

*Archäologischer Wegweiser durch Portugal*. Herausgeber THOMAS G. SCHATTNER. Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt, Band 74. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1998. ISBN 3-8053-2313-1. 236 pp., 5 maps, 204 ill., 19 colour plates. EUR 34.80.

Portugal is a familiar country to many tourists, but its ancient remains are probably not so very well known. This book, written by a group of German archaeologists who have worked extensively in the country, takes action towards making them better known and more easily approachable. To a certain degree the book is successful in that, but its use also requires, as the editor Thomas Schattner states in the introduction, a great deal of skill in finding the described sites based on very short route descriptions and on very simple maps showing only a general location of the sites. So, pack a good road map of Portugal!

The volume is small and relatively light, so it will travel easily. Its content is divided into two parts: first, the general outline of the prehistoric and historical periods starting with the Mesolithic and ending in the 14th century AD in six short articles, followed by a gazetteer of 305 archaeological sites which forms the bulk of the book. At the end of the volume, the reader finds a list of museums with archaeological collections, glossaries of archaeological and Portuguese terms, geographical and biographical indexes as well as a fairly extensive bibliography.

The general articles have a slightly odd emphasis on archaeological research history which, at least in the first article about the early prehistoric periods from the Mesolithic to the Copper Age, takes up far too much space and attention. One would assume that the most important thing is to give the reader a good idea of what the prehistoric period was like, instead of how its studies have developed. Also, the Palaeolithic is not even mentioned though the gazetteer presents at least two Palaeolithic rock art sites. Even for an expert reader, the effect of the general articles is slightly more baffling than clearly informative.

The site list is arranged geographically from North to South, and to a certain extent according to major river valleys. Geographical or administrative regions have not been used to separate the list into smaller segments, which might help the reader find the sites in the region he/she is in more easily. The list is ca. 150 pages long and because it continues without any kind of break, it looks a little uninviting. The indexes are not very helpful either in trying to organize the data provided by the list as any indexes (or even just lists of site numbers) by date and administrative regions are missing. The map at the beginning of the book helps a little at least in trying to find the sites in one region, but trying to find sites for a specific period requires quite a lot of effort.

A typical description starts with brief advice on how to reach the site followed by a short description of the remains with dates, etc. The text is supplemented by photographs of landscapes and artifacts as well as with, in general, very clear and informative maps and plans of the sites. The most important literature has also been mentioned. The descriptions have been written by five authors and the contents of the descriptions are mostly similar, and presented in a similar manner. It might have been an improvement if the texts would also have been edited to look alike, instead of showing a variety of styles.

It is obvious that producing a guide book of this extent, covering an entire country and its entire history, is not easy. One is nevertheless left with the impression that with a little more effort the book would have been easier to use as a guidebook and would invite even the lazier tourist to desert the beach in favour of the search for the distant past.

*Eeva-Maria Viitanen*