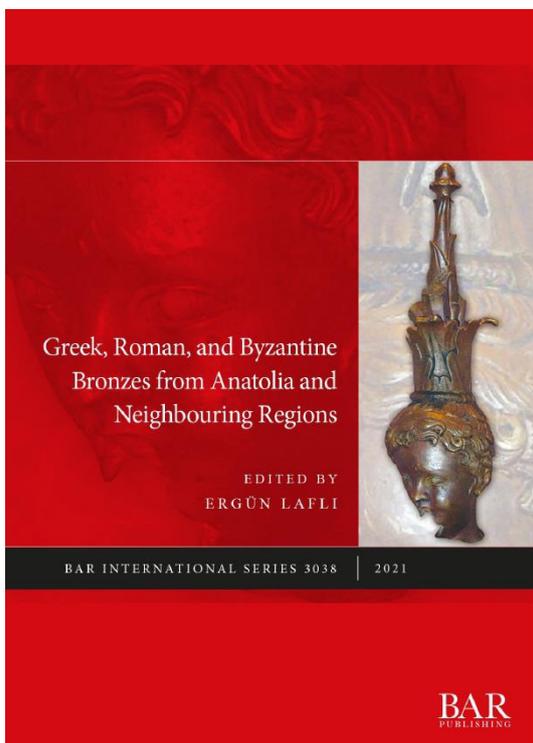


## CLARA REVIEW No. 7, 2021



Lafli, E. (ed) *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Bronzes from Anatolia and Neighbouring Regions*.

BAR International Series 3038. BAR Publishing. Oxford 2021, 462 pp.

ISBN: 9781407316918

Reviewed by Margherita Bolla

The international congresses *Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea Antiqua (Congressus internationales Smyrnenses)* held in recent years in Izmir at the Dokuz Eylül University are an important initiative in the field of Archaeology. The tireless activity of Ergün Lafli and his collaborators has helped to create lasting links between researchers from different countries and to enhance the role of Turkish archaeology in Europe.

These congresses have covered different categories of ancient finds. The most recent one, held online in 2021, was about engraved gems (*Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine Engraved Gems in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea Region*). The next

international e-conference (in May 2022) will focus on fibulae (*Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine Fibulae*) and will be held in honour of Maurizio Buora, who was also actively involved in organising the congress behind the book under review.

The XVII<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Ancient Bronzes was organised by Lafli in Izmir in May 2011 as the fifth meeting of the *Colloquia Anatolica*, with the title *The Archaeology of Bronzes in Anatolia and the Eastern Mediterranean from Protogeometric to Early Byzantine Periods (tenth century BC to seventh century AD)*, with the participation of about 140 scholars (see the abstracts at <https://www.academia.edu/7755913>). Some years later, 29 of the papers presented at the Izmir Congress were published in the *Proceedings of the XVII<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Ancient Bronzes* (Izmir, 2011), *Monographies-Instrumentum* 52, edited by Alessandra Giumlia-Mair and Carol Mattusch, Autun 2016.

The present book, edited by Ergün Lafli, consists of 44 papers divided into three parts, with 45 authors, some of whom submitted more than one text (e.g. Lafli, Melih Arslan, Maurizio Buora); all papers are in English, which required more preliminary drafting work and resulted in some translation errors here and there. Thirty articles deal with Turkey while others are about eastern regions; in the introduction, a map of the archaeological sites mentioned in the book is intended to help the reader. The fourth part of the volume (pp. 399-442) includes a combined bibliography, which is a compilation of most of the known texts on the subject of Anatolian bronzes. This book also disseminates information about archaeological finds previously published only in Turkish.

After a foreword by Maurizio Buora, the introduction by Ergün Lafli highlights the fact that ancient bronzes in Turkey have been generally overlooked, despite the numerous important discoveries, and that there have been more publications on Bronze and Iron Age items than on Greek, Roman and Byzantine bronzes. It is for this reason, too, that the volume is mainly devoted to classical bronzes. Part I (*Pre-Greek Bronzes from Anatolia*) includes a small group of papers, arranged more or less chronologically. Two of these papers concern swords of the Hittite period. The first sword – presented by Ahmet Ünal, Ahmet Ertekin and İsmet Ediz – bears an important inscription that refers to Tudhaliya II (king during the second half of the fifteenth century BC); the other sword, published by Ahmet Ünal, is interesting for its shape, linked to the sword type Mycenaean B. The items were not unpublished, but are worthy of further attention due to their importance, despite the fact that they lack archaeological context.

