

sind. In Britannien liegt der Schwerpunkt auf Militärgeschichte, während wir in Gallien und Germanien viel mehr von der Verwaltung und Religion hören. In den Donauländern überwiegt die Siedlungsgeschichte, in Anatolien die inneren Verhältnisse der Städte. In Ägypten kann man reiche Auskünfte über Recht und Wirtschaft auffinden. Soweit ich sehe, wird Rätien in keinem Kapitel behandelt. Für einige Regionen gibt man Abschätzungen der Gesamtbevölkerung (so für Italien über 15 Millionen Einwohner, für Afrika 7-8 Millionen, für Hispanien 6-8 Millionen, für Ägypten 8-9 Millionen), aber keine für die anderen. Die Karten sind von unterschiedlicher Qualität, einige unter ihnen weniger brauchbar. Die umfassende Bibliographie der Sekundärliteratur reicht hauptsächlich bis zur Mitte der 90er Jahre, mit einigen Ergänzungen für die Zeit danach.

Die provinzwweise Darstellung des Reiches erweist sich als sehr ergiebig. Heute betont man z.B. die verschiedenartige wirtschaftliche und demographische Entwicklung der einzelnen Regionen während der Kaiserzeit. Im Fazit stellt der Herausgeber das Erfolgsgeheimnis des Römischen Reiches fest: die Fähigkeit, verschiedene Individuen aus völlig unterschiedlichen Völkern bald nach der Unterwerfung zu integrieren. Die Krise des 3. Jahrhunderts zeigte den Erfolg dieser Politik. Damals verdankte Rom sein Überleben nicht den italischen Senatoren, sondern einfachen Männern aus den Randzonen des Reiches. Alles in allem: das Werk erscheint als ein nützliches und zuverlässiges Handbuch sowohl mit Bezug auf Einzelheiten als auch auf die grossen Linien.

*Antti Arjava*

*Die Tonplomben aus dem Nestorpalast von Pylos.* Hg. von INGO PINI. Bearbeitet von W. MÜLLER, J.-P. OLIVIER, I. PINI & A. SAKELLARIOU. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1997. ISBN 3-8053-1981-9. 123 pp., 46 ill. EUR 81,81 ca.

Excavation finds sometimes take a long time to get published and the publication of the clay seals from the palace of Nestor at Pylos is no exception to this unfortunate rule: the excavation reports date back to the 1960s and this publication is from 1997. Most of the material has been published before in various studies on the subject, but no comprehensive catalogue has ever been done before. Much attention has been given to the study of seal stones and ring seals, their iconography, dating, and sometimes even to their function, but the seals themselves have not received as much notice. This book raises some very interesting issues and is a valuable contribution to the study of the Aegean Bronze Age even when dealing with only one category of finds.

The main part of the book has been dedicated to the catalogue of the 114 seals and although whole impressions have been usually treated in many other instances, most of the fragments are published for the first time. Only a little over 10 % are without a fairly precise context and most have been found outside the main building, in the "wine magazine" or the "north eastern building". Each description includes technical information such as type and dimensions as well as a description and discussion of the image and its content (by the late Agnes Sakellariou), and a bibliography. Each seal has also been photographed and drawn. Possible inscriptions have also been transcribed in the text and drawn in the plates. The information is also compiled into several tables

towards the end of the volume.

The rest of the book is taken up by five chapters on typology (by W. Müller), string and artifact impressions (by W. Müller and I. Pini), inscriptions (by J.-P. Olivier), dating (by I. Pini), and on manufacture and function (by I. Pini). The typology is fairly simple, based first on the manner of attaching the seal to the object and then on the morphology. Most seals were attached with a piece of string from varying materials and the clay either actually sealed a knot or then was attached to the object with a piece of string, perhaps as some kind of label or proof of quality. There are also some which were attached directly to the object and some which are morphologically similar to seals, but which have not been attached at all ("nodules"). The intact seals were X-rayed to find out the shape of the string inside and silicon casts were made of the suitable fragments for the same reason. Müller and Pini also did some experiments with strings and knots for acquiring comparative material.

Only 22 of the 114 seals were inscribed. Compared with the other palace seal assemblages, the difference is clear as the Pylos seals are not a very uniform group. They were inscribed by several different persons and were found scattered inside the palace area, unlike many of the other finds, which come from more concise deposits of seals. From these inscriptions one might hope for clarification of, e.g., room functions or on the type of commodity held in magazines, but unfortunately in most cases this cannot be achieved. The seals have usually been connected with the baskets which held clay tablets of the palace administration, but the study of the strings and the attachments might point to their use in connection with the actual transportation or to storage vessels or packages. Another way to get more enlightenment on this matter could perhaps be the study of the architecture and the complete artifact assemblages, especially in those rooms whose function cannot be directly determined. The contexts of the seals were not discussed very much and this, to me, would seem to most important part.

The date of the seals is an even more problematic issue than their function. The dates given are mostly based on the images which sometimes can be connected to actual seal stones or metal ring seals. Unfortunately, despite the intense interest in the Minoan and Mycenaean seal stones, a solid typological study is still missing and the opinions on their dates given by scholars can vary considerably.

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ELIZABETH ANGELICOUSSIS: *The Holkham Collection of Classical Sculptures*. Photographs by RAOUL LAEV and KEN WALTON. Monumenta artis Romanae 30; Corpus signorum imperii Romani: Great Britain, vol. 3, fasc. 10. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 2001. ISBN 3-8053-2697-1. 189 pp., 43 figs., 101 pls. EUR 76,69 ca.

This beautiful volume continues the series of catalogues dedicated to classical sculpture in British private collections, a Cologne-based project that was started some thirty years ago. This time the material comes from Holkham Hall (Norfolk) which houses a most remarkable collection of classical antiquities. The formation of the collection goes back to the efforts of one individual, Thomas Coke (1697-1759), later the 1st Earl of Leicester. Besides its size, the assemblage impresses by the superb quality and the excellent state of