complex systems of the Ofanto with those of the relatively isolated mountains, a route used by Bronze Age polities, Peuketiantes, Lucanians, Romans and Goths in succession. What is particularly attractive about the Vulture region, other than the wealth of archaeological material in the area which is apparent even from casual observation, is that the conditions of sociocultural formations and negotiation which are unique to the frontier environment are very likely to be here both highly magnified and unusually well-preserved in the archaeological record.

### *Field Survey*

Interdisciplinary regional survey as a form of archaeological research is now widely accepted in the Mediterranean.<sup>18</sup> While a few decades ago the nucleated settlement was regarded as the dominant feature of the archaeological landscape, field surveys have demonstrated "evidence for a wealth and diversity of rural settlement in classical times that were entirely unsuspected from the written sources".<sup>19</sup> The sites discovered by field survey are of much greater interest than simply for their existence as single settlement units - the settlement patterns can be analysed, on the basis of the date, size, ecology and probable function of the sites, into a hierarchy which is widely assumed to correlate with social practices (the specific interpretations of course remain controversial). Changing social, political and economic relationships can be traced on the basis of this settlement data; such data have recently been given pride of place in synchronic syntheses of developments in the Mediterranean in the first millennium BC.<sup>20</sup>

It is, however, the relationship between the zones around the Vulture that will be the major (but not exclusive) focus of this project, initially with Daunia and the Ofanto to the north and Lucania to the south and later between zones in Roman Lucania. The project will have two major components, field-survey and excavation and these components will be dealt with in order.

Archaeological field surveys generally aim to explain processes of change over long time-periods, on a regional scale. The proposed survey area is about 60 km<sup>2</sup> in extent. I estimate that only half of this will be available for survey, being overbuilt or made otherwise inaccessible by landowners. However, this proportion is more than sufficient for the proposed "intensive" and "extensive" survey over the area of Rionero and Atella. From personal experience in numerous survey projects in Italy, Greece, Israel and Turkey, I estimate that a small team of eight fieldwalkers is capable of covering 20 km<sup>2</sup> over the period of this project in an "intensive" survey. The remaining available area shall be covered in an "extensive" survey.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Supra*, n. 1

<sup>18</sup> Given *et al.* 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Barker, 1995, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Bintliff 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Yntema 1993, 19.

Field survey will supply important and completely novel information on the following questions:

- Identification of a primate centre south of the Vulture and an understanding of how it was formed. Preliminary reconnaissance suggests that the southern slopes of the Vulture were relatively densely inhabited already in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (although stray finds from the Bronze Age have also been reported, in small numbers). Identification of sites in the Vulture zone - their size, location and function - will inform general debates about the process of nucleation in pre-Roman indigenous Italy.<sup>22</sup> It will provide specific information on the zone of the Vulture itself, and allow us to speculate on factors of various kinds (e.g. fissioning, synoecism, demographic change, agricultural intensification, opening of trade contacts, need for defence, fluidity of frontier etc.) which may have resulted from frontier interaction.
- Transformation in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, accompanying economic intensification and growing social stratification. I will be trying to identify the cultural boundaries of contact throughout the history of the area. The transformations evidenced in Daunia (particularly Lavello) and in Peuketiante centres to the south (such as Serra di Vaglio) in the 6<sup>th</sup> century will suggest and inform evidence in the Vulture.
- The extent and effects of the Lucanian “invasion” from the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. I wish to investigate this process in terms of rural settlement, to see whether there is a rapid expansion of rural settlement similar to that found in the *chorai* of Greek colonies,<sup>23</sup> or whether settlement remained isolated.
- Transformation as a result of the Roman conquest of the region: the wars of conquest in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the establishment of the Roman colony of *Venusia* to the east, the end of Daunian civilisation with the “destruction” of Lavello at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. A major research question will revolve around the conquest of this area by the Roman state. While the area around the Vulture is fertile agriculturally, it was not on the major Roman route to the south (the Via Appia ran north of the Vulture and by-passed the area in favour of *Venusia*); was the territory of the Vulture transformed and developed as they were incorporated into the Roman World System, as has been proposed for other parts of South Italy?<sup>24</sup> Or shall we find evidence for an almost-total collapse in rural settlement, similar for that documented for the territory of Metaponto,<sup>25</sup> and the establishment of a Roman villa system that centred upon the springs and *terme* of the Vulture as resorts for the wealthy?
- A crisis of depopulation and isolation has often been proposed for Lucania during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, as a result of military hostilities between Romans and Greeks/Carthaginians during of the Pyrrhic and Hannibalic wars. Results of land-use should shed light upon this question.
- A major research question will also be the state of the Vulture in Late Antiquity. Excavations already conducted by me at Rionero (Torre degli Embrici) indicate continuity of settlement in the area. While a villa site such as S.Giovanni di Ruoti showed evidence

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<sup>22</sup> Burgers 1998.; Damgaard Andersen et al. 1997; Lomas 1993.