Derya Yalçıklı deals with some fragments of clay moulds found at Çemialo Ridge, during a rescue excavation near a Late Iron Age oven; they testify to the use of lost wax casting and are the earliest samples of this technology known from Anatolia and the Upper Tigris region. Ergün Lafli and Maurizio Buora publish five bronze brooches from the Iron Age, exhibited in the Museum of Şanlıurfa, as a first step towards increasing knowledge about the *fibulae* of Turkey (see also E. Lafli, M. Buora, *Fibule antiche dalla Cilicia costiera*, 'Rivista di archeologia', 30, 2006, 37-46; *Fibulae in the Museum of Ödemiş (western Turkey)*, 'Archiv Orientalní. Quarterly Journal

of African and Asian Studies', 80, 2021, 417-434). The brooches of the Museum of Şanlıurfa generally date between the ninth and the seventh century BC; three were probably found in the region, near the Museum.

Makbule Ekici presents some bronze clothing plaques without findspot, held in the Karaman Museum. Gods and human beings are depicted on the plaques in the style of Urartian art. Based on a study of the representations, the author hypothesises that the origin of these objects is the village of Giyimli, where some unauthorised excavations discovered a hoard of Urartian bronzes in the 1970s, which was then dispersed on the antiques market.

The second part of the book is dedicated to *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Bronzes from Anatolia*; the 25 papers are grouped by categories of find. Kurt Gschwantler proposes new observations about a well-known bronze female statuette from the Artemision of Ephesos. It is a rare object because of its size and the metal used (the figurines of ivory and gold are more frequent in the temple). The suggested date of the statuette ranges from the seventh to the sixth century BC. Gschwantler rejects the theory that the statuette might have been manufactured as a model for the production of other figures made of gold or silver sheet.

Danyş Baykan discusses some small finds of bronze and iron dating to the eighth to sixth century BC from the excavations at Nif (Olympos) Mountain in Western Turkey. Here, there is important evidence for the manufacturing of *fibulae*, and arrowheads of several types are connected with the conquest of Sardis between 546 and 539 BC. Ceren Baykan then surveys the restoration carried out on these metal finds from Nif. Perhaps these papers could have been placed in the first part of the book.

Lucia Nováková's paper, based on literary and epigraphic sources, discusses the problem of lost equestrian bronze statues in Asia Minor, and in Greece, during the Hellenistic period (see also L. Nováková, E. Hrnčiarik, M. Daňová, *Equestrian Statues in Antiquity: City, People, Monuments*, 'Studia Historica Nitriensia', 1 Dec. 2018, 434-455). In addition to the references cited in the article, we should also add G. Calcani's book *Cavalieri di bronzo. La torma di Alessandro opera di Lisippo*, Roma 1989.

Ergün Lafli and Gülseren Kan Şahin present an attractive bronze mirror with Aphrodite and Eros from Nicomedia in Bithynia. The mirror lacks context, as is the case for many of these decorated objects; the authors attempt to date it on the basis of stylistic considerations, such as the similarity to images of Aphrodite of the second century BC, and propose a date in the first century BC.

Bekir Sıtkı Alptekin Oransay publishes thirteen vessels and fragments from the city of Arykanda, where there is evidence of a metallurgical workshop dated to the late fourth-early fifth century AD. These include an aryballos of a form well known in Pompeii (Tassinari 1993, F 2110), a beaked jug (interpreted as a local product inspired by the jugs Tassinari 1993, E 2200), some Late Antique jugs and *Blechkannen*, a basin, some handles of jugs, a handle that fits into the group of the so-called *Trankasserollen*, and a handle of the type VIII,3 by Petrovsky 1993. Many of these vessels were found in dated contexts.

Hüseyin Metin writes about a damaged statuette of Hercules from Cremna in Pisidia, linking it to other evidence of the Hercules cult in this city. The bibliography is sometimes incorrect: for example, the pages cited in footnotes 8 and 10 concerning Menzel 1986 do not exactly correspond; also, the book indicated as Kaufmann-Heinimann 1977 is actually Leibundgut 1976.

