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SHELLEY WACHSMANN, *The Gurob Ship-Cart Model and Its Mediterranean Context*. Ed Rachal Foundation Nautical Archaeology Series. College Station, TX: A & M University Press, 2013. 352 pp. ISBN: 978-1-60344-429-3. USD75.

In 1920, at the site of Gurob near entrance to the Fayum oasis in Middle Egypt, pieces of a small wooden ship model were discovered in a shallow and otherwise empty tomb (Tomb 611). Incorrectly assembled but perceptively labeled as a "Pirate Boat" by Flinders Petrie, the overseer of its excavation, the model was paired in antiquity with a *pavois* for carrying, as well as a wheeled cart, perhaps signifying its representation of a cultic object (pp. xviii, 20–21, 102, 163, 202–204). The model was largely forgotten until the turn of the millennium (pp. 6–7), when it was "rediscovered" in the Petrie Egyptological Museum and republished, in the volume presently under review (henceforth "Gurob"), by one of the foremost authorities on ships and seafaring in the Bronze Age Mediterranean, Shelley Wachsmann of Texas A&M University.

Wachsmann conclusively demonstrates in this volume that the Gurob model represents a Helladic oared galley, one of the most important vessel types in maritime history and the ancestor of the Greek *dieres* and Phoenician bireme which played such important roles in the travel, trade, and colonization of the first century BC (pp. 80–82, 262 n. 134). However, the author goes far beyond simply providing a close description of this fragmentary object,

and in short order, the reader is taken on an accompanied tour of the Eastern Mediterranean world writ large, with stops at Medinet Habu, Thebes, and the Dakhla Oasis in Egypt; Hama in Syria; the ruins of Thera, Knossos, Pylos, and Tiryns; and the Athenian Akropolis, among others. Wachsmann's talent for near-drowning his readers in data is on full display in *Gurob*, as written, iconographic, and physical evidence alike are marshaled from across the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean and from the Bronze Age to the Roman period and beyond in support of his study of this small object and its wider context.

Chapter 1, “The Gurob Ship-Cart Model,” provides the background of the object’s excavation and previous publication, along with close descriptions and detailed photographs and measurements of each of the model’s component parts. The remarkable polychromatic nature of the object is covered in depth in print (pp. 26–28, 219–224). Though the book contains no color images, Wachsmann partnered with the Institute for the Visualization of History, Inc. to produce an excellent online resource (<http://www.vizin.org/Gurob/Gurob.html>), which provides a full-color companion to the photographs in the volume, as well as three-dimensional imaging that allows the user to interact with both original and reconstructed versions of the Gurob model.

Other physical elements of particular note include a waterline projection at the bow, vertical stem and stempost with upturned finial, and vertical pegs along the top of the hull that the author identifies as stanchions, or load-bearing posts, which on a physical galley would have supported the superstructure and partial decking (pp. 14–16, 201, 252). The importance of each of these aspects of the model is discussed in Ch. 2, while the wheels and *pavois* are addressed in Ch. 3.

Chapter 2, “The Iconographic Evidence,” provides deep and wide-ranging comparative analysis in support of the author’s assertion that the Gurob model is “the most detailed known [galley] representation, supplying structural details in a unique, multihued, three-dimensional manner, which contemporaneous ship depictions either ignore or, at best, illuminate in two dimensions only” (p. 33). Wachsmann meticulously compares each characteristic of the Gurob model and its corresponding feature in galley iconography from the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean (pp. 65–84), thus facilitating a contextual examination of each individual aspect of this unique addition to the corpus for the purpose of better understanding, wherever possible, the actual appearance and function of the various components that made up this important vessel type.

In making his case, Wachsmann first presents the corpus of representations found in Egypt, including the Medinet Habu reliefs and Dakhla Oasis graffito, and on the Syro-Canaanite littoral, including potsherds from the Philistine sites of Ashkelon and Ekron, graffiti from Nahal Meerot, and a cinerary urn featuring a Helladic galley with vertical stempost and upturned finial from the Syrian site of Hama. The representations of Helladic ships featuring open rowers galleries and birdlike stem devices found on the Levantine coast are held to “indicate that the Sea Peoples introduced this ship type to the region” (p. 59) from the Aegean, while the author has long interpreted the Hama urn as evidence for an Urnfield element among the invading Sea Peoples pictured at Medinet Habu.¹ As will be seen in the discussion of Ch. 4 below, evidence from Gurob is presented as further support for this hypothesis. Whether Wachsmann’s case is convincing is up to the individual reader, though two related points should be noted: first, the argument for a Sea Peoples presence among prospective Central Europeans at Hama is dependent on a single urn out of 1,100 found in the relevant stratum at the site (p. 59). Second, while the hypothesized connection between Urnfield culture and the Sea Peoples pictured at Medinet Habu rests on the common ornamentation (bird heads at stem and stern) on the Sea Peoples’ galleys and on ceremonial *Vogelbarken* in Central European iconography, the Hama urn—though presented as a connection between the two—features a galley decorated in typical Helladic fashion, with decorated finial on the stempost only.

Chapter 3, “Wheels, Wagons, and the Transport of Ships Overland,” traces the tradition of ships on land, primarily as objects in processions. Wachsmann demonstrates that Egyptian funerary boats were sometimes depicted as being transported on wheeled wagons, and that deities were frequently transported overland in boat-shaped shrines fitted with poles attached to a *pavois*, which allowed them to be carried by porters. The author then goes beyond the Egyptian evidence to find examples of ship-cart use in Greek culture, as well, with particular emphasis on representations of Dionysos in a ship-cart and on the wheeled ship used to transport the new *peplos* at each Panathenaic festival.

