

Nigel Spivey und Simon Stoddart, *Etruscan Italy*. B. T. Batsford Ltd., London 1990. 168 Seiten, 99 Abbildungen.

The main body of this book is contained in its 8 chapters: I. Physical environment and prehistoric background. II. Settlement and territory. III. Subsistence, technology and production. IV. Trade and exchange. V. Language, myth and literacy: the process of cultural change. VI. Ritual. VII. Warfare. VIII. Social organisation, these are followed by a traveller's gazetteer, a glossary, a bibliography and an index. The titles speak for themselves and I find it very sensible, that the headings from the first chapter on prehistory pp. 34–37 are used again as the titles of chapters II–VII. It is a very ambitious book being an attempt to write "a different history of the Etruscans" from what we are used to and it is a result of a collaboration between two authors trained in different disciplines (prehistory and classical archaeology), a collaboration that we can only welcome, especially because the Etruscans have to be studied from what is left of their material culture as they did not leave any written sources about themselves. This however has always been well known.

The intention of this book is to reject the value of the Roman historians i. e. the written sources for an Etruscan history. How is this, however, done? Livy is taken by his word only as a moralist (rape of Lucretia). But Livy is not all morals and much archaeological evidence can be confronted with his text (cf. already R. M. OGILVIE, *Early Rome and the Etruscans* [1976]). One could ask after the reading of Spivey and Stoddart: are we to return to the age of German hypercriticism? I think not and I want to stress that Livy certainly did not conceal that the monumentalisation of Archaic Rome was due to Etruscan kings as it has lately been presented in a bulky but useful Exhibition Catalogue (M. CRISTOFANI [ed.], *La Grande Roma dei Tarquini* [1990]). Time has come to make a critical edition of the literary sources concerning the Etruscans, the outdated book by G. BUONAMICI (*Fonti della storia Etrusca tratte dagli autori classici* [1939]) was only a collection of sources. It is obvious that it requires an equal amount of source critic to take into account archaeological as well as written sources. However, to write history one has to deal with all sources. It is outdated to deny this fact (as M. Finley did) unless you concentrate on very specific subjects as for instance political history. The barrier built up for centuries between historians and archaeologists has to be broken down by all means. This important fact does not bother our authors, as they have fixed themselves on "an archaeological history", a concept of nonsense to the reviewer. I consider the discussion archaeology/history more valuable than to bring fire to the fuel called "the great divide" between classical and prehistoric archaeology (p. 18). Etruscology has always been a grey zone that has been able to unite so many different disciplines that I can only think of it as a pioneer science. Therefore the attacks on

the discipline seem arrogant, and full of unjust generalisations. It would have been more correct to explain why some things are as they are. We are told about the prehistoric background but not what happened afterwards, for instance the reason why so many Etruscan cities have not been excavated (as they are covered by centuries of habitation and still inhabited), and the fact that Italy has not been excavated like Britain or Denmark, and last but not least that we are awaiting the publications of many excavations. We cannot but insist on deploring the fact that fundraising goes to spectacular exhibitions at the cost of scientific publications so that the result is the putting away of important manuscripts.

I have dwelt long on the introduction, because it is a kind of manifesto from the authors and has to be taken seriously. They consider their book "a guide to some of the current themes of research", the question, however, is for whom? They are not specific (as M. PALLOTTINO in the foreword p. 17 of his most valuable "The Etruscans" [1975]), is the book under review meant for the general reader and traveller? If so, the gazetteer is extremely short and out of date. Or to the students of the archaeological disciplines? If so, references are insufficient (for example p. 43; 47; 59). To the reviewer this book implies a certain knowledge, so it cannot be meant for the great public, although there are various hints of vulgarization (suggestive landscapes, mozzarella, Tuscan beef, etc.). It would have been useful with topographical maps of high standard. You really miss a map on p. 29 following the description of the inland tectonic valleys. In the first chapter Strabo is cited at random – one wonders why. The declared principle not to use the written sources is broken as the book is seasoned with citations. Certainly it would have been useful to compare the topographical descriptions of the ancient geographers with new scientific investigations, extremely important because the ancient landscape is being destroyed by modern man.

In chapter 2 I find it strange that Latium Vetus is not mentioned, or do the authors think of this area as outside Etruscan influence in the Iron Age? Campania, too, merits some modern considerations (especially Pontecagnano and Fratte have yielded new results recently). However, it is important to stress that Bronze Age settlement was already present at least in a restricted area of almost every Villanovan centre in South Etruria. But it has to be emphasized that the evidence is of a very small amount. Field surveys are means not ends and the limits are shown by illustrating the two Veiiian contradicting surveys on p. 47. Open area excavations are badly needed.

