

1956 during a British School of Archaeology in Iraq excavation directed by Max Mallowan. After conservation and study at the British Museum, the temple gate bands were displayed in the Mosul Museum in Iraq. Tragically, large parts of these bands were looted in April 2003 and are lost. Thus, the only full record of the appearance of the temple bands is found in this book.

Ashurnasirpal's son and successor, Shalmaneser III, erected a similar pair of wooden and bronze palace gates at Imgur-Enlil. These were also discovered by Hormuzd Rassam in 1878 and can be seen in the British Museum, accompanied by a dramatic reconstruction. Shalmaneser's gates have been well known through publication since 1902 and this book means that his father's gates can now be similarly appreciated.

The available evidence about Ashurnasirpal's gates is thoroughly presented by the editors, using both text and illustration. Eight bands chased and embossed with figurative scenes and cuneiform inscriptions decorated each gate leaf and all 32 bands are illustrated and published in detail. The royal themes of warfare, receiving captives and tribute, and hunting lions and bulls were employed. The bands were arranged in a decorative scheme and the diminishing diameter of the gate posts, originally tree trunks, remains diagnostic. Bronze edging strips were also inscribed.

After Richard Barnett's original introduction in Chapter 1, John Curtis gives a very useful summary of the Balawat excavations and discoveries in Chapter 2. The textual heart of the book is a pair of chapters, Chapter 3 on the palace gates and Chapter 4 on the temple gates. Each chapter is packed with invaluable material from a range of contributors as follows: introduction; technical description or excavation; arrangement of the bands and content matter; description of the gates; and inscribed edging strips.

A comparison of the two sets of bands by John Curtis and Nigel Tallis in Chapter 5 significantly reveals that hunting scenes and files of captives occur only on the palace gates. John Curtis investigates bronze gate overlay in Mesopotamia in Chapter 6 as a final contextual study.

Five appendices add rich documentary material, drawing on letters of Hormuzd Rassam and others, registered finds and samples, as well as inscribed material, from the British School of Archaeology in Iraq excavations, and Ashurnasirpal's stone inscriptions from the site.

Valuable though the chapters and appendices are, much of the book's impact lies in its illustrations. Justifiably occupying more than half the volume, they give a very thorough visual coverage of both pairs of gates. The four colour plates and 161 monochrome figures, plates and diagrams include many excellent photographs and drawings that are published for the first time. Particular gratitude is owed to Marjorie Howard who prepared the drawings of both pairs of gates.

From excavation to full publication 130 years have elapsed for Ashurnasirpal's palace gates and 52 years for those from the Mamu Temple, so this book is a very welcome corrective. Taking a holistic approach, the editors present a wide range of evidence with expertise, thoroughness, and clarity. Given Iraq's recent turbulent history, including the looting of large parts of the temple bands, it is especially important that these gates are finally published in full.

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W.G. CAVANAGH, C. GALLOU & M. GEORGIADIS (ed.). *Sparta and Laconia: from prehistory to pre-modern* (British School at Athens Studies 16). xxxii+424 pages, 407 b&w & colour illustrations, 6 tables. 2009. London: British School at Athens; 978-0-904887-61-7 hardback £97.

The British School at Athens' interest in Laconia is long-standing. In 1904, the BSA published its first papers on Laconian subjects: one on epigraphy and another on a topographical study in the tradition of Pausanias. Shortly thereafter, spades first broke ground in the BSA-sponsored excavations at Geraki (now a Dutch project). From the beginning, the BSA's interest in Laconia has been an eclectic mix of epigraphy, archaeology and art history. This volume, produced to commemorate the 100th anniversary of British interest in Laconia, is very much the product of this tradition.