Danış Baykan provides two papers about metal finds from the now submerged city of Allianoi, near Pergamum. The artefacts examined are surgical instruments (a selection of the 365 found at the site) and several objects relating to the cult of Aesculapius (as a Telesphoros statuette). They lead the author to propose the existence of a *valetudinarium* in the city, and the presence there (instead of in Pergamum) of the famous physician Galenus in the second century AD. The paper of Melih Arslan and Mustafa Metin deals again with surgical instruments, from the large necropolis of Juliopolis in Bithynia. However, some of the objects had a different function; apart from the *stili*, which could actually be used for minor surgery, there are some writing instruments (the wax knives at pl. 16.5, 16.16, 16.18 and perhaps 16.4) and a probable female distaff at pl. 16.15. The *spatula* pl. 16.16 is presented again further in a paper about a rare bronze vessel from tomb no. 174. These finds are very interesting because they come from dated graves, but the catalogue promised at the end of the paper (with the dates of the associated coins) is missing.

Ergün Lafli and Maurizio Buora republish in this section of the book five Roman bronze fibulae, without context, exhibited in the Museum of Kahramanmaraş (see *Five Roman fibulae in the museum of Kahramanmaraş in southeastern Turkey*, in 'Folia Orientalia', LV, 2018, 395-410). The discussion of the five specimens is enriched by distribution maps and lists of the enamelled symmetrical brooches variant Alesia in Europe and of the *Zwiebelknopffibeln* from Turkey.

The rich Roman cemetery of Juliopolis is again the subject of two papers by Melih Arslan with Candemir Zoroglu and with Bekir Sıtkı Alptekin Oransay. The first one deals with bronze vessels, *strigiles*, mirrors and a *Zwiebelknopffibel*, datable on the basis of the coins associated with them in the graves; the second paper focuses on a rare and decorated little bronze vase in the form of a wineskin (inspired by a boar or pig skin) from tomb no. 174, with two skeletons, two coins of the first half of the third century AD and writing instruments. It would be interesting to see the drawings of all the objects found in the grave.

A bronze plate with the representation of Cybele sitting on a throne is ascribed to a Roman sword scabbard by Melih Arslan and Bekir Sıtkı Alptekin Oransay; the piece is in a private collection in Ankara. A winged Attis statuette found in the Roman bath of Ancyra/Ankara is presented by Melih Arslan and dates to the second century AD. The same author and Burçak Delikan publish two metal plaques in a private collection in Ankara (one of silver acquired in Lycia, the other in bronze without provenance, both believed to have been found in Anatolia). The two plaques had different functions: the silver one is made of two riveted plates (the front plate in repoussé technique) and was perhaps worn as an amulet, while the

bronze plaque was cast in a mould and was probably intended as a votive object. Both represent a female goddess interpreted as Artemis Potnia Theron, but the expected animals are not visible (at least in the case of the second plaque).

In the next paper, Melih Arslan discusses Isiac items preserved in private collections in Turkey: a silver statuette of Isis (perhaps from Ankara) and a bronze bust of the same goddess (perhaps from Tralles), both dated by analogy to the second century AD; a bronze statuette of Harpocrates and a small bronze figurine of Harpocrates assigned to the Ptolemaic period; a bronze seal ring depicting Harpocrates dated to the second century AD.

Ayşe Emel Erten presents some attractive Late Antique/Early Medieval bronze items from the excavations recently conducted in the city of Olba in Cilicia: a *polycandelon* and a lamp hanger from the Christian monastery, wick-holders for glass lamps, a buckle, an inscribed double-sided amulet with St George and the evil eye and a tube-shaped pendant (interpreted as a phylactery and so connected to an eventual Jewish presence in the city, but tube-shaped amulet-containers are known in Italy from Roman contexts, too).

Lafli continues his survey of material in Turkish museums, presenting two papers on metal objects preserved in the Museum of Amasra (ancient Amastris), many of which are unpublished. The first 42 objects are almost all without findspot, but two of them are from a Roman tomb in Devrek and a group forms the 'Göbkel Treasure', comprising twelve liturgical objects probably hidden in the early eighth century on the occasion of the Arab invasion; also in the museum are crosses, finger rings, bracelets and other items. The author goes on to publish 343 metal finds also held in Amasra, but found in recent excavations at Hadrianopolis; they are made of bronze and iron, and include 268 (all drawn) iron nails from Early Byzantine contexts.

