

Reviews

La civilisation énéolithique dans la péninsule ibérique, par Nils Åberg (Vilhelm Ekmans Universitetsfond, Uppsala, No. 25). 10½ × 6¾; pp. xiv + 204. Uppsala, Leipzig, and Paris. 15 kr.

The great advances in archaeological research which have been made in recent years in the Iberian peninsula, more particularly in Spain, have reawakened among archaeologists outside the peninsula the interest which was raised nearly forty years ago by the publication of the late Professor Cartailhac's *Les âges préhistoriques dans l'Espagne et dans le Portugal*. The abundance of material discovered since the appearance of that work has placed the archaeology of the peninsula on an entirely different footing, and consequently Dr. Åberg's book is very welcome, inasmuch as it presents a very useful survey of the chalcolithic period as known up to the present time. The more so, as with its numerous illustrations it supplements the admirable conspectuses published in recent years by Professor Bosch Gimpera in his appendix to Schulten's *Hispania* (Spanish translation) and his *Prehistòria Catalan*.

But the purpose of Dr. Åberg's work goes beyond a mere survey. He, like other northern archaeologists, in seeking for an explanation of certain problems of northern and central European prehistory has, by his study of the material from the Iberian peninsula, arrived at a point when, to quote his own words used in a particular connexion, 'Je crois pouvoir dire aujourd'hui avec quelque certitude que l'influence étrangère . . . est l'influence ibérique'. In short, Dr. Åberg finds in Spain and Portugal the clue to many phenomena, not only in France and the British Isles, but also in Germany and Scandinavia. His conclusions are mainly based on a study of the pottery, and in what he terms the Palmella-Ciempozuelos pottery to which the beakers of the peninsula belong, he sees the forbears, not only of the whole beaker-pottery of Central Europe, but also of such classes as the Schönfelder ceramic of Germany and the Augerum pottery of Sweden.

This diffusion of the Iberian influence follows, in his opinion, two lines, one by way of Western France perhaps by land or sea, the other through France along the Rhone to the Rhine. The suggestion of a connexion between the beakers of Central Europe and Spain is not new, but not even the adducement of material from Haute Savoie makes the leap-frog transmission of the beaker and allied types by a land-route from Spain to Central Germany, which Dr. Åberg's argument postulates, any easier to accept. Nor is such a theory helped by the comparisons (to which allusion is made) between the wares of El Argar and those of Unetič and the like. In both cases

the difficulty is the same, namely, the existence of wide intervening areas in which no substantial link occurs. The wholesale transportation of pottery-types from one region to another is only affected by migration of the makers themselves, and any such migration in the present case is inconceivable.

Dr. Åberg, in placing the centre of his chalcolithic culture in Portugal, assigns to it a comparatively short duration, and thinks that the dolmens, megalithic tombs and grottoes, with their numerous burials, represent a dense population. If this be so, what happened to this population in the Bronze Age, of which the remains are admittedly scanty as compared with those of the earlier period? It may be that the extension of the use of bronze into the north of Europe diverted the trade in copper in part from the peninsula to other sources, such as those of the British Isles to which Cornish tin and Irish gold lent additional attractions. In that event the chalcolithic culture of the peninsula, even after it had begun to influence other parts of Europe, may have survived in simple form unaffected by outside influences over several centuries, followed by a like persistence of the El Argar culture. Thus it may be possible to bring the latter, as suggested by the long swords of El Argar, to within measurable distance of the traditional founding of Tartessus and the coming of the Iron Age, filling the gap with the Bronze Age types of implements which are more numerous than Dr. Åberg's lists would suggest.

In tracing the expansion of Iberian influence to the British Isles some interesting suggestions are made, notably that the decoration of a class of round-bottomed food-vessels is derived from the Palmella group of pottery. This particular class of food-vessel is practically confined to Ireland, with offshoots into western Scotland, and so far keeps step with the diffusion of tombs of the New Grange type. But, whereas the megalithic tombs and the Palmella pottery are contemporaneous in the peninsula, there is no proof that the same holds good for Britain and Ireland. And why, if Ireland shows so much influence from the Palmella bowls, did she not adopt also the Palmella beakers in an equal degree? The Irish bowls stand typologically too late in the British series to have any links with Portugal, and Dr. Åberg's comparison omits all consideration of the evolution of the distinctive British food-vessel from the equally distinctive British Neolithic pottery as traced by Mr. Reginald Smith. In England, again, this influence must have been of a more indirect nature than Dr. Åberg would lead us to suppose. Apart from a certain type of zonal decoration which is found in all the beaker groups, only one or two English beakers bear the faintest resemblance in form to the Spanish type. Further, however much the Folkton drums may recall Iberian objects, they are certainly not imports, for Canon Greenwell distinctly states that they are made of local stone.

There is perhaps at the moment a tendency to overestimate the influences emanating from the peninsula in prehistoric times. The general conclusions arrived at by Dr. Åberg are nevertheless suggestive, and will need to be borne in mind in any future research into the problems which he discusses.

E. T. LEEDS.