<sup>23</sup> Carter 1990.

<sup>24</sup> Yntema. 1995; Burgers 1998.

<sup>25</sup> Carter 1990a.

of abandonment in the period of the Gothic wars in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the construction of the Church complex over the baths at Torre degli Embrici indicate occupation until at least the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Excavation*

The inclusion of excavation into regional survey projects was once unfashionable.<sup>26</sup> This is in part due, in my opinion, to the ideological divide between those who favour one method over the other as the best route to archaeological knowledge. In addition, many surveys have been carried out in regions in which the primate centre had already been extensively excavated, and the survey was seen as an overdue corrective.

Not only does it clearly make sense to understand changes in the settlement of the proposed primate centre if we are to properly interpret the changes in its territory, but closely-controlled stratigraphical excavations at Rionero and Atella will be important in informing the field survey in other ways. Many classes of ceramics (particularly the coarser wares) are as yet very imperfectly understood in the Vulture, and the usually battered fragments found on the surface during field-survey can be very difficult to identify and date. Excavation at Rionero and Atella will give us a firm chronological and typological sequence for understanding the survey data.

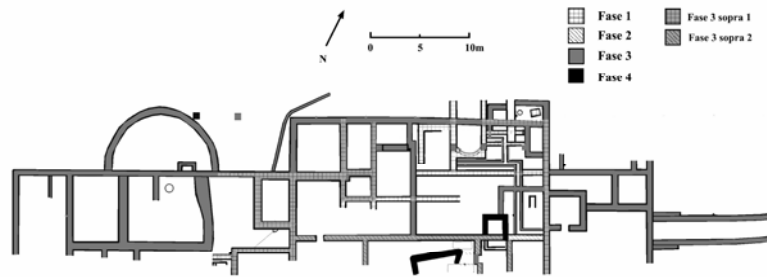
As has already been made clear, very little systematic archaeological work has been done in the Vulture. The excavation at Torre degli Embrici has seen only one campaign and, although the site is of prime importance, it will be difficult to study and publish the finds without financial support. A major part of the significance of this project, therefore, comes from the excavations proposed (and the publication thereof) for the site of Torre degli Embrici, the necropolis and earlier tombs from the area; they will supply the first reliable information on an important centre in an important frontier zone in south-central Italy.

### *Previous Work*

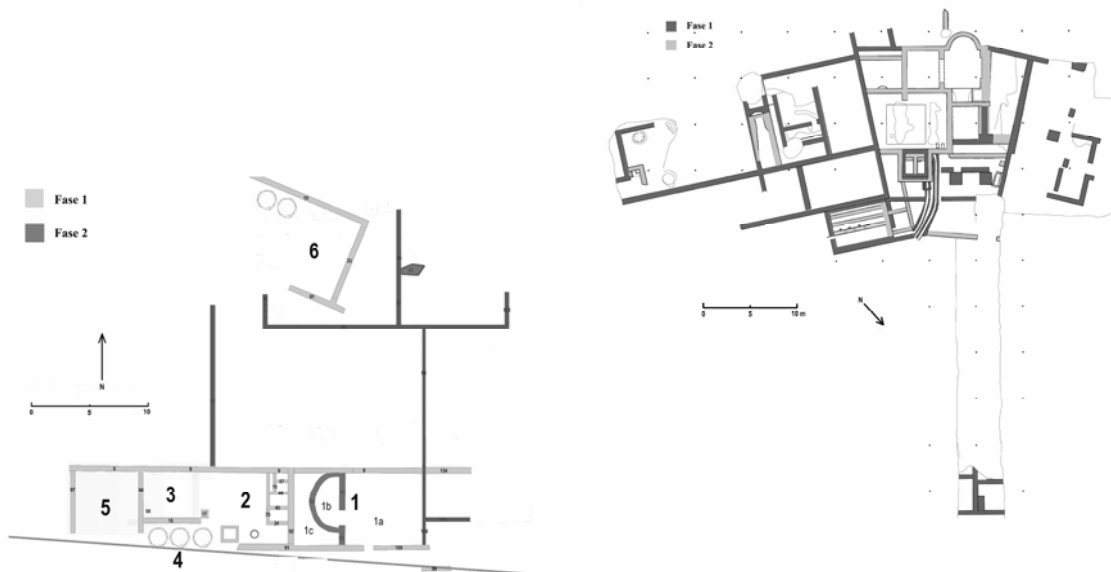
The basis for this project will be my previous experience in this area of Basilicata. I already have five years of experience in the region, but in the past I have directed excavations almost entirely in the north of Basilicata. This has included excavations of three Roman Villas in the Ofanto valley (Casa del Diavolo and Gaudio at Lavello, Serra dei Canonici at San Nicola di Melfi), the Roman Villa/Church complex at Rionero, the Daunian clan centre at San Felice, the Daunian tumulus complex at Casa Bella (Lavello), the Daunian necropoleis at Carozze and Cimitero (Lavello), a Medieval cemetery at Lavello (probably 9<sup>th</sup> century AD), the Late Roman Catacombs of Venosa, and the fortification walls and adjacent houses at the site called Mura del Parco at Serra di Vaglio. The experience gained directing these excavations, in addition to the unofficial work of rescue archaeology (usually the emergency excavation of tombs in the Ofanto valley and the identification of archaeological sites by what can only be termed unofficial survey in northern Basilicata), has given me extensive local knowledge and experience. The pre-Roman and Roman ceramics of the region are well known to me, as are the bronzes – particularly of the Lucanian period. Moreover, years of almost constant fieldwork in the area (broken only by inclement weather), in addition to my survey experience in the area and in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean, has given me the experience necessary to identify sites by survey and conduct complex excavations.

