

*The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, ed. by R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright. Volume II: *Instrumentum Domesticum*, Fascicule 6, ed. S.S. Frere and R.S.O. Tomlin with contributions from M.W.C. Hassall. Oxford 1994. 102 p., 8 pl. ISBN 0-7509-0536-0. GBP 35.00.

The new fascicule of RIB – *Instrumentum domesticum*, containing dipinti and graffiti on amphorae and mortaria as well as inscriptions in white barbotine, on coarse ware and Samian barbotine, is put at the disposal of research, in the customary reliable manner. It has been compiled by S.S. Frere with the assistance of R.S.O. Tomlin on the bases of the archives of R. Wright. The fascicule contains finds up to 1986. Apart from drawings to each inscription in the text, some important pieces are reproduced in photographs at the end of the volume. An index of sites facilitates the access to the material from a geographical point of view. Other references will be available upon completion of the volume. Nevertheless, this is a further piece of evidence for a fuller view of Roman life in Britain.

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DAVID RIDGWAY: *The First Western Greeks*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992. xvi, 180 p. ISBN 0-521-42164-0. GBP 32.50 (hc) / 10.95 (pb).

This important book is the 2nd, revised and up-dated, edition of the author's *L'Alba della Magna Grecia* which was published in 1984 by Longanesi & C. Milan. The primary changes have been made in chapter 1 Mycenaean prologue, chapter 2 The Euboeans at home and abroad, chapter 7 Campania, Latium vetus and Southern Etruria in the ninth and eighth centuries, and chapter 8 Etruscan epilogue. A new final section has been added called Notes for further reading. The illustrations are identical with those of the previous edition. The rest of the contents are as follows: chapter 3 Pithekoussai: an introduction, chapter 4 Pithekoussai: the cemetery in the Valle di San Montano, chapter 5 Pithekoussai: the non-funerary sites, and chapter 6 Pithekoussai: status and function. The aim of the author is "to acquaint a wider audience with an archeological project that could hardly be more revolutionary: the effective discovery and excavation of the first Greek establishment in the West". In this task he has succeeded very well.

With the new and better excavated sites our information on the Mycenaean presence in South Italy and Sicily occurring from the Middle Helladic period (16th to 15th century) to the Late Helladic IIIC period (1200-1050) has increased considerably (p. 4 ff.). It now seems to be apparent that a dominant quantity of the imported material can be dated to the LH IIIA period (1400-1300) which shows an increasing Mycenaean activity towards South Italy in general, while on the contrary in the next period LH IIIB (1300-1200) there are many changes of emphasis, as, e.g., imports to southeast Sicily decrease but those of the Aeolian islands as well as those along the Ionian coast of the modern Calabria and Basilicata increase. This stage of Mycenaean contact with Italy is in perfect harmony with the Mycenaean palace civilisation in Greece and it is contemporary also with the Mycenaean presence in Crete, the Dodecanese, Egypt, Cyprus, Anatolia and the Levant. Altogether, the excavated sites in Italy cover a Mycenaean engagement which was in existence for more than 500 years between the 16th and the 11th centuries.

The forthcoming excavations will certainly give us still more information about still existing problems concerning the indigenous inhabitants of Italy and the actual Mycenaean residents, and their real relationships with each other.

The second chapter is a significant contribution to Euboian importance in Greek and Italian history from the late 10th century onwards and it consists principally of deductions from archaeological evidence. The excavations in Eretria, Chalcis and Lefkandi seem to confirm that Euboea belonged to a loose maritime federation from the 10th century onwards which extended from Thessaly to the northern Cyclades. It could also take advantage of the existing trade routes of the Phoenician and Cypriot traders. Moreover, the new Euboian survey finds suggest extensive early use of local metal resources. Thus the new archaeological evidence from Chalcis, Eretria and especially Lefkandi allude to the existence of an economically flourishing society during the 10th and 9th centuries. This society also had useful contacts both to the West and to the East as members of the Cypro-Phoenician trade network.

In the west, Sardinia was the main centre of metal work already from the 12th century onwards and it also gives the earliest evidence of iron in the western Mediterranean. According to the recent finds the indigenous nuraghic communities were technologically far more advanced in the beginning of the first millenium than their contemporaries in Italy. This could have been one of the reasons which caused the Euboian communities to seek new connections in the West, inasmuch as they became aware that metal was easily available. Their first destination could have been Northern Etruria, an area rich with metals, and the first mutually profitable exploitation of the metal resources was then organized in Sardinia.

Many interesting details are offered to the reader in chapters 3-6 about different social aspects of Pithekoussai itself. The weakest element in this analysis seems to be the tables and figures (p. 69-77, and especially p. 101). It would have been better to leave off the percentages in the distribution of burial sites and grave goods in late Geometric I and II (= LG) (table 2., fig.17) as well as in the proportion of grave goods in LG I and II (table 3., fig 18). The same goes for the other tables, viz. the distribution of objects by burial rite (what does it mean?) in LG I and II (table 4., fig 19), the incidence of objects in graves in LG I and II (table 5, fig. 20). The meaning of the figures is difficult to understand, and the percentages are misleading since the finds are necessarily haphazard and far too small in number to be statistically relevant. Nevertheless, one is absolutely convinced that the earliest Euboians came to Pithekoussai with good technology and Levantine connections, and they can be considered as some kind of "missing link" on the route from East to West (see. p. 121). Their influence on the native cultures is certainly difficult to define, but it is evident, as R. shows, that a crucial impact was made not only in pottery but also in the know-how of metal working. It was "high technology" they could offer to the Etruscans as well as other native communities. The other item in which they might have been a sort of go-between was the transmitting of ideas, e.g., the first introduction of the Homeric Epic to the West might have happened through their intermediation. Not only the Nestor kotyle but also two *passi* at *Odyseia* (1.184; 14.305-13) suggest that along with the trade also ideas were transported.

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