

N. Theodossiev, *North-Western Thrace from the Fifth to First Centuries BC*, BAR International Series vol. 859, Archaeopress Oxford 2000. II + 239 pp. ISBN 1 84171 060 1, £ 34,-.

If Thrace as a whole is, for many western archaeologists and classicists, already a *terra incognita*, this goes even more so for the north-western part of it, to a large extent the home of the tribe of the Triballoi. A first exploration of this area, centred around the monuments of this region from the fifth to the first century BC including (*i.e.* the Late Iron Age - LIA) and irrespective of national borders (*i.e.* both on Bulgarian and Serbian territory), is to be found in the book under review.

In the introduction Theodossiev (hence T) states that: “the main target of this book is to achieve, as far as possible, a reconstruction of the entire cultural and historical development of the north-western Thrace during the Late Iron Age” (p. 2). Even with the proviso made, this is a huge task for a lifetime, even more so because much of the archaeological record is either not or poorly published (*ibid.*). Also T acknowledges this and limits his main tasks: tracing the territories, specifying LIA chronology, specifying spatial organization, review and analysis of mortuary practices, historical development and contact of NW Thracian tribes, revision of some older opinions imposed in the historiography, elaboration of a catalogue (*cf. ibid.*).

The book can be divided in four main parts: chapters I-III and the catalogue. In chapter I, ‘North-western Thrace in the Late Iron Age’, pp. 10-24, T briefly describes landscape, time, types of monuments etc. Part of this ground he already previously explored in a paper published in *Archaeologia Bulgarica* 2 (1998): ‘Sanctuaries and Cult-Places in NW Thrace during the First Millennium BC’. Chapter II, pp. 25-70, is devoted to ‘Mortuary practices in North-western Thrace in the Late Iron Age’. T relatively briefly discusses some peculiarities of the more than 1,000 tumuli in NW Thrace and the different types of so-called flat graves, of which some 125 are known. Next he deals with the social structure of NW Thracian tribes both based upon the, very scanty, literary evidence and the evidence one may gather from the different cemeteries. T concludes this chapter with a review of religious beliefs and ideas relevant to death. Some of the views expressed regarding after-life and the mother-goddess may appear strange in westerners’ eyes, though they are worthwhile to contemplate. Chapter III, pp. 71-

100, treats the ‘Historical development of NW Thrace in the fifth-first centuries BC’.

Important and enlightening as each of these chapters is – and they certainly are –, their importance is, in my view, dwarfed by the Catalogue, pp. 105-148. Here T enumerates all sites, known so far, a total of 255, and the monuments and finds of each of these sites as well as, if present, the relevant literature for this site. Views and theories may change over time, as the first three chapters of T themselves frequently testify, but the material itself – and the sites – is, or at least should be, the constant factor in our research: the access thereto is what T offers here.

The book is concluded with a, as far as I could check, comprehensive bibliography (pp. 149-171), with separate sections for literature in Cyrillic, Roman, and Greek script, and a section of figures (pp. 173-293), with plans, line-drawings, and photographs (black/white, some of unsatisfactory quality) which serve to illustrate the descriptions of the catalogue.

In spite of my great appreciation for this work I am not overall satisfied. My first point of criticism is the number of typos throughout the text: they do not always distract from the clarity of the content, but they are at least annoying. I think that an extra check by the editor(s) could have prevented much inconvenience. The second point is more fundamental.

In spite of the fact that T shows time and again that he masters most, if not all, parts of the ground, there simply is too much of it. I sincerely believe that the book would have greatly benefited from a more modest setting of objectives. A third point of criticism concerns the absence of an index.

To try and achieve the task T has set for himself – as formulated in the introduction – within the relatively limited space of a single volume is, I believe, virtually impossible. The writer either has to detract from his scholarly qualities or has to limit himself to the bare minimum of facts. Also here the editors should have intervened: to allow a second volume would, in my opinion, have been a serious option and would have served author, reader, and subject. The book shows several examples of the splits the author has to do to keep within limits, *e.g.* regarding death and immortalization, after-death travelling and rebirth (pp. 58-62). In the process he withholds the reader from a more thorough introduction into an area and culture hitherto virtually unknown (at least in the west) and where, generally, no prior knowledge by the readership may be assumed. Finally he bars himself from the possibility to outline some main characteristics of the NW Thracian entity more clearly and link them both to objects which the western readership may, coincidentally, have seen, like the Rogozen treasure (and are now only sporadically alluded to: *cf.*, *e.g.*, p. 51, 56, 78; p. 135, nr. 196; figs. 121-140) and the cultures surrounding NW Thrace (and the related interaction).

All this does not detract from the fact that this book is a landmark in Thracian studies. It is a first attempt, at least in a western language, to shed some light on an almost completely neglected region in (an almost neglected part of)

Europe. Moreover, T provides researchers, with the raw material he has collected, with a tremendous amount of work to elaborate. The mere fact that T has found the opportunity to assemble all this raw material makes this work a useful, if not indispensable, tool for anyone working in this field in the foreseeable future.

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M.Y. Treister, *Hammering Techniques in Greek and Roman Jewellery and Toreutics*, in: Hargrave J. (ed.), *Colloquia Pontica* 8, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001, xxx + 620 pp., 133 ill. ISBN 90 04 12150 1, ISSN 1389-8477, € 179,-.