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<sup>26</sup> There are, of course, notable exceptions since G. Barker has made an art of combining survey and excavation, particularly in Molise. Barker 1995a; Barker-Grant 1991; Hodges *et al* 1980. Such work must be considered methodologically much more valuable than most work in Greece constrained just to do survey (eg. Cherry *passim*).



Torre degli Embrici (2004)



Serra dei Canonici (2003)

Casa del Diavolo (2004)

## Approach

### *Survey*

The choice of survey area is never straightforward in regional survey projects. Ideally, it would involve the *region* that can be expected to have supported a cultural system (in this case an area enclosed by mountains and constituting a restricted frontier zone); I am interested in how systems changed over time, and it is clear that "an area ideal for one period may not be suitable for others because the size and complexity of cultural systems are most unlikely to remain constant over time".<sup>27</sup> Starting from the hypothesis that between e. 700 BC and AD 700 'Il Vulture' was the major frontier zone between mountains and the Ofanto, I have selected a sample through this territory, just to the south of Rionero and including most of the territory of Atella. Similar survey units have been selected in the past.<sup>28</sup> This sample provides a wide range of landscapes and will therefore be suitable for the study of periods in which there was probably no primate centre in the region. We will begin the survey by sampling the region with transects, including as many different geomorphological zones as possible, and re-assessing the survey area as results accumulate.

The survey itself will be conducted on a field-by-field basis, with borders identified from 1:10,000 aerial photographs, with verification from Italian IGM maps (new series 1987) and local GPS readings. The aerial photographs will be digitised and the data collected entered

<sup>27</sup> Cherry et al. 1991, 14.

<sup>28</sup> A survey project in which I took part in 2001: Robinson 2003; Fletcher—Robinson 2003.

into a GIS system (ESRI software). A crucial factor will be the issue of survey intensity which is affected by numerous factors, the distance between field-walkers being the most important. It has been clearly demonstrated that the number of sites found in field survey is directly correlated to survey intensity,<sup>29</sup> and that this affects particularly sites under 0.2 ha and prehistoric sites generally.<sup>30</sup> I propose for this survey an average spacing of 10m between fieldwalkers, less in cases where visibility is poor.

Recording of surface data will take account of the realisation that a wide range of human activities take place on the landscape, not all of them connected with permanent settlement.<sup>31</sup> The concept of the "site" is clearly an interpretative construct, and surveys now have to take account of a range of possible off-site or non-site activities; manuring of fields is often implicated, but there are many other possible causes. We will be attempting to plot the density of artefacts over the entire landscape, with a view to interpreting the level and nature of activity in different periods. When substantial scatters are defined, they will be examined with methods of intensive site survey proposed especially by Dutch scholars.<sup>32</sup> In the interpretation of the results of the field survey, we will take account of recent work in cognitive geography: people orient themselves to landscapes that are significant socially, particularly through their links with past activity.<sup>33</sup>

The identification of aqueducts in the area should also be possible using survey. M. Gualtieri<sup>34</sup> has published a map showing the centrality of the Vulture in the aqueduct system of northern Basilicata – which is hardly surprising in the light of the popularity even now of spring waters from the Vulture. It is hoped that the aqueducts can be properly identified and mapped, which in turn could lead to the identification of further sites since such aqueducts will invariably indicate as much.

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<sup>29</sup> Bintliff—Snodgrass 1985.

