

first from upland Romania! Equally, petrological identification of a sample of the excavated ground and polished stone tools would have helped set the site reports in their wider regional context. Finally, the debate on industrial-scale salt production in the Bronze Age could have benefited from the time-depth provided by a consideration of the scale of salt production at Provadia in relation to the mid fifth millennium BC Varna I cemetery, as well as the huge demand for salt from the fourth millennium BC Trypillia mega-sites in the Uman–Kirovograd region—it would seem unlikely that industrial-scale production was first developed in the Carpathian Bronze Age.

This volume represents a major contribution at once to Bronze Age studies and Carpathian archaeology. Harding & Kavruk deserve our congratulations for putting Bronze Age salt exploitation firmly on the map. Much of the text comes across as vintage Harding—terse, solidly grounded in matters empirical, albeit a little cautious on social interpretations. Overall, this volume marks a fine and welcome addition to the *Archaeolingua* Main Series.

Reference

DAIRE, M.-Y. 2003. *Le sel des Gaulois*. Paris: Errance.

JOHN CHAPMAN

Department of Archaeology, Durham University,
UK (Email: j.c.chapman@durham.ac.uk)

MICHEL MOUTON & JÉRÉMIE SCHIETTECATTE. *In the desert margins. The settlement process in ancient South and East Arabia* (*Arabia Antica* 9). 334 pages, 176 b&w illustrations. 2014. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 978-88-913-0680-7 hardback, €250.

With this book, Mouton and Schiettecatte have produced the first synthesis of the late pre-Islamic settlement archaeology of southern and eastern Arabia, encompassing modern Yemen, Oman and the UAE. *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity* (1992) by Dan Potts addresses the archaeology of the Gulf States from prehistory to the coming of Islam, and the reviewer's *Habilitationschrift* (2001) focuses on the Samad Late Iron Age (LIA, 150



BC–AD 300), centred on the Sharqiyah province of Oman; both therefore cover only parts of Arabia, and both are now in need of updating. This new book draws on such specialist publications to provide an overview of the settlement evidence of late pre-Islamic Arabia for a wider archaeological audience. The volume is attractively presented with many excellent illustrations, printed on very good paper—and comes with a stiff price tag, typical of the publisher.

The book divides into two parts. The first focuses on the Gulf coast of eastern Arabia from Bahrain to central Oman, organised into three geographical chapters and a synthetic overview of the settlement archaeology of this region. The more substantial Part 2 focuses instead on South Arabia and is organised into five thematic chapters.

The authors' treatment of the evidence is strongest in relation to the UAE and Yemen, rather than Oman. In the latter region, for example, reference to a number of recent contributions (e.g. Schreiber 2007) is omitted and instead the authors rely on literature from the late 1980s and 1990s. As a result, some terminology and interpretations abandoned in recent years as unsuitable are presented as current (e.g. the term 'Samad Culture'). For example, the authors consider the cemetery at al-Fuwaydah to be part of the 'Samad Culture' (pp. 78–79, fig. 63), which this reviewer—as an excavator of the site—has never suggested and would not accept (Yule 1999: 119–86). Moreover, while balsamaria are common to both the Samad LIA and the *Préislamique récent* (PIR) periods, at al-Fuwaydah the rest of the ceramic material demonstrates a close relation to that of the PIR. There are a number of other similar examples in the book; for instance, the misattribution of the fort (M34) to the Early Iron Age (EIA, c. 1300–300 BC) (p. 86), although the published pottery is Samad LIA, mixed with a few EIA sherds (on such forts, see Yule 2014: 36, fig. 14.1–5).

In fact, there is a wider issue here. In central Oman, due to a lack of distinct stratigraphical sequences, archaeologists group finds into EIA and Samad LIA assemblages. Further, across south-eastern Arabia, the Samad LIA itself differs significantly from the subsequent PIR. In order for the authors to bring these archaeological facies into alignment—or to make the equation Samad LIA = PIR—the authors consequently question or omit existing knowledge from intact LIA contexts in central Oman (e.g. al-Amqat, al-Bustan, al-Moyassar).

