

Book reviews

BARBARA VOORHIES. *Coastal collectors in the Holocene: the Chantuto people of southwest Mexico*. xviii+364 pages, 124 illustrations, 54 tables. 2004. Gainesville (FL): University Press of Florida; 0-8130-2758-6 hardback \$69.95

Documenting Archaic period adaptation is fundamental to understanding the transition from foraging to agriculture. Monographs from the Oaxaca and Tehuacan valleys provide a baseline of data for this period from highland Mexico, but no equivalent source of synthesised data has existed from the tropical lowlands of Mesoamerica until the publication of this volume.



Barbara Voorhies provides primary data on the ancient Chantuto people, inhabiting the Soconusco region of southern Mexico in the Middle and Late Archaic period (5500-1500 cal. BC). The Archaic period is poorly known from elsewhere in the lowlands of Mesoamerica, and so this volume is a significant contribution to the archaeology of the region. It allows the author to update her previous monograph on the subject (Voorhies 1976), summarise published work from the intervening 28 years and present much new data. This volume is essential reading for Mesoamericanists and for scholars who study the origins of agriculture and settled life worldwide.

Voorhies strives 'to present a comprehensive palaeo-ethnography of the Chantuto people' (p. 1). Chapter 2 presents excavation data in a concise and comprehensive manner; it fills 93 of the book's 417 pages of text. This section is not simply a description of excavation units, stratigraphy and features as it also includes interpretations of site formation, based on ethnographic analogy and replication experiments. Voorhies interprets six shell mound sites as locales that were briefly, yet repeatedly, occupied to extract meat from clams harvested in the surrounding estuaries. A unique deposit amongst these shell mounds is a large surface of prepared clay brought from nearby river sediments to the site of Tlacuachero, the only site in lowland Mesoamerica where Archaic period structures and human burials have been documented.

Also important is the Vuelta Limón site – the only inland Archaic locale known from the Soconusco. Many tools, but no features, were recovered there and the site's exact function is difficult to ascertain.

Chapter 3 consists of new ethnoarchaeological data from Costa Rica and Mexico on methods for harvesting, cooking and transporting clams and shrimp. Ecological observations of habitat and behaviour of local molluscs and crustaceans are also provided. Voorhies and co-authors then present the data and results of faunal and floral analyses (Chapters 4-6). Ninety-nine per cent of all fauna from shell mound Archaic levels consist of marsh clams collected from the estuary, and, amongst vertebrates, most are fish species that inhabit the semi-saline lagoons. Floral preservation is poor in the Soconusco environment but maize (*Zea mays*) phytoliths are associated with the clay surface at Tlacuachero and with the Archaic levels at Vuelta Limón. Shell, bone and stone tools are described in Chapter 7; most are expedient and performed functions linked to a hunter-gatherer adaptation.

After presenting this wealth of data, Voorhies provides a model of hunter-gatherer mobility patterns in the concluding chapter. She interprets the Late Archaic Chantuto people as collectors (*sensu* Binford 1980) practicing logistical foraging from residential bases. Voorhies proposes convincingly that the shell mound sites were mass procurement and processing stations for marsh clams that were dried and brought inland to base camp sites such as Vuelta Limón. This collector strategy contrasts, for example, with that of the more mobile forager strategy that characterises the Late Archaic adaptation in the Valley of Oaxaca (Marcus & Flannery 1996: 52). It is not surprising that different adaptive strategies were at work in the diverse ecological zones of the highlands and lowlands; now that we have two of the best-documented records of Archaic adaptation in Mesoamerica, a detailed comparison of collector versus forager strategies is possible. Comparing the two areas and their respective Late Archaic mobility patterns might help explain differences in regional developmental trajectories such as the earlier emergence of socio-political ranking in the Soconusco during the following Early Formative period (see Rosenswig 2000: 447-8).

The research in this book is presented in an accessible manner, blending technical description and analysis with personal accounts of the process of

discovery and the authors' evolving interpretations over the past three decades. Voorhies consistently provides alternative explanations for the patterns she documents and explicitly details the interpretations she favours. The line drawings, graphs, tables and photographs are well labelled and nicely reproduced. This is a major contribution of unique data to the archaeological literature of Mesoamerica that will be regularly cited for years to come.

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PRUDENCE M. RICE. *Maya political science: time, astronomy and the cosmos*. xxii+352 pages, 82 illustrations, 16 tables. 2004. Austin: University of Texas Press; hardback 0-292-70261-2 \$60 & paperback 0-292 70569-7 \$24.95.

In this book, Prudence Rice hypothesises that Classic Maya (c. AD 250-950) 'geopolitico-religious organization was structured by Maya calendrical science' especially the *may* cycle (p. xv), where seats of power ('capitals') changed hands every 256 years. Other than works by Munro Edmonson and a 1940s publication by Sylvanus Morley (when scholars thought that inscriptions only concerned astronomy and time), there is no mention of the *may* cycle in the Classic Maya literature. Edmonson discusses the *may* cycle based on Colonial period documents (e.g. *Chilam B'alam* books). And while the



direct-historical approach taken by Rice is admirable in its intent, there is no evidence in the Classic Maya hieroglyphic record for a comparable system.

