

BOOK REVIEW

The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks. By PHILIPP NIEWÖHNER, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xii + 470. Hardcover, \$125.00. ISBN 978-0-1906-1046-3.

In the centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire, Anatolia was an anomaly. With the administrative seat of power situated in Constantinople, it was the only major region of the empire where Roman rule persisted until the 11th century CE and the people still considered themselves to be Romans. As a result, Anatolia serves as a unique case study, informing us about the ways in which Roman government and society changed in the period after the collapse of the pan-Mediterranean empire.

This volume focuses on life in Anatolia from the 5th century CE through 11th centuries CE—bookends which mark the collapse of the Western and Eastern Empires, respectively. Since there is a dearth of contemporary literary sources, the results of archaeological research are key to understanding this volatile period as they provide us with a glimpse of daily life activities, cultural developments, and the ebb and flow of settlement patterns. For instance, there was a significant decline in urban population in the 5th century CE as people relocated from cities to prosperous rural settlements. Ruralization, however, was stymied from the 7th through 9th centuries by Persian and Arab incursions, which prompted the repopulation of fortified urban centers as Anatolians sought refuge from foreign invaders. A subsequent period of peace from the 9th century through 11th centuries encouraged another population shift to the countryside, resulting in the abandonment of many cities. Then, in the 11th century, fortified urban centers were revived yet again as the arrival of the Seljuk Turks caused widespread sociopolitical instability and fear for personal safety.

The book opens with an introduction by the editor, Philipp Niewöhner, which discusses the history of research on the subject, as well as themes and terminology that appear in the volume. The 38 essays that follow are divided into two parts. The first, entitled “Syntheses,” consists of a series of thematic essays, each dealing with archaeological reconstructions of various facets of life of Byzantine Anatolia. The topics discussed in this section are historical geography, transport

and communication, urbanism, human remains, coins, rural settlements, fortifications, houses, monasteries, churches, rock-cut architecture, funerary archaeology, ceramics, and small finds.

In addition to the shifting settlement patterns discussed above, these essays reveal that Roman society experienced irrevocable changes during the Byzantine period. For instance, the 5th and 6th centuries witnessed a dramatic surge in the construction of ecclesiastical architecture, such as churches (Chapter 10, Hans Buchwald and Matthew Savage) and monasteries (Chapter 9, Philipp Niewöhner). The minting of new coinage drastically declined in the 7th century, although old coins continued to circulate until there was a break in coin usage after the 11th century (Chapter 5, Cécile Morrisson). The 7th century also marked the end of the import of Near Eastern and North African ceramics and the rise of the local production and distribution of ceramic wares (Chapter 13, Joanita Vroom).

The second part, “Case Studies,” is a compilation of 24 site summaries. The sites covered in this section are Nicaea, Assos, Pergamon, Sardis, Ephesus, Priene, Miletus, Mount Latmos, Aphrodisias, Patara, Olympos, Side, Sagalassos, Binbikilise, Çanlı Kilise Settlement, Aezani, Amorium, Germia, Ancyra, Boğazköy, Çadır Höyük, Euchaita, Amastris, and Sinope. Since each site differs widely from the next, each essay varies in organization. The common goal, nevertheless, is to describe the salient aspects of the sites and the ways in which they changed over the course of the Byzantine period. For instance, the chapter on Priene (Chapter 20, Jesko Fildhuth) is organized thematically. After an introductory section, the author describes what written sources say about the site, then shifts to a discussion of the urban development of Byzantine Priene. Mount Latmos, on the other hand, was a monastic site, so the information presented in its essay focuses on the Early and Middle Byzantine monuments erected there (Chapter 22, Urs Peschlow).

Although Oxford has marketed the volume as a textbook on Byzantine archaeology in Anatolia—and indeed it is the first of its kind in that respect—it is also an invaluable research tool. It is an omnibus resource on Byzantine Anatolia, which is exceptionally useful as previous studies on the period are scattered throughout edited volumes, journals, and excavation reports.¹ For a scholar of the Mediterranean who is relatively new to the study of Byzantine Anatolia (such as

¹ For examples, see T. Vorderstrasse and J.J. Roodenberg (eds.) 2009. *Archaeology of the Countryside in Medieval Anatolia*. Leiden; journals such as *Byzantion* and *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*; and J. Poblome et al. 2000. “An Early Byzantine Tile and Lime Kiln in the Territory of Sagalassos” in M. Waelkens and L. Loots (eds.) *Sagalassos V: Report on the Survey and Excavation Campaigns of 1996 and 1997*. Leiden: 669–84.

myself), this book provides a concise overview of archaeological topics of general interest. However, the most notable feature of the book is that it contains the first English presentations of foreign research; for example, the majority of the data found in the chapter on human remains (Chapter 4, F. Arzu Demirel) derive from Turkish publications. Furthermore, the book is well-illustrated, with clear, informative site and architectural plans, vivid color photographs, and detailed computer-generated reconstructions. Overall, this volume is a must-have resource for anyone working on material from Byzantine Anatolia.

CARRIE L. SULOSKYWEAVER

University of Pittsburgh, clweaver@pitt.edu