

Michael Mackensen, *Resafa I. Eine befestigte spätantike Anlage vor den Stadtmauern von Resafa. Ausgrabungen und spätantike Kleinfunde eines Surveys im Umland von Resafa-Sergiupolis*. With contributions by J. Boessneck, K. Munzel, U. Willerding; preface by T. Ulbert. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz 1984. XII, 97 pages with 16 illustrations in text, 1 fold-out plan, 32 plates.

The walled city of Resafa in the Syrian desert, one of the classic sites of Late Antiquity, has attracted the attention of various German scholars since the beginning of this century. The monumental architecture has hitherto been their chief concern. It is perhaps fitting that this first volume in a new series of reports breaks fresh ground: it brings the archaeology up to date, by integrating all categories of excavation finds with the building remains. Moreover, it concerns itself not with the city proper, but with a walled outlier to the SW, largely overlooked by previous investigators. This was the site of trial excavations by the authors in 1978 and 1980, here published in full detail with commendable promptness. The excavations formed part of a wider survey programme in the region extending from the environs of the city some 30 km north to the Euphrates. The finds from the survey sites, mostly of similar (5th–6th century A. D.) date, are here published along with those from the dig.

Here a digression seems in order. This relatively slim volume appears in von Zabern's 'large' format (36 × 25.5 cm), in double columns with ample margins. Hence a series of fine site photographs (Taf. 1–8) can be reproduced two to a page. The well-executed pottery and small-finds drawings (Taf. 11–32), reduced to a sensible 1 : 3 scale, fit mostly within a 23.5 by 17.5 cm rectangle (exclusive of brief captions), leaving elegant but vast margins. Why this large format? I have scarcely a bookshelf that will accommodate it. Two volumes of this size open on a table for purposes of comparison leave little space for the taking of notes, and the volume is not an easy companion for the fieldworker in e. g. Syria. The architect's demands in future volumes in the series seems to have outweighed commonsense considerations. (Incidentally, the printed page-size is not too large to photocopy.) I approve, however, of the practice of grouping the foot-notes at the bottom of each right-hand column.

The report itself is well presented, with great attention to detail, and, as might be expected, carefully printed. As is indicated in the subtitle, it comprises two major elements (site report, survey finds) prefaced by a short introduction on the project as a whole. The site, apparently civil rather than military, is a trapezoidal compound (max. 98 × 88 m) surrounded by a two-phase mud-brick wall, whose surface outlines, along with those of some internal structures, were clearly visible on the ground and were recorded during survey in 1977 of the extra-mural sites at Resafa. Two smallish areas, a bath-building and a gateway in the east wall, were then excavated in detail. These are methodically described, and dated on the evidence of coins and pottery to the second-fourth quarters of the 6th century. A later (Umayyad) remodelling of the gateway is in evidence, yet finds of that date are few. The bath-building is of the small compact 'Byzantine' type with five rooms (not clearly numbered on the main plan; see p. 16 for an explanation). Remains of an opus sectile pavement go with a remodelling. Parallels for this and for the brickwork of the hot rooms are discussed at length in an effort to date the structure architecturally, since virtually no stratified dating-evidence was found except in layers going with the destruction phase. The original connection between Rooms 1 and 2 and the three heated rooms (3–5), which are off-axis, is not clearly established by the author; could the former in fact antedate the bath structure? The status of the compound as a whole is discussed; the limited excavation evidence at present suggests a walled villa (rather than, say, a *mansio*).

The dating-evidence for the site rests on the coins and the fine pottery, which are listed and discussed in great detail in the second section of the volume along with comparable material from the other survey sites, which are shown to proliferate in the 6th century. Here Mackensen's intimate knowledge of the various Late Roman red-slipped wares (as detailed in my 'Late Roman Pottery' [1972] with Supplement [1980], here cited liberally) comes to the fore. I have no quibbles with his identifications; Mackensen has produced

the classic work of reference for the early Byzantine period in the Syrian frontier regions. Such detailed illustration of fine-ware sherds will not be required there in the future. A first effort is here made to classify the local Byzantine coarse wares, which are here presented by site or by context along with the fine wares and small finds. More excavated finds will be needed before a proper type-series can be created.

The interpretation of the coin and pottery evidence is perhaps a little strained. A date-range for occupation of the excavated site of 520s to 580s A. D. (more or less) is proposed; these, to me, seem absolute minimums, perhaps over-influenced on the one hand by the 'Justinianic' activity in the city nearby, and on the other by the latest closely datable coin find (a number of others are vaguely late 6th century). Thus Mackensen argues for earlier dates for all versions of my Phocian Red Slip Ware form 10 (common on the site), and sees the absence of specific fineware shapes (especially African Red Slip) as firm negative evidence of continued occupation. The latter assumes, I suppose, a regular supply of new coins and all the 'Late Roman' fine wares to this frontier site throughout the period of occupation, which might be open to question. Finds from other parts of the Byzantine world suggest a wider date-span for the versions of the Phocian ware ('Late Roman C') seen here: viz. c. 470/500 until after A. D. 600. The absence of coins of Heraclius perhaps supplies a better terminal date.

The volume concludes with short sections on the faunal and plant remains recovered from the excavations. The samples of each, perforce small but carefully tabulated, may serve as a foretaste of what we may expect when the main site comes to be published in detail.

This is a fine start to the series, and we hope that forthcoming volumes will maintain the same standards of comprehensive recording.

Toronto

John W. Hayes