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Review

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BOOK REVIEWS

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EARLY ARAD. THE CHALCOLITHIC SETTLEMENT AND EARLY BRONZE AGE CITY. I. FIRST-FIFTH SEASONS OF EXCAVATIONS, 1962-1966, by *Ruth Amiran, Uzzi Paran, Yigal Shiloh, Rafi Brown, Yoram Tsafir, Amnon Ben-Tor*. Pp. xiv + 138, figs. 23, pls. and plans 193. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem, 1978.

This volume presents the results of the first five seasons of excavation at Arad, which, with its fortifications, elements of city planning and extensive ceramic corpus, is one of the most important Early Bronze Age sites in this region to be excavated scientifically. *Early Arad* concentrates on the excavations of the lower city with material of the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages, excluding the Iron Age settlement on the upper mound excavated by Y. Aharoni. While much of the information presented in this volume is already familiar from earlier articles, it is valuable to have the final publication available.

After a brief introduction, including the history of the excavations and description of the topography of the site, discussions of the main chronological divisions of the site are given: the Chalcolithic (Stratum V) and EB I and II (Strata IV-I). For the latter time periods, more detailed discussion is presented of the architecture and stratigraphy, including the public architecture (the city wall with its horseshoe-shaped towers, water catchment system, temples, and enigmatic stone platforms which may have been the bases of grain silos) and the private dwelling areas.

The material remains are discussed by categories (such as ceramics, figurines and metal implements), and with specialists' reports, including petrographic and technological analyses of ceramics (by J. Glass), glyptics (P. Beck), physicochemical analyses of a sample of metal objects (J. Fuchs), lithic analyses (T. Schick), human osteological remains (N. Haas), plant remains (M. Hopf), faunal remains (H. Lernau) and carbon-14 dating (E.K. Ralph), and additional brief notes on specific topics. The collaboration with specialists from disciplines related to archaeology and the attention paid to virtually all types of material remains permit the retrieval of the types of data

needed to understand a prehistoric site or society. Finally, forming perhaps the most important contribution of this volume, are the numerous plates of high quality (both photographs and line drawings) of the objects, particularly the pottery. As Arad is likely to be considered the type-site for EB II Palestinian ceramics, this corpus will be the basis for future comparative studies of this period.

The faults which one could find with this report, other than the relatively minor problems of typographical errors, incompletely labelled figures and some lack of clarity in general organization of the data, lie primarily in the lapse in time between excavation and publication (which was beyond the control of the authors), and the lack of emphasis on synthesis of data and integration of the various specialists' reports with the general conclusions. For example, little attempt is made to reconstruct the environment of Arad during EB I and II, despite the data on rainfall, the relationship of topography and catchment, and different types of grains and seeds recovered which may indicate either import of various agricultural products or climatic conditions suitable for local cultivation. Environmental reconstruction would also lead to the broader questions of the support of the population of a major settlement with a relatively specialized and stratified society, the reasons for occupation of an area which today might be considered a "marginal zone" and possible causes for the end of the settlement, whether by invasion or some other means. While some of these points are mentioned in the "Conclusions and Implications," fuller synthesis of the data might have permitted a more satisfactory approach to the issues raised by this important site, with implications far beyond the geographical limits of the site itself.

The lapse between excavation and publication has resulted in the restatement of previously published data and ideas, such as the revision of Egyptian-Palestinian chronology requiring the First Dynasty of Egypt to overlap with the latter half of the EB I period in Palestine. Some of the conclusions of *Early Arad I*, however, have been outdated by the subsequent excavations between 1971 and 1978. While a bibliography of articles on Arad is included, the

reader should also be aware of recent revisions proposed by Amiran, including her redating of the end of the earlier occupation at Arad to the end of the EB II (*IEJ* 28 [1978] 182-84, an article intended to supplement the publication of this book). Problems of the definition and division of archaeological periods on the basis of ceramic criteria are also raised indirectly in reference to both the EB I and EB II periods. These difficulties are not as fully confronted as they might have been in a publication of the ceramic type-site for these phases. While *Early Arad I* makes contributions to the study of EB I-II, it is necessary to await the publication of *Early Arad II* in order to seek resolution for some of the provocative issues raised by this site and to assess the full significance of Arad for the Early Bronze Age archaeology of Syria-Palestine.