© Antiquity Publications Ltd, 2015

We can summarise the first half of the book thus: the cultural assemblages of pre-Islamic Arabia are spatially mixed. In central Oman about 75 per cent of finds can be attributed to the Samad LIA, others to the PIR and some to neither. In the UAE, by contrast, PIR material dominates and Samad-type objects are absent. Seventy-two Samad LIA sites distributed across 80 000km² are insufficient to define a settlement model. There also remain problems with the absolute dating of the Samad LIA sites. Our textual sources do not permit a coherent history of Persian invasions of south-eastern Arabia, aside from places such as Bahrain and Rustaq. Moreover, sites such as Suhar are a problem as it was probably a Sasanian town, but investigations have revealed no Sasanian sherds, which makes one wonder exactly how politics and pottery interfaced and therefore how text and material culture can be brought into alignment.

The second half of the book deals with South Arabia, presenting five chapters including a discussion of 'Urbanism and urban functions', 'The social structure and identity of South Arabian populations' and a 'Discussion of the settlement process in South Arabia'. In the latter concluding chapter, the authors summarise the main themes, including the distribution of water and the processes of urbanisation. Notwithstanding a few mentions, this second half of the book downplays the importance of the Ḥimyarite confederacy, centred in the south-western corner of the Arabian Peninsula during the first half of the first millennium AD. For example, the section on urbanisation devotes whole case studies to sites such as Makaynūn and Qāni, but there is little discussion of Zafār—the Ḥimyaritic capital—which is larger, better documented and arguably far more important for our understanding of the wider organisation of Ḥimyarite society than sites such as Makaynūn (see Yule 2013).

This book builds on the two authors' previous publications. It articulates in detail the pre-Islamic settlement processes across eastern and southern Arabia. Although some aspects of the treatment of the material can be questioned, the value of the book lies in its updating of the literature and original synthesis of settlement evidence drawn from a vast and still little-known region.

References

POTTS, D. 1992. *The Arabian Gulf in antiquity*. Oxford: Clarendon.

© Antiquity Publications Ltd, 2015

SCHREIBER, J. 2007. *Transformationsprozesse in Oasensiedlungen Omans. Die vorislamische Zeit am Beispiel von Izki, Nizwa und dem Jebel Akhdar*. PhD dissertation, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

YULE, P. 1999. 'Amla/al Zahīrah—Späteisenzeitliche Gräberfelder Vorläufiger Bericht, in *Studies in the archaeology of the Sultanate of Oman* (Orient-Archäologie 2): 119–86. Rahden: Leidorf.

– 2001. *Die Gräberfelder in Samad al-Shān (Sultanat Oman) Materialien zu einer Kulturgeschichte* (Orient-Archäologie 4). Rahden: Leidorf.

– 2013. *Late Antique Arabia: Zafār, capital of Ḥimyar. Rehabilitation of a 'decadent' society. Excavations of the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg 1998–2010 in the highlands of the Yemen* (Abhandlungen Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft 29). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

– 2014. *Cross-roads: Early and Late Iron Age south-eastern Arabia* (Abhandlungen Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft 30). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

PAUL A. YULE

Languages and Cultures of the Near East, University of Heidelberg, Germany
(Email: paul.yule@t-online.de)

JUDITH S. MCKENZIE, JOSEPH A. GREENE, ANDRES T. REYES, CATHERINE S. ALEXANDER, DEIRDRE G. BARRETT, BRIAN GILMORE, JOHN F. HEALEY, MARGARET O'HEA, NADINE SCHIBILLE, STEPHAN G. SCHMID, WILMA WETTERSTROM & SARA WHITCHER KANSA. *The Nabataean temple at Khirbet et-Tannur, Jordan, volume 1. Architecture and religion. Final report on Nelson Glueck's 1937 excavation* (Annals of the ASOR 67). xxvii+340 pages, 455 b&w illustrations. 2014. Boston (MA): American Schools of Oriental Research; 978-0-89757-035-0 hardback \$89.95 & £65.

JUDITH S. MCKENZIE, JOSEPH A. GREENE, ANDRES T. REYES, CATHERINE S. ALEXANDER, DEIRDRE G. BARRETT, BRIAN GILMORE, JOHN F. HEALEY, MARGARET O'HEA, NADINE SCHIBILLE, STEPHAN G. SCHMID, WILMA WETTERSTROM & SARA WHITCHER KANSA. *The Nabataean temple at Khirbet et-Tannur, Jordan, volume 2. Cultic offerings, vessels, and other specialist reports. Final report on Nelson Glueck's 1937 excavation* (Annals of the ASOR 68). xx+329 pages, 151 b&w illustrations, 18 tables. 2014. Boston (MA): American Schools of Oriental Research; 978-0-89757-036-7 hardback \$89.95 & £65.