

GEORGIOS I. DESPINIS: *Hochrelieffriese des 2. Jahrhunderts n.Chr. aus Athen*. Deutsches archäologisches Institut, Athenische Abteilung. Hirmer Verlag, München 2003. 3-7774-9870-X. XXII, 217 S., 91 Taf. EUR 68.

This book is simultaneously an homage to Margarete Bieber, who started working on Athenian relief friezes of the mid-Imperial period in the early 20th century under difficult circumstances, and a proof of other researchers' perseverance in finalizing the task some ninety years later.

The central part of the material was formed by the familiar high relief slabs of the Theatre of Dionysos, taken from an earlier building and incorporated in the bema in the early 5th century by archon Phaidros. Corresponding fragments, many of which have been known since the late 19th century, were traced not only in the storerooms of Athenian museums, but also in European and even North American collections. Most of the material is only now being properly published; the catalogue is arranged according to the museums, and then according to the subject, naked or robed males, and clothed women forming the majority.

After detailed research, the material was divided into five different entities, two of which were of Dionysian subject and separated according to the slabs' measurements, technical features, iconography, and style; the fragments were thus connected to Hadrian's building activity. Another crucial problem was the attempt to identify the buildings once adorned with these series of high reliefs. In this, the original whereabouts of storing the fragments before their removal to the National Museum in 1875 was of great importance. Several candidates are presented, from temples to choregic monuments, mostly in the northern side of the Acropolis, but reaching a definite solution is hardly possible. The workshops are pondered over, including all those outside Athens and in the area of Corinth, taking into consideration, among others things, sarcophagi, statue bases, and altars.

It is a pleasure to hail an expert sculptural study, profoundly researched and well written, which enlarges considerably our knowledge of Attic art in the Roman period.

Leena Pietilä-Castrén

GLORIA S. MERKER: *The Greek Tile Works at Corinth: The Site and the Finds*. With a Contribution by CHARLES K. WILLIAMS II. Hesperia Supplement 35. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens 2006. ISBN 978-0-87661-535-5. XIII, 185 pp. USD 55, GBP 35.

PHILIP B. BETANCOURT: *The Chrysokamino Metallurgy Workshop And Its Territory*. Hesperia Supplement 36. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens 2006. ISBN 978-0-87661-536-2. XXII, 462 pp. USD 65, GBP 40.

The excavation report is undoubtedly the most common archaeological publication. Sometimes the report comes long after the actual fieldwork has been completed; this is the case with Gloria S. Merker's book on the Tile Works at Corinth. The excavation took place in 1939, long before Merker herself even became an archaeologist. Sometimes the time gap is much shorter and the fieldwork at Chrysokamino on Crete, directed by Philip B. Betancourt,

is admirably published in a mere decade's time. The importance of a report should never be underestimated, but appreciated instead; the greatest archaeological sin having thus been successfully avoided.

Merker has also the thankless task of reporting someone else's work which is never easy, and she does it well. The emphasis of the volume is on publishing the finds, particularly those regarded as products of the Corinth tile works. The finds catalogue also includes other ceramic products of local manufacture as well as imports and covers ca. two thirds of the book. Merker's work has been augmented by a section on architectural terracottas by Charles K. Williams II. The introduction presents the research history and chapter one the structures and phasing of the Tile Works. Each find is described in detail and most are also depicted in black and white photographs. The volume will serve well its purpose as a research tool.

The Chrysokamino site is a metallurgical workshop in Eastern Crete, known for a long time, but has been properly studied only in the mid-nineties in a special project directed by Betancourt. The site was excavated and the finds related to metallurgy analyzed with scientific methods with good results. The work also included a survey in the territory surrounding the workshop in order to study its wider social and economic background. The results of most of the work are reported here, but for example the excavations of a settlement site nearby will be published separately.

The Chrysokamino volume also consists to a great extent of descriptions of various types of excavation and survey finds. The book is divided into two parts, one devoted to the metallurgy workshop and the other to the results of the survey. Approximately one third of the pages consist of appendixes. Each artifact category is described and discussed in a separate article in a rather traditional manner. The scientific analyses of slags and furnace chimney fragments are included as appendixes. Somewhat curiously, some of the survey finds have also been included as appendixes instead of giving them a place in the chapters discussing the sites. The chapters also include a lengthy discussion of early metallurgy in the Mediterranean as well as of the boundaries and land use around the Chrysokamino farmstead found in the survey work.

The structures and finds from Corinth come from an old excavation which probably means that most of them have been collected without much attention to context. There is, however, some contextual data in the descriptions and a simple table listing the finds from each recognized context would have been a useful addition to the information published. This could even have given some new insight into the material itself. Somewhat surprisingly, the same problem is present in the Chrysokamino volume representing data from recent work. Little attention is paid to the layers and structures excavated and few distribution maps have been included. There are few proper features in the workshop area and it would have taken only a little time and space to give them full descriptions. The finds from various contexts are separated into the various discussions and no aids are given to anyone who might be interested in trying to reconstruct find distributions. Even the context information is somewhat enigmatic – the letter and number codes are not fully explained, but comparison between the distributions maps and codes confirms that they signify the letter-number codes of grid squares and then excavation layers.

Both volumes represent the traditional excavation report well enough. Both could also have been at least slightly improved with a more contextual approach.

Eeva-Maria Viitanen