This book offers a detailed and technical analysis of the tools and techniques used for the decoration of metal objects and jewellery in Greek and Roman times. From an exhaustive choice of objects and references it studies the use of punches and matrices from Archaic Greece till the Late Roman Empire, with an extra focus on the organisation of the workshops in the central and eastern parts of the Greek and Roman world.

The book is built up in a very clear and consistent structure, which allows for easy access.

Its preface offers a *status quaestionis* of the used terminology in previous works and the technical vocabulary used throughout this volume (freehand repoussé, relief matrix, intaglio matrix, punches).

In the introduction the author focuses on the tools and techniques that were in use in the 2nd millennium BC and whose influence lived on in later times.

In the consequent four chapters the hammering techniques are studied in Archaic Greece, the Classical Period, the Hellenistic Period and the First centuries AD. Each chapter starts with a short summation of representative tools (punches and matrices) and continues to discuss the different kind of metal objects on which these tools were applied, from jewellery to horse harnesses over armour, votives and mirrors, by describing in detail specific archaeological objects.

After each chapter the author has included several articles (*excursūs*) relating to the topic, mostly from earlier publications. Most of them focus on one particular object or group of objects and explain in great detail which techniques were applied. As such, they offer a better insight in and illustration to the overall study, while at the same time they remain separate from the main structure, thus not clouding the debate by their abundance of offered details. Two *excursūs* though, describing the hammering techniques of the Near East and Scythia, feel out of place in this set-up. In these articles the author explains in an approach similar to the study at hand the methods for metal decorations in these neighbouring cultures, with probable influences in the Greek workshops. By placing them in the book as an *excursus* their

relevance is understated, confusing the reader on their possible importance in the overall view of hammering technique in ancient times.

In the concluding chapter the author collects all arguments and reasoning and presents it in a consistent and proper way, following the time line of his study. He focuses in particular on the workshops, the ways they were organised and the practice of travelling craftsmen who distributed their own domestic techniques throughout the Mediterranean while adapting their new methods with the local traditions. He ends by pointing out the specialisations used in the complete process. It seems reasonable to assume that gem cutters were used to cut the intricate and detailed design of the matrices, while the actual metal decorations were created by specialised toreuts using these matrices.

After the actual text the 133 figures (shown in more than 150 photographs) are placed. They are of an excellent quality. They are in the first place used as illustrations to the texts but also offer a representative overview of hammering tools and decorated metal objects of ancient times.

At the end the author has placed his bibliography and some meaningful indices. The bibliography is very thorough and detailed, holding references to all major works and incorporating the many publications used in his study. It is an overview of the current results in the field of ancient metal working and as such alone offers merit. The indices further enrich the study, by allowing the reader to cross-reference the texts from the point of view of museums, collections, sites and provenances.

The book of Mikhail Y. Treister introduces itself as a future reference work for the study of Greek and Roman metal working. It has certainly succeeded in gathering the current state of archaeological studies on this topic and presenting it in a clear and open time line, providing the reader not only with excellent examples but also with consistent hypotheses on how the methods evolved through time and how ancient metal workers went about creating these beautiful metal objects in their workshops. The use of *excursūs* is an excellent approach to enrich his discussions with detail studies without obscuring the mainstream logic with too much detail (some examples to the contrary notwithstanding).

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Bernal, M. 1991: *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical*

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Schachermeyer, F. 1929: *Etruskische Frühgeschichte*, Berlin/Leipzig.

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TRANSLITERATIONS

The editors urge the authors to use the following standards of transliteration from Russian, Bulgarian, and Greek in their contributions:

Russian:

Аа = a	Зз = z	Пп = p	Чч = ch
Бб = b	Ии = i	Рр = r	Шш = sh
Вв = v	Йй = y	Сс = s	Щщ = shch
Гг = g	Кк = k	Тт = t	Ъъ = '(apostrophe)
Дд = d	Лл = l	Уу = u	Ыы = y
Ее = ye, e (1)	Мм = m	Фф = f	Ээ = e
Ёё = yë, ë (1)	Нн = n	Хх = kh	Юю = yu
Жж = zh	Оо = o	Цц = ts	Яя = ya

(1) ye initially, after vowels, and after Ъ and ъ ; e elsewhere; when written as ë in Russian, transliterate accordingly as yë or ë.

Bulgarian:

Аа = a	Жж = zh	Мм = m	Тт = t	Шш = sh
Бб = b	Зз = z	Нн = n	Уу = u	Щщ = sht
Вв = v	Ии = i	Оо = o	Фф = f	Ъъ =
Гг = g	Йй = y	Пп = p	Хх = kh	ь = '(apostrophe)
Дд = d	Кк = k	Рр = r	Цц = ts	Юю = yu
Ее = e	Лл = l	Сс = s	Чч = ch	Яя = ya

Greek:

Αα = a	Εε = e	Ιι = i	Νν = n	Ρρ = r	Φφ = f
Ββ = b	Ζζ = z	Κκ = k	Ξξ = x	Σσ, ζ = s	Χχ = ch
Γγ = g	Ηη = ê	Λλ = l	Οο = o	Ττ = t	Ψψ = ps
Δδ = d	Θθ = th	Μμ = m	Ππ = p	Υυ = u	Ωω = ô

The spiritus asper is to be rendered as h.