

Donald M. Bailey, *Ptolemaic and Roman Terracottas from Egypt: Catalogue of Terracottas in the British Museum Volume IV*, British Museum Press, London, 2008.

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In the latest publication of terracottas in the British Museum, Donald Bailey, a former curator of the museum, presents us with more than eight hundred terracottas from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. The material included in the catalogue comes primarily from the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities and the Department of Ancient Egypt and the Sudan.

One might question the reason for including Ptolemaic and Roman Period material in the same publication, a criticism that can be levelled at many studies of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. This lack of distinction can be problematic as there are clear differences between the two periods, not only in regard to material culture, but also in relation to many of the fundamental characteristics of administration, culture and society. In fact, Bailey recognises this problem and emphasises the need for scholars to distinguish between the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, but he argues that in the case of this study, it is not possible due to how little is actually known about both the provenance and the chronology of these terracottas. Still, Bailey proposes a potential date range for each example, and notes that with future study the two periods may begin to be distinguished.

As the title suggests, the objects are primarily made of terracotta (fired clay); however, a few pieces that are made from plaster or unfired mud are also included. The majority are manufactured using moulds, although some hand-modelled pieces do occur, as well as a few reliefs that are applied to wheel-made vessels.

Following a short introduction that covers issues such as function, distribution, dating and manufacturing techniques, the catalogue itself is divided into chapters according to a variety of themes. These themes include votive objects, fertility and protective

beings, Egyptian and Greek deities, Christian religion, daily life, and animals and plants. Obviously, it is not possible to sort the catalogue by provenance or date as this information is often unavailable; however, the method that Bailey uses is not consistent. Some of the themes are based on the subject matter of the object, for example Egyptian deities, while others, such as coffin-attachments, are related to the object's function. Perhaps it would be more useful to divide the catalogue based on the apparent function of the objects, and then subdivide according to the subject matter, as is done in the chapter on ritual, votive and funerary objects.

Each chapter begins with a short introduction, followed by examples of terracottas relating to that particular theme. The catalogue entries are detailed and cover a range of information including dimensions, subject matter, material, manufacturing technique, date, and provenance where known. In addition, a black and white photograph of each object is provided at the end of the book.

Overall, this volume provides a comprehensive study of a group of material, which until now has not been subject to detailed analysis. It is anticipated that, as more publications of this nature are produced, a greater understanding of Ptolemaic and Roman terracottas will develop and that eventually terracottas from these periods will be distinguished and considered in their own right.