Lafli and Buora present a useful catalogue of thirteen inscribed metal rings from different museums, dated from the Roman to Byzantine periods; many of them have a provenance, but none is linked to a precise archaeological context. They bear interesting inscriptions, almost all of a religious nature. The same scholars offer two papers about oil lamps. The first one considers a bronze Egyptian lamp, without findspot, of the second to first century BC, and a group of clay lamps imitating the same type. The second paper is about five bronze lamps with a crescent moon-shaped handle from Anatolia (first century AD), and includes a list of the known lamps of this type; apparently, the rare bronze lamp with a stamp from Wederath-Belginum is not mentioned in the list, however, it is treated here at p. 290 as *DVRNACCVSF* (as in *Artefacts.mom.fr*, sheet LMP-4018), read instead *DVRNICCVSF* by Nicola Geldmacher (2004). The other three bronze lamps, without findspots, preserved in the Museum of Isparta, are discussed by Murat Firat, with parallels: one of the lamps is dated to the first century AD, while the other two belong to the Late Antique period. The second part of the volume concludes with a paper of Lafli and Buora about a bread stamp, without provenance, from the eleventh–twelfth century AD, preserved in the Museum of Afyonkarahisar.

The third part of the book is devoted in part to analytical investigations: Anise Soltani Nejad presents the metallographic study on a pin from Iran; Seyed Mohammadamin Emami, Omid Oudbashi, Alireza Asghari-Chaverdi and Pierfrancesco Callieri discuss the analyses of artefacts from excavations in Persepolis; Alessandro Pacini studies casting cores and provides a reconstruction of the technique involved in making a bronze hand and foot found in a sacred area near Chianciano Terme (Italy); Jeffrey P. Maish reflects on the use of the saw in the ancient bronze foundry; Barbara de Filippo, Daniela Ferro and Stefano Natali propose new approaches to the study of corrosion patina on bronzes exposed to sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere.

This part of the book also contains archaeological papers on objects found outside Turkey. Unpublished bronze objects – an axe, a chisel, some brooches, a razor and a pendant – of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age from Calabria (Italy) are presented by Carmelo Colelli and Antonio La Marca, as a preliminary exercise for a complete catalogue of the Antiquarium at Luzzi.

Ketevan Ramishvili presents a group of zoomorphic fibulae from Georgia, dated by their contexts to the third/fourth century AD, but which is related to the ‘Caucasian animal style’, which exerted its influence throughout the first millennium BC. Athanasios Sideris publishes some bronze items from the Archaic temple of Athena at Anticyra (Greece): a small base with a dedicatory inscription, a fragmentary female figurine and a beautiful Athena Promachos on its base, belonging to an Athenian series of Athena statuettes and dated by the author to 490-480 BC. Elena Gigolashvili and Marina Pirtskhalava present a group of fragments probably belonging to an honorific equestrian statue from Vani (Georgia), found in a context dating to the first century BC; the gilded bronze statue was perhaps produced in a local workshop. A bronze statuette of Actaeon with two dogs from Koper in Slovenia is published by Vesna Pintarič Kocuvan; this subject is rarely represented in bronze, so the statuette, probably from a piece of furniture or a chariot decoration, is particularly noteworthy, although damaged. The authenticity of the bronze has been discussed, but we can agree with the author that it is from the Roman period.

Deana Ratković proposes a survey of the workshops for production of metal objects in Upper Moesia, along the Danube Limes, from the second to the fourth century AD, particularly near the Iron Gate (kilns for melting lead, mould) and at *Diana* (fibulae, ingots and so forth). Vladimir P. Petrović and Vojislav Filipović present two intriguing bronze cultic objects from a recent excavation of a Roman building in *Timacum Maius* (Serbia), constructed in the second century AD and still in use in the fourth century: a *signum*-holder with two animals interpreted as roebucks (they are similar to snakes in the drawing) and a fragment of a circular medallion with the representation of a Doric temple, allegedly a pendant. A Roman hackamore from a metal hoard from Šljivovac (Serbia), found with a metal detector, is presented by Milica Tapavički-Ilić and Dragana Spasić-Durić, with considerations about the function of this piece of horse equipment and comparisons with sculpture and

other similar metal objects of the 'Rhine' type; the authors theorise that it may have been connected to a road station in the area. Finally, Nino Sulava publishes a naked left arm of a bronze figure found at Gonio-Asparus in Georgia, which is difficult to date, and includes a survey of the bronze statuettes known from the rest of Georgia.

Whenever possible, all authors tried to place the studied objects in a broader historical or economic framework. The abstracts of the papers are in English and Turkish. The quality of the images is patchy, while the drawings are generally easily readable. The volume is very interesting and documents as a whole the laudable intention to make known a considerable number of ancient metal objects preserved in many museums of the eastern regions, which have often appeared in publications that are not widely accessible.

Dr. Margherita Bolla

Curator of the Archaeological Museum at the Roman Theatre

Musei Civici, Verona

[margherita.bolla@comune.verona.it](mailto:margherita.bolla@comune.verona.it)