

sanguinely tempered by straightforward admissions when the evidence is ambiguous, and is also usefully illuminated by mini-biographical essays recounting the development of the author's involvement with both the area and aspects of its archaeology (such as his Maiden Castle fieldwork).

Although predominantly about Wessex, and indeed helpfully demonstrating the internal variations in the cultural records apparent within it, Sharples also makes selective comparisons elsewhere within Britain, mostly with south-east and eastern England as far north as Yorkshire and Atlantic Scotland. The reader is still left, however, with a perception, that — notably after the Late Bronze Age — Wessex was a rather introverted and different place, a view which is reinforced in the conclusion (e.g. p. 311). In particular, it could be contended that the distinctions from the near continent, where too archaeologists have progressively learned to recognise regionally-diverse cultural practices in later prehistory, are rather overdrawn in the concluding chapter here, notably by the emphasis placed on some regionally-specific elite traits which are absent in many areas. This is something that others, armed with this valuable synthesis, can pursue. An excellently-organised bibliography, a good index and a wide selection of illustrations, primarily line-drawings, only occasionally over-reduced to fit the page format, are included. This book is thus a recommended purchase for anyone interested in the later prehistory of temperate Europe, despite its hefty price.

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ASKO PARPOLA, B.M. PANDE & PETTERI KOSKIKALLIO (ed.) with RICHARD H. MEADOW & J. MARK KENOYER. *Corpus of Indus Seals and Inscriptions. Volume 3: new material, untraced objects and collections outside India and Pakistan. Part 1: Mohenjo-daro and Harappa* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Humaniora 359/Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India 96). lx+443 pages, 9 figures in text, 2 tables, 363 pages of b&w plates, 48 pages of colour plates. 2010. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia; 978-951-41-1040-5 hardback €295.

The first of several thousand Indus Valley seal stones to reach the modern world was published in 1875

by Alexander Cunningham, director general of the Archaeological Survey of India. It was carved with a one-horned quadruped like a unicorn and six mysterious symbols. Cunningham was shown the



object by a British army officer with an interest in Greek numismatics, who had acquired it at the little-known site of Harappa and eventually gave it to the British Museum in 1892. But despite two more seal finds at

Harappa, the Indus Valley civilisation remained hidden until the early 1920s. At Partition in 1947, the seal stones and other inscribed materials excavated at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and other sites were divided between museums in India and Pakistan. For many decades, they were relatively inaccessible — and some were undoubtedly lost or stolen and sold in the antiquities market — until the publication of the Unesco-assisted photographic *Corpus of Indus Seals and Inscriptions* (CISI), the essential source for serious students of this exquisitely carved, tantalizingly important, undeciphered script.

Volume 1 of the CISI, dealing with the collections in India, appeared in 1987. Volume 2, dealing with those in Pakistan, followed in 1991. After a gap of two decades, we now have Volume 3, still under the chief editorship of Asko Parpola, the retired professor of South Asian studies at the University of Helsinki, who has been at the forefront of Indus script studies since the 1960s.

This third volume was originally intended to include all remaining inscriptions (plus addenda and corrigenda to the earlier volumes), particularly the images of lost objects kept in the photographic archive of the Archaeological Survey of India; as many as 447 of the objects excavated at Harappa and 266 from Mohenjo-daro have disappeared, Parpola notes after years of detective work. But the new material grew too extensive and had to be split into two parts, the first of which covers seals and inscriptions from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, while the second will be devoted to material from all other sites and sources, including the small collections outside South Asia, such as the eleven seals in the British Museum. Also in preparation is a fourth, and presumably final, volume that will present all available data about each object

in the CISI, such as its archaeological context (where known), material and size, and an updated computer edition of all Indus inscriptions, together with various concordances and statistics based on the text edition.

An advantage of the delay in publishing Volume 3 is that it can include photographs of the large number of new finds — more than a thousand objects ranging from pottery graffiti to full-blown seal inscriptions — made in the period 1986–2007 by the Harappa Archaeological Research Project, directed by Richard Meadow of Harvard University's Peabody Museum and Mark Kenoyer from the University of Wisconsin. In a useful essay, Meadow and Kenoyer pay justified tribute to the indefatigable Parpola 'for his foresight, efforts, stamina, and patience in preparing a compendium to which we can all refer with confidence' (p. xlv).

They also support Parpola's long-held view that the signs form a writing system based on a language, like Egyptian hieroglyphic as it developed during the first half of the third millennium, rather than comprising a system of non-linguistic symbols (proto-writing like the modern symbols used for garment washing instructions), as was proposed by three linguists, Steve Farmer, Richard Sproat and Michael Witzel in 2004. But Meadow and Kenoyer favour giving more attention, by detailed study of the objects, to the probable evolution of the signs over the perhaps seven hundred years of the script's use, rather than simply lumping all of the best-preserved inscriptions together and using them to work out a putative unchanging sign system, as has been the practice among the dozens of would-be decipherers from the 1920s to date.

Parpola, supported by his formidable knowledge of Indian languages and culture, maintains that the language of the Indus script is proto-Dravidian, ancestral to the family of Dravidian languages spoken in south India, such as Tamil; and he has argued for this in numerous publications, most notably his *Deciphering the Indus Script* (1994). The CISI is not the place to rehearse his complex reasoning, as he appreciates. Instead he merely concludes: 'A full decipherment of the script is admittedly impossible with the present materials. Yet, if the Indus script is of the same logo-syllabic type as all the other writing systems that were in existence by 2400 BCE, a partial decipherment can be achieved,' (p. xv) — provided that its language does relate to a known language family in India. Given that the Harappan population in the late third millennium

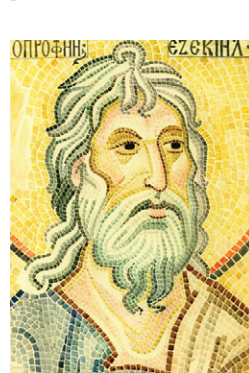
is estimated to have been around one million, this is probably a reasonable assumption.

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MICHAEL LLEWELLYN SMITH, PASCHALIS M. KITROMILIDES & ELENI CALLIGAS (ed.). *Scholars, travels, archives: Greek history and culture through the British School at Athens* (British School at Athens Studies 17). xxvi+254 pages, 116 b&w & colour illustrations. 2009. London: British School at Athens; 978-090-488-760-0 hardback £55.

Scholars, travels, archives is a collection of papers presented at a conference held in Athens in 2006.



The conference, jointly organised by the British School at Athens (BSA) and the Institute for Neohellenic Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation, was conceived as a way of presenting the contribution of the BSA in the fields of Byzantine and Modern Greek studies. The book is not a comprehensive history

of the BSA and readers should expect only passing discussion of its well-known achievements in the archaeology of prehistoric and Classical Greece. Rather, two intertwining stories are told: one is the history of scholarship pursued by the BSA outside archaeology and the second is how its members and their work influenced the development of Greece towards a modern nation. Thus seventeen contemporary British and Greek scholars examine the lives and work of past BSA scholars and members in the fields of ethnology, anthropology, linguistics, art history, architecture and history. The range of topics and diverse interests among the individuals who are discussed are unusual and surprising.

Chronologically the book starts in the 1820s with George Finlay and Colonel Martin Leake, who, although never members of the BSA since the School was not established until after their deaths, contributed to the story. Liz Potter discusses George Finlay, Philhellene and considered the founding father of the BSA, who first came to Greece at the time of Lord Byron and later returned to spend the rest of his