The volume contains the proceedings of a conference held at Sparta in 2005; there are 42 papers arranged in 5 sections. Most papers are in English (of the 42, 9 are



in Greek and 1 is in French) and there are abstracts, in both English and Greek for all the papers. The volume is arranged roughly chronologically: 9 articles concern prehistory, 21 Archaic to Roman subjects, 9 medieval and later topics, and 3 could be classed roughly as historiographical. The papers are a mix of specialised studies on particular artefact classes (Early Helladic ceramics, Mycenaean terracottas, Archaic bronzes, ivory reliefs, Droop cups, urns, Roman statuary) and round-ups of current work on individual sites (various Neolithic caves, Geraki, Epidaurus Limera, the city of Sparta) or site types (caves, quarries, cemeteries, religious structures), and as with any such collection the contents are variable.

Those papers that focus on individual sites will be of interest only to a specialised few, as little interpretation is included amongst the descriptions of pottery assemblages and artefact classes. The exceptions to this are the contributions by Greek Ephoreia staff describing the rescue excavations in and around the modern city of Sparta, as the Greek system has no real equivalent of the 'grey' literature common in Britain and publication of any sort is vitally important. Of the prehistoric papers, the most interesting to this reviewer are those by Mee and Cavanagh, which seek to situate the archaeology of Laconia within broader archaeological discussions of connectivity and territoriality. The highlights within the Archaic to Roman periods include a novel reassessment of bronze manufacturing by Stibbe, Roy's study of the changing frontier between Sparta and Arkadia up to c. 370 BC and its role in shaping local identities, and Kennell's assessment of the third century AD 'civic militia' of Sparta. Also of note are the implications in Langridge-Noti's and Pickersgill's papers on ceramic assemblages at Geraki and Roman Sparta respectively, both studies of local assemblages from stratified deposits which will help to complement, refine (and perhaps refute) regional trends observed in surface survey.

It is interesting to note that 6 out of the 9 Greek contributions are in the section devoted to the medieval and later periods, perhaps suggestive of a renewed emphasis on later historical periods within Greece, and a shift away from the traditional focus on Classical antiquity. Of note are Bakourou's paper on extra-mural Middle Byzantine public buildings, Armstrong's examination of the twelfth-century olive oil trade, and Morris' historiographical appraisal of early modern travellers to Sparta. However, many of the contributions in this section are quite narrow and specific, and either describe the topography of

individual sites, detail aspects of particular buildings, or outline the methodology of ongoing projects without providing results. So while it is heartening to see Byzantine and later periods become the focus of research, it is disappointing that little synthesis or interpretation beyond the site is offered.

This volume is well produced, despite some inconsistencies in anglicising Greek terms, and in the formatting of references (some in-text, some in footnotes, some non-existent). But beyond the superficial, it is difficult to characterise such a diverse collection. That contributions should vary in quality, style and breadth of interest is to be expected in a publication of this sort. Some papers are rather insular and descriptive and will interest few beyond a handful of like-minded specialists. Others offer unique insights into the archaeology of Laconia and highlight significant finds that will undoubtedly change our understanding of the region, and will appeal to all those with an interest in the southern Peloponnese. But only a scant few tie developments in Laconia to broader Peloponnesian and Mediterranean trends in a critical and theoretically-informed manner, and these should rightly fuel synthetic studies for some time to come. In short, this volume is an epitome of the 100 years of scholarly endeavour it seeks to commemorate.

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ANTOON CORNELIS MIENTJES. *Paesaggi pastorali: studio etnoarcheologico sul pastoralismo in Sardegna*. 285 pages, 87 illustrations. 2008. Cagliari: CUEC Editrice; 978-88-8467-478-4 hardback €40.

'Quale è l'archeologia che lascia un pastore o la pastorizia?' ('What traces do shepherds or pastoralism leave to archaeology?'). This is



what Graeme Barker asked us in 1984, after his experiences in the Biferno valley in central Italy, during a survey at Tuscania: we young students on our first field survey found this difficult to answer. It appears that Mientjes is rising to the same challenge in this book: an attempt to characterise pastoralism in Sardinia through ethnoarchaeological research. Archaeologically this