Chapter 4, “Foreigners at Gurob,” presents evidence for non-Egyptians at the site for the purpose of determining “the *most likely* foreign candidate for the model’s owner” (p. 163; italics in original), as well as a brief history of the Sea Peoples movements, with particular focus on the Sherden (pp. 183–190). Foreign elements found at Gurob include Mycenaean and Cypriot pot-

¹ Wachsmann 1981; 1996; 1997; 1998: 175, 178–183, 329–330; 2000.

tery, Syro-Canaanite toggle pins, a spindle for “z-spun” threads, and blond hair. Additionally, both Tjuk-people (Libyans) and Sherden, a Sea Peoples group faced by Ramesses II, Merneptah, and potentially Ramesses III (esp. p. 206; cf. Emanuel 2013: 16), are mentioned in the mid-12th c. Wilbour Papyrus as owning or occupying land in an area of Middle Egypt that includes Gurob (Appendix 4).

Perhaps the most interesting intrusive phenomenon at Gurob, aside from the ship-cart model itself, are the Ramesside-era “burnt groups” consisting of personal possessions (pottery, jewelry, household items, and furniture) which had been buried intramurally and then burned (p. 193). The author notes several previous theories regarding these enigmatic “burnt groups,” which are unique in Egypt, before offering his own proposal, that the burnt groups “represent physical evidence of an Urnfield element...in the midst of rapid acculturation” (p. 199). In Wachsmann’s reading of the evidence, this acculturation by a central European element at Gurob meant that they “no longer cremated their dead, having adopted Egyptian burial practices, but still kept alive a memory of their traditions by burning and burying the deceased’s personal items,” which were then left in covered pits rather than being placed into urns (p. 199).

This interpretation of the burnt groups is presented in combination with the Hama urn in support of Wachsmann’s theory regarding an Urnfield element among the Sea Peoples coalition. In arguing for this connection, he notes both that “[their] burial custom, resulting in vast fields of cremation urns, is one of the most typifying characteristics of the Urnfield Culture, *hence its name*” (p. 199; italics in original) and that “burial methods can adapt when foreigners arrive at a new setting [and] the particular burial customs that remain will be those that have consequential cultural meaning to the new arrivals” (p. 199). Accepting what Wachsmann calls “the most likely, and simplest, explanation for the burnt group phenomenon at Gurob” (p. 199), then, seems to require accepting that the act of burning, rather than cremation burial itself—in the cinerary urns that serve as the namesake for this culture-historical group—was the element of death-related ritual that carried “consequential cultural meaning” to the prospective Central Europeans at Gurob.

Chapter 5, “Conclusions” (pp. 201–206), provides a concise and accessible synthesis, while reinforcing the author’s core argument about the Gurob ship-cart model, its cultural connections, and its potential ownership by a member of one Sea Peoples group or his descendant (p. 206). Following this are seven appendices (pp. 207–249), the majority of which deal with aspects

of the physical model, including lines drawings, virtual reality reconstructions, radiocarbon dating, and analysis of the wood and pigments. These are followed by a useful Glossary of Nautical Terms (pp. 251–253), extensive endnotes (pp. 255–283), a comprehensive bibliography (pp. 285–312), and a very helpful and accurate index (pp. 313–321).

The aforementioned online companion to the text is a further source of invaluable information, and one can only hope not only that it will survive online in perpetuity, but that it will also serve as inspiration to others in the field to avoid what the author has called the “Evans-Petrie Retrograde Paradigm Shift” by taking full advantage of web-based technologies to make artifacts, interpretations, and reports more accessible than ever, to practitioners and the public alike.²

Whether or not the reader agrees with all of the author’s conclusions, *Gurob* is a formidable work of scholarship which goes far beyond the close study of an important object. As such, it represents a significant contribution to the existing literature not just on the development and construction of the Helladic oared galley and its Iron Age successors, but on seafaring, technological transference, and cultural interconnections in the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age transition across the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean worlds.

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² Wachsmann 2014: 205

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DAVID LEE PHILLIPS, *The Samaritan Version of the Book of Numbers with Hebrew Variants: A Close Textual Study*. Lewiston, NY; Lampeter, UK: Edwin Mellen Press, 2014. XV + 302 pp. ISBN 978-0-7734-4317-4. U\$D 179,95.

The present study claims to have two goals: 1) "to determine the autograph Hebrew letters for each word, the grammar of its pronunciation, and the end of each sentence"; and 2) "to express ancient Hebrew in modern English" (I). Of the two goals, only the second can be achieved with any kind of certainty; the first presents an impossibility or at least a general uncertainty, and the difficulties associated with it are barely reflected in Phillips' monograph. Even the most optimistic biblical scholar would hardly claim to reconstruct "the autograph," *i.e.*, the very first edition of a biblical book, going back to its initial author. Nonetheless, Phillips seeks to undertake such a reconstruction on the basis of the Samaritan text presented in the critical editions. Beyond this, he translates his presumed "autograph" and marks distinctions between the various witnesses (primarily LXX and MT). In general, this study presents a flawed methodology and contains many inaccuracies, which certainly advise against purchasing the volume at its overwhelming cover price of U\$D179,95 (according to the publisher's website). To clarify this position, this review will exemplarily discuss several problems with the volume.

The book opens with a confusing series of introductions containing significant speculation and even substantial errors. To this first category, one can assign the dating of the pre-Samaritan textual tradition identified in Qumran manuscripts: the Samaritan passages in 4Q22 and 4Q27 were "from a copying tradition going back to the beginning of the monotheistic ... Temple of Jerusalem in the 6th century BCE under the Persian regime of Darius I" (II). Such an assertion demonstrates that Phillips evaluates the transmission of texts over time as most stable and that he does not distinguish between elements that can be viewed as "pre-Samaritan" and elements that must be rec-