Chapter 3 deals with the subsistence of man. There are many guesses, but it is very readable. One deplores the missing information from the excavations carried out in Latium Vetus over the last 20 years. The material (analyses of bones and plants) is sparse but the evidence from new excavations has been squeezed. Certainly, we all hope for a more systematic sampling procedure in the Iron Age settlements and urban excavations. When handling the bones it is very important to distinguish between subsistence economy and feasts (that is ritual/social behaviour), surely the image of the always feasting Etruscans from the Archaic tombs represents but a tiny percentage of the population, but we have to consider the social functions of eating. Hunting is a particular theme in Etruscan iconography and has to be confronted with the results of actual remains. It is not clear when and how the Mediterranean polyculture developed in Etruria, – however, this question is fundamental for our understanding of the rise of the city-states. We still know very little about the archaeology of housing, one of the most neglected areas in Etruscology. Work has been done on the huts, but for rectangular houses with stone foundations and covered with a tiled roof, work is at its initial stage.

In chapter 4 the authors plead for the idea that the trade and exchange of Etruria must be seen in their own cultural context, a concept which I believe is obvious for everybody seriously involved with the Etruscans. "Central Italy was at the end of a Mycenaean exchange network" (p. 81). To the reviewer the conspicuous role of Sardinia, which becomes more clear by the extraordinary finds and intensive research on that island, seems to be understated (cf. also D. RIDGWAY, *The first Western Greeks* [1992] xviii). It is a well known fact that even if the Mycenaean network collapsed, the Phoenicians covered most of the Mediterranean (latest O. NEGBI, *Am. Journal Arch.* 1992, 599–615). In fact, the role of the Phoenicians is traditionally suppressed in the present volume, cf. the map of the Mediterranean fig. 13c: they are virtually absent. They have got very little space compared to the interaction between Greeks and Etruscans. Two international congresses of Phoenician and Punic studies have been published with a lot of relevant material as regards import/export.

The authors are completely right in their conclusion "we have a pattern of societies that shared some sump-

tuary elements of material culture“, but we must surely add lifestyles (cf. the reviewer’s ”Manners and customs in Central Italy in the Orientalizing Period: Influence from the Near East“. *Acta Hyperborea* 1, 1988, 81–90). The so-called Orientalizing period has to be studied in its context: the Mediterranean.

In chapter 5 the contact zones for cultural change are presented for the 6th century, stressing the impact of immigrants resulting from the Persian occupation of Ionia and J. BOARDMAN’s anachronistic philhellenism (*The Greeks Overseas* [1980] 200) is rightly rejected. The case study of Attic imports argues soberly for the dialectic interaction between Greeks and Etruscans. Of paramount importance is the authors’ presentation of the understanding of Greek myth and various stages of transmissions, concluded by the well known fact that ”the Greek myth once adopted in Etruria circulated in Etruscan“. It is of importance, too, to reconstruct which myths were adopted and consciously selected and which were not, in order to decode circulating ideas.

In chapter 6 the more familiar topic of Etruscan ”city-planning“ and funerary rituals are discussed raising a fundamental question: ”Were the cemeteries intended to dwarf the cities either physically or symbolically? Does the concept of necropolis bulk larger in the ideology of the Etruscan landscape than the concept of Polis“ (p. 116). We certainly know very little about the Etruscan poleis but we seem to be rather sure of their difference. It is auspicious that comparative studies of the process of urbanisation and state formation in the Mediterranean area will see the light of the day. Etruscan funerals are well described as ”rites de passages“ and the tomb paintings are seen in the connection with the cult of the dead. Here is only space to a hint to the new (old) methods of decoding messages from images, very important sources to our understanding of the society that produced them. Iconology is an important tool in archaeology. However, we have to remember that ritual is part of a communication process, funerals are not only for the dead but as much for the living left behind.

Chapter 7 on warfare is very illustrative. We are told not to believe in the adoption of the Greek phalanx but rightly to concentrate on the clan factor (like the structure of the Latin gentes). We can thus compare the Etruscan warfare with the condottieri of Medieval Italy. An important point, as there seems to be no valid evidence for a comparison between the phalanx-warfare of the Greek poleis and the warfare of the Etruscans. It is rightly stressed how important a factor of social and ritual life is warfare.

In chapter 8 the social structure is presented by the examples of differentiation in burial and the iconology of power. The authors plead for the use of literacy as a major symbol of power. We have to add that literacy was very practical when you had to deal with literate people (as later colonialism has shown very eloquently). I fully agree that Etruscan art expresses social political hierarchy (p. 150), and as for the difficulty of interpreting i. e. the architectural terracottas, a key-group in the Etruscan language of images, it is being taken care of in recent research (cf. 1st Internat. Conference on Central Italic Architectural Terracottas, Rome 1990 [in print]). No doubt the ’suppressed‘ status of Etruscan iconology is vanishing.

This book is very heterogeneous, at times a refreshing exposition, otherwise provocative for the sake of provocation. Some of the illustrations must be meant for the initiated (14; 16; 18). However, many of my objections could have been spared if it had been left to the reader to find out that this book is something special, instead of being told so all the time by the authors.