<sup>30</sup> Bintliff—Snodgrass 1988; Bintliff et al. 1999; Barker 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Bintliff—Snodgrass 1988; Alcock *et al.* 1994.

<sup>32</sup> Burgers 1997; 1998.

<sup>33</sup> A.B. Knapp, *The Archaeology of Late Bronze Age Cypriot Society: The Study of Settlement, Survey and Landscape* (Glasgow) (1997); Given *et al.* op cit.

<sup>34</sup> The map shown below is from Gualtieri 1999, 127.



### *Excavation*

The approach to excavations at Torre degli Embrici and Rionero will be relatively straightforward. Torre degli Embrici was first excavated by myself in 2004 and restricted to the one field already purchased by the commune of Rionero. Excavations will be conducted to the north of the previously excavated area. These excavations should enable a more thorough understanding of the site.<sup>35</sup> The well preserved stratigraphy at this site will facilitate a better understanding of survey finds in the region. I plan to keep all excavation records in a GIS environment, with linked databases with a fully quantitative recording of the contexts. Material from the excavations will be incorporated into ongoing programmes of ceramic research conducted by myself aimed at identifying the distributions of wares in the region through the first millennium BC. Excavations at Torre degli Embrici and Rionero will continue throughout the life of the project with funding and local archaeological workers (with extensive experience) from Rionero and Atella. Excavations at the necropoleis at Rionero will be conducted. The information so obtained will be of the utmost importance not only for its own sake, but to inform the material found in the field survey.

### *Study*

The study of the finds – and their ultimate publication with the overall results – is one of the main aims of the project, and one of the major difficulties of extensive archaeological

<sup>35</sup> Fletcher *et al.* 2005.

fieldwork. One of the benefits of collaborative work (between the superintendency, the comune, and, it is proposed, the University team) will be the relative ease with which the finds may be studied. My experience in the region and my contacts at both the Museums at Melfi and at Venosa will enable the rapid processing, identification, drawing and photography of the finds. The data management will, however, be entirely in my hands. The team proposed for this project will include personnel that will be able to study and publish the finds as the ultimate result of the project. It should be noted that I have already, with the aid of a postgraduate student from the University of Alberta (Erin Stepney), begun the study of the finds from the first excavation at Rionero (2004).

### Benefit

The project will have three main areas of benefit:

1. On an archaeological level, it will expand knowledge in an important area of the Mediterranean and Italy. The history of the zone is not well understood. For the pre-Roman era, the project will uncover a hitherto unexplored area, while for the Roman and Late Roman periods the project aims to show that continuity was possible within the political context of disorder and instability.
2. Its broader themes of frontier research should create public interest in the Basilicata region and in Europe generally. I will be looking at processes of migration, acculturation (ancient “multiculturalism”), changing urban-rural relationships, frontier transformations and fluidity, and of the assimilation of small, distinct units into much larger economic zones (the Roman Empire introduced a World System, the effects of which were at least as dramatic for the inhabitants of ancient Basilicata as the modern process of “globalisation” are in Europe).
3. The project will augment the reputation of International research in South Italy, particularly in Europe and the US. It will, through exposure of students from the area to archaeological research techniques, significantly enhance the skills, contacts and research capacity of younger, aspiring archaeologists wishing to work in the Melfese.

### Core Personnel

1. Richard Fletcher (University of Alberta - Director)
2. Ted (E.G.D.) Robinson (University of Sydney – Director)

### **Ben-Gurion University (Israel):**

2. Peter Fabian (specialising in Roman archaeology)
3. Dimitri Tarat (specialising in Late Roman and Medieval archaeology)
4. Karni Golan (specialising in Roman archaeology)
5. Eyal Marco (specialising in prehistoric archaeology)
6. Alexey Sapojnik (specialising in Late Roman archaeology)

### **Israel Antiquities Authority**

7. Emil Aladjem (specialising in prehistoric archaeology)

### **University of Alberta (Canada)**

8. Erin Stepney (Roman Archaeology with extensive experience in northern Basilicata)
9. Adam Tupper (specialising in Bronze Age Archaeology)

**Sydney University (Australia)**

10. Camilla Norman (specialising in Daunian Archaeology)
11. Bernadette McCall (specialising in Roman Fine Ware and Glass)
12. Mathew Mcallum (specialising in Roman Baths)

**Oxford University (England)**

13. Elizabeth Smith (specialising in Roman Villas)

**Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens**

14. Anthoulla Vassiliades (specialising in Byzantine Archaeology)

**University of Edinburgh (Scotland)**

15. Bruce Glendinning (specialising in geophysics)

**Students****Volunteers**Publication

The primary purpose of this project will be the publication of both the excavation and survey results.

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