

of published reports with the requisite quality of information available, as is the case with sites excavated before the advent of modern sampling and quantification methods, C.'s choice of sites is limited and her analysis inevitably raises as many questions as it answers. This is particularly noticeable in the chronological chapters at the end, where the main point to emerge is the variation in attitude towards food between different groups in different areas and under different circumstances. By the end of the Roman period some more general trends may be detectable, but here, too, C. offers pointers for further work rather than categorical answers. To what extent the sites she discusses are typical, only time can decide.

One final, general, point cannot be stressed too strongly. At a time when editors appear increasingly to be adopting a policy of omitting specialist reports from their publications, or of curtailing them beyond recognition, this book comes as a shining example of how the data they contain can be used to interpret aspects of life in the past. This information, the primary evidence, must be made available, and continue to be available, in an accessible form. Without it, not only will it be impossible for future generations to reinterpret a site, but books such as this can never be written. In her 'Digestif', C.'s final wish is that in ten year's time someone else might rewrite her book in the light of new information. May her wish be granted!

Stockport

FELICITY WILD

*Roman Furniture.* By A.T. Croom. Tempus, Stroud, 2007. Pp. 192, col. pls 24, figs 75. Price: £18.99. ISBN 978 0 7524 4097 2.

The furniture of ancient houses is a badly neglected topic. Because most of it was made of organic materials, notably wood and (for soft furnishings) textiles, it rarely survives in the archaeological record: the bulk of our evidence comes from written sources and artistic representations. And yet an appreciation of how rooms were furnished is crucial to our understanding of life-styles. Too often we focus on mosaic pavements or painted wall-decorations and forget that these were part of a larger ensemble — and that any mosaics and paintings would have been to some extent hidden by couches, tables, stools and the like. Among the few studies devoted to ancient furniture, a fundamental contribution was made by Gisela Richter's sumptuous tome *The Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans*, published in 1966. For Roman Britain there was Joan Liversidge's little handbook *Furniture in Roman Britain* (1955). More recently, Stefan Mols has produced an in-depth study of the important remains of carbonised furniture at Herculaneum, *Wooden Furniture in Herculaneum: Form, Technique and Function* (1999).

Alexandra Croom's new survey fills a gap by bringing together the various forms of evidence for furniture in the Roman world. Her starting point is Roman Britain, where, as curator of the fort at South Shields, she has reconstructed several items for exhibition; but this has entailed analysing the available data from all parts of the Empire and from all kinds of sources — literary, epigraphic, artistic, and archaeological. Here, alas, C.'s lack of specialist expertise becomes a problem. While she has searched far and wide for illustrations, she is largely dependent on popular books and on surveys written in English. With a few exceptions, C. has been unable to refer to publications in foreign languages, which include not only excavation reports but also major studies such as E. Pernice's *Hellenistische Tische, Zisternenmundungen, Beckenuntersätze, Altäre und Truhen, Die hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji* 5 (1932). And even her coverage of publications in English is patchy: one might have expected the section on household shrines to have mentioned G.K. Boyce's *Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii* (1937). In addition, C.'s unfamiliarity with Latin constantly lets her down. Singulars and plurals are used interchangeably; orthography and case-endings are frequently inaccurate; and, more damagingly, there are basic misunderstandings as to how the ancient writings should be handled. In the discussion of legal codes in the Introduction, for instance, it is misguided to quote juristic definitions of 'furniture' (15: *Digest* 33.10, not 33.7 or 33.2): the word used in the ancient texts is *suppellex*, which may have had subtle differences of meaning from the modern word. This is an important point. As with many of the Greek and Latin terms given to individual items of furniture, we cannot always be confident that we know the precise modern equivalents — or indeed that the usage of the ancient writers was consistent.

