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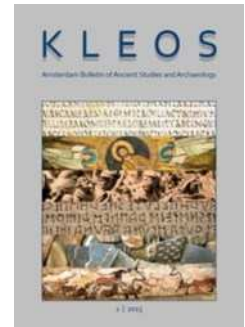
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William S. Hanson / Ioana A. Oltean (eds.), 2013:
*Archaeology from historical aerial and satellite
 archives*, New York: Springer.

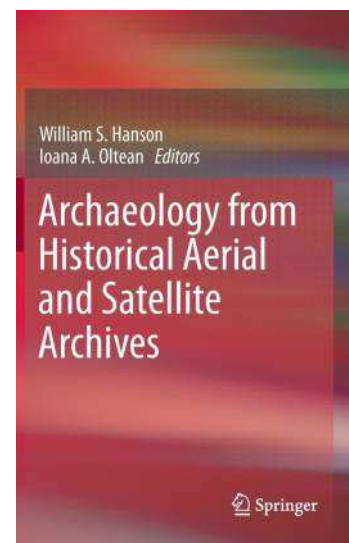
ISBN 978-1-4614-4504-3 and ISBN 978-1-4614-4505-0
 (eBook). 365 pp. €105.

Archaeology from *Historical Aerial and Satellite Archives* edited by Hanson and Oltean contains contributions of the editors and 27 additional authors from the UK, Australia, USA, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Hungary and Russia. The editors' primary aim is 'to draw to wider attention the existence, scope and potential access to historical archival aerial and satellite photographs in order to encourage their use in a wider range of archaeological and landscape research.' (p. 9). It is written to address a wide audience ranging from students to researchers working within different fields of Archaeology although it is especially useful for those working within the field of Landscape Archaeology.

The authors focus on historical photography taken at least 40–50 years ago for purposes other than archaeological survey, e.g., military or cartographic purposes. The editors started to work on the subject after the Advanced Research Workshop on Aerial Archaeology in Leszno, Poland, in November 2000. Here, their attention was drawn to the fact that Second World War aerial reconnaissance photography offered a great potential for archaeology and that this potential was largely unexploited. The annual Aerial Archaeology Research Group conference in Copenhagen held in September 2007, showed that the subject was still current and under-examined, which stimulated the editors in compiling this book.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT

The book consists of three parts divided into 18 chapters: Part I: Introduction (chapter 1), Part II Opening Doors: Aerial and Satellite Archives (chapter 2-4) and Part III: Historical Aerial and Satellite Photographs in Archaeological Research (chapter 5-18). 118 figures, most black and white, and four tables are included. The introduction offers the context for the extensive examples of the use of aerial and satellite photographs in archaeology that feature in Part III. It discusses the range of archival sources that are available, their accessibility and the benefits of using them, e.g.: the visualisation of the landscape as it was before the destructive impact of late twentieth-century urbanisation, industrialisation and mechanisation of agriculture; time-change analysis of the condition of archaeological monuments; and the discovery of unknown archaeological



sites that are now destroyed. Part I also draws attention to differences between countries concerning availability of aerial imagery. E.g., closed-skies policy in Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria impede the use of aerial photography for archaeology in these countries.

Part II focuses on the different archives that are available worldwide and discusses the access to the archives as well as the importance of best practice in using historic aerial photographs. Most important and extensive historical aerial imagery is derived from military sorties, e.g. RFC/RAF, Luftwaffe and USAAF, taken during and shortly after both the First and Second World Wars. Many of these photographs are housed in three major international archives: The National Collection of Aerial Photography in Edinburgh, also known as The Aerial Reconnaissance Archives (TARA), the Imperial War Museum in London and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at various locations in the Washington D.C. area in the USA. Another source of historical aerial imagery consists of declassified US CORONA satellite photographs taken between 1960 and 1980 for military intelligence and mapping purposes. These images are available through the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Unfortunately, accessibility to some of the archives is problematic because finding aids often have not been catalogued. Continuing efforts are made to improve this.

Part III is the most extensive part and the core of the volume. It contains fourteen case studies that illustrate the use of historical aerial and satellite archives for archaeological research. The papers range widely both geographically and chronologically: 'in order to demonstrate the widespread applicability of the methodological approach both to students and academic researchers' (p. 9). Their geographical coverage extends across eastern and western Europe, the Middle East and South America. The timeframe of the case studies ranges from prehistoric to World War II Archaeology. In most case studies the focus lies on the use of aerial photography, derived from First World War or Second World War intelligence-gathering reconnaissance or from internally generated survey photography. Two papers illustrate the value of declassified Cold War satellite photography and two cases demonstrate the benefit of the integration of both aerial and satellite imagery.

EVALUATION

Part II is, in my opinion, the most valuable part of the book for students and researchers wanting to use historical aerial imagery. It offers practical information on the available archives and how to access them, including website URL's. Of course, this is also a weakness, since it is information that can easily become out-dated. In any case, the book gives an excellent overview of the state of affairs in 2011. Also, it offers an update to previously released books on the subject e.g., *Images of Conflict: Military Aerial Photography and Archaeology* (2007) by Birger Stichelbaut and others.¹

An essential read is the chapter on best practice in the use of historic aerial photographs. This chapter addresses the importance of scale of photographs; wrong ideas on the scale of the image lead to misidentification of archaeological features. Also, the need for understanding the relationships between the nature of expected archaeological features (e.g. buried structures, earthworks) and the way in which they can register on aerial photography is stressed. Furthermore, the benefits of using stereoscopic viewers are discussed.

The case studies in Part III nicely illustrate the use of historical aerial and satellite photographs. One can browse through the wide range of subjects and select a chapter that suits one's specific interest or field of study. Many case studies include methodology issues and offer further information on the archives that are available in different countries. If one reads all the case studies, the conclusions become a bit tedious, since the importance of historic aerial imagery for discovering unknown sites and assessment of the changing landscape is stressed again and again. The message would have been clear enough when just five or six case studies had been presented. Although the case studies range widely chronologically and geographically, they are strongly tied together by the shared focus on the use of historic aerial and satellite imagery. Also, the introduction in Part I places the case studies in a broader context.

The figures included in the book are mostly examples of aerial images. Unfortunately, many figures lack arrows pointing at features discussed in the text and figure captions. Whilst the features might be easily recognizable to those familiar with the subject, for less-experienced readers it is not always clear what one should see.

Overall, the book is written in excellent style, one does not notice that many different contributors have worked on the volume. The book is generally well-structured: each chapter begins with an abstract and ends with a summarizing conclusion. But the order of the case studies seems to be more or less random; they are neither chronologically nor geographically ordered.

IN CONCLUSION

The book is highly recommended to those with an interest in using historic aerial imagery for archaeology or other purposes, since it offers practical information on the availability and access to the photographs and addresses issues of methodology. The editors succeed in convincing the reader of the added value of historic aerial and satellite images for archaeological research.

MARIJKE BEKKEMA

NOTES

- 1 B. Stichelbaut / J. Bourgeois / N. Saunders / P. Chielens (eds.), 2007: *Images of conflict. Military aerial photography and archaeology*, Newcastle upon Tyne.