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VASILIKE WARE. AN EARLY BRONZE AGE POTTERY STYLE IN CRETE. RESULTS OF THE PHILADELPHIA VASILIKE WARE PROJECT, by *Philip P. Betancourt et al.* (Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology, vol. LVI.) Paul Åströms Förlag, Göteborg, 1979.

This is the first monograph on Vasilike pottery. It is the result of a program conducted at Temple University, Philadelphia, under the direction of Philip P. Betancourt. The title and subtitle refer to the Vasilike pottery both as a ware and as a style, and technical investigations as well as some stylistic analyses are presented. The volume is illustrated with photographs of Vasilike vases, several microscope photographs, and drawings of Vasilike shapes. There is a useful catalogue.

One of the chief aims of the program was to find out how Vasilike Ware was made and why its quality varies considerably. Several different methods were used to determine the firing temperature, the nature of the slip and the chemical composition of the clay. Some sherds were examined with a binocular microscope to determine hardness, gloss, color variations, etc. Three sherds were also submitted to electron microscopic examination. It would, of course, have been interesting to have a greater number of sherds investigated and it would certainly have been useful to know if there are any conclusive variations in the material from different sites and parts of Crete. This would, however, clearly have been impossible for various reasons.

The technique of the manufacture has also been studied and it is shown that the walls of the vessels were constructed of pre-cut clay slabs, slightly overlapping and pressed together to form smooth, strong seams.

Various theories about the methods of producing the mottled surface of the Vasilike Ware have been tested at the Tyler Art School at Temple. One of the merits of this book is that some of these theories are firmly dismissed. It is concluded that mottling was *not* produced by firing in an open kiln, by having jets of air passing through a pierced kiln floor or by painting tar or some other substance on the surface. Other theories are corroborated and the tests have shown that several different techniques were used, consciously or accidentally. Separate parts of the surface were, for instance, oxidized and others reduced. Slip of varying texture was also employed to produce the mottling; and dots, tongues and other designs were made by applying the slip in patterns.

The stratigraphy and origins of the Vasilike Ware are discussed and Betancourt shows that it was probably introduced at different times in different parts of Crete. Unfortunately the material does not permit any conclusions about changes in shape and decoration within the Vasilike style. Betancourt suggests that the decoration developed from preceding Minoan styles. He cautiously avoids tracing the ultimate derivation of the various shapes. It is rightly pointed out that parallel development is to be expected in different regions because of common techniques and a common stage of culture.

The question of the interaction of various media is also discussed. Clay types have been copied in stone, but Betancourt states that none of the Vasilike shapes can definitely be shown to have had stone prototypes. Several years ago, W. Schiering compared the mottling to the look of polished stone. Betancourt thinks that the similarity may be accidental, since there are no attempts at banding, in spite of the fact that this would have been possible with the Vasilike techniques. The argument is, however, not conclusive. That one type of stone is imitated does not mean that others have to be imitated as well. Mottled ware may not have been invented to imitate stone vases; this was actually never suggested by Schiering, who merely pointed to the fact that the surface is accentuated in the same way by the veins in the stone vases and the painted dots and other designs on the clay vases. But the Minoans were probably just as aware of the similarity between Vasilike pottery and stone vases as we are, and they may well have emphasized it deliberately in some cases, although this is hard to prove.

Several different centers of production are identified. The identification is partly based on the appearance of distinctive local shapes.

The chapter on Vasilike Ware as utilitarian objects and as art is, in my opinion, rather summary. A more detailed analysis might have led to interesting conclusions about Minoan vase decoration at this early period. I do not agree with the author's statement that there is no torsional decoration in Vasilike Ware. The term "torsional" may be differently interpreted, but