There is plentiful evidence for *k'atun* (c. 20 years) period-ending rites, as Rice details. But there is no clear support for 13 *k'atuns* having had any significance in Classic Maya political life, though it became a means of tracking time by the Late Postclassic (the Short Count) (Sharer 1994: 572, 574). If the *may* cycle was so important, why did the Classic Maya not write about it? Stating that key inscribed monuments might be missing, or yet undeciphered, or that the pertinent information has eroded, is inadequate. Nor is it adequate to divide or multiply 256 years until it fits preconceived notions.

K'atun period-ending rites are associated with the reigns of specific kings (Stuart 1995: 166), not vice versa. The Classic Maya used the Long Count, a linear rendering of time (Stuart 1995: 224), and, later on, period-ending dates that revolved around a 52-year cycle (Calendar Round) (Sharer 1994: 571) rather than *k'atuns* as cyclical renderings of time (Stuart 1995: 168). In a recent book on the Madrid Codex, a Maya book concerning calendrics written, seemingly, in Pre-Columbian Yucatán (Vail & Aveni 2004), there is no mention of the *may* cycle. It centres on two major calendars, the *haab* (solar year of 365 days) and *tzolkin* (52-year cycle). Classic period inscriptions in the southern lowlands focused on specific site histories rather than regions, as one sees in the Postclassic period in the northern lowlands (Stuart 1995: 171). If the *may* cycle indeed was acknowledged in later periods (c. 1250-Conquest), it may have developed in tandem with joint or shared rule for which Postclassic northern lowland political histories are known.

Maya kings decided the timing of certain events based on auspicious dates, such as *k'atun* period-endings, and they might have acknowledged the existence of a 256-year cycle. Rice's interpretation of its significance regarding political histories, however, falls short. Shortfalls in the inscribed dates and events discussed are not the only weaknesses. There are issues of how such ritual 'capitals' were built and maintained. Did people flock to centres because of a priest-king, or because there were plentiful resources with which to sustain one's family? By not discussing the people, Rice leaves herself open to criticisms of supporting the out-dated 'vacant centre' model. In addition to calendrics, the written record also details military history; kings and their noble underlings captured other kings for public sacrifice – how would this fit

into the model of the ritual seat of power changing hands every 256 years? A brief mention that 'defeats' may be the result of competition for ritual seats does not address the role of warfare and politics adequately enough, especially if everything was preordained.

Occupational and political histories (e.g. sole *vs* group rulership) are quite different in the Postclassic northern and Classic southern lowlands; it seems that Rice has a tendency to mesh the two to suit a particular point (e.g. titles, dates, political systems and histories, or settlement hierarchy). Rice also explains Terminal Classic events at Tikal as a '*preordained reduction of activity in its architectural and iconographic programs*' (p. 152) rather than due to other causes supported by much stronger evidence, such as drought or political upheavals. How would the model explain the majority of southern lowland centres being completely abandoned by the end of the Terminal Classic (c. AD 950)? An interesting point Rice makes is the use of 'accession' *vs* 'seating' glyphs regarding the inauguration of kings (p. 93). There is some evidence, however, that 'seating' events might have taken place throughout a ruler's reign, sometimes at mythical places (Stuart 1995: 202).

In spite of the points made above, let us stress a positive aspect of Rice's book: it shakes us out of our Western perceptions of political (and ritual) histories. Rice ends her book by noting that we know little about Maya succession rules. While we must await a better-grounded or more substantiated explanation, we are nevertheless left with food for thought.

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ROBERT KILLICK & JANE MOON (ed.). *The Early Dilmun settlement at Saar* (London-Bahrain Archaeological Expedition Saar Excavation Report 3). xii+367 pages, 536 colour illustrations, tables. 2005.

Ludlow: Archaeology International; 0-9539561-1-3 hardback.

This volume, the third in the series of monographs published by the London-Bahrain Archaeological Expedition, concerns the results of the excavations carried out between 1990 and 1999 at the Early Dilmun settlement of Saar in northern Bahrain. It follows the publication of the Dilmun temple at Saar (Crawford, Killick & Moon 1997) and the Early Dilmun seals at Saar (Crawford 2001).

The settlement publication is structured as follows: Saar, Dilmun and the London-Bahrain Archaeological Expedition are introduced by the editors in Chapter 1; Chapters 2, 3 and 4 deal with the sequence and buildings (Robert Killick). Assemblage studies start with tools, weapons, utensils and ornaments (Jane Moon, Chapter 5), followed by pottery vessels in Chapters 6 and 7 (Robert Carter, Jane Moon). Animal bones and their relevance to the ecology and economy of Saar occupy Chapter 8 (Margarethe and Hans-Peter Uerpmann), and archaeometallurgy features in Chapter 9 (Lloyd Weeks and Ken Collerson). Wendy Matthews and Charles French report on the microstratigraphic evidence, while Peter Bush, Graham Evans and Emily Glover deal with geology (Chapters 10 and 11). Robert Killick and Jane Moon conclude with a chapter on social and economic organisation (Chapter 12). Appendices include a bibliography, lists of corporate, institutional and individual supporters, staff and volunteers, the Saar archive and ¹⁴C determinations.

Four thousand years ago the merchants of Bahrain (ancient Dilmun) had contacts far and wide from the Indus to the Euphrates, bartering and exchanging a wide range of commodities. The economic success of these trading ventures led to increased prosperity at home, where stone-built temples and settlements were established in the well-watered northern part of Bahrain by the start of the second millennium BC.

Over 70 buildings were excavated at the Saar settlement, some of which were extremely well preserved with walls standing to roof height. The development of the architecture is described and there are chapters on the contents of the buildings, the domestic installations, food remains, metal work, pottery and