Sadly, the errors go further than those of Latin terminology. Names of places and persons are often misspelt — the same name sometimes misspelt in different ways in different passages. Generally,

the standard of writing is uneven, and the punctuation wayward. It is also difficult to understand the organisation of chapters: examples of furniture are classified sometimes by form and function, sometimes by material. The inconsistency is understandable, given that artistic depictions do not always allow a judgement as to whether an object was of wood, metal, or stone; but, for clarity of presentation, it would have been better to adopt so far as possible a standardised system of divisions and subdivisions.

In short, this book has its disappointing aspects. None the less it offers a general survey of a kind for which there is no exact equivalent in English, and as such will serve as a useful handbook for general readers seeking a first introduction to the field. The four short concluding chapters summarising the evidence for furniture in use are of particular interest. And the illustrations, including numerous clear drawings, are excellent. Pride of place goes rightly to the colour photographs of several of the replica items in the South Shields fort.

*University of Manchester*

ROGER LING

*Dalmatia. Research in the Roman Province 1970–2001. Papers in Honour of J.J. Wilkes.* Edited by D. Davison, V. Gaffney and E. Marin. British Archaeological Reports International Series 1576. Archaeopress, Oxford, 2006. Pp. iii + 212, illus. Price: £37.00. ISBN 978 1 84171 790 6.

John Wilkes' great study of *Dalmatia*, published in 1969, remains for most scholars the point of entry of this fascinating province of the Roman Empire. This volume includes papers offered at the Roman Archaeology Conference in 2000 to celebrate his achievements and discuss subsequent research in the region. As with any such volume, contributions vary in depth and quality, but even the briefest of essays proves a useful signpost towards the directions taken by current researchers.

Faced with a miscellany of contributions, the editors have done a commendable job in achieving a broadly coherent framework. After an editorial section which honours Professor Wilkes' contribution, the volume continues with a discussion of the prehistoric background to the province (Glogović), focusing especially on developments from the eighth to the fourth centuries B.C. The paper's content underscores how much work remains to be undertaken, especially when it argues bluntly that 'the settlements of the Dalmatian Iron Age were hillforts' (9). One is reminded here of how many Iron Age landscapes have been defined in such terms prior to the development of landscape archaeology, a disciplinary approach that has only recently started to transform our knowledge of the region. This survey is then followed by a discussion of the Greek background (Kirigin) which also introduces preliminary findings from the remarkable Nakovana cave. This site, which should excite interest from all students studying the archaeology of cult, preserves important information on ritual practice from the fourth to first centuries B.C. More detailed discussion of the site has since been published in *Antiquity*.

Two papers by Bilić-Dujmušić examine warfare in the region, offering us insights into the battle of Taurida (briefly noted in Caesar's *Bellum Alexandrinum*) and the siege of Promona (described in Appian's *Illyrica*). These detailed studies will be of particular interest to military historians. The military theme is continued with a survey of research on the legionary fortress at *Tilurium*, modern Gardun (Sanader), an important site long known to scholars, and notice of the recent discovery of the Augustan fort at Obrežje (eastern Slovenia). The latter resulted from survey work in advance of motorway construction and the account of its investigation, summarised here by Mason, will be welcomed by students of the Roman army both on account of the calibre of the excavation work and the rare archaeological evidence it gives for forts in this region during the Roman conquest of Pannonia.

The volume's attention then shifts to settlement study, beginning with contributions on the urban centres of Salona and Narona (Marin) and a survey of excavations in Salona (Mardešić). Of especial note is Marin's discussion of an important fragment of a limestone rostra (75–7) discovered at Narona. Marin, in the reviewer's opinion, is right to allow the possibility of an early (pre-A.D. 14) date for this previously unpublished piece and to believe that it will be of particular interest to all students of Augustan iconography.

As already noted, however, the wider study of rural settlement must constitute a particular priority for Dalmatian research. This was the case when John Wilkes wrote *Dalmatia* in 1969 and it is no less true today. While excavations, many of them driven by rescue work in advance of major infrastructure projects, have illuminated some aspects of rural life, informed overviews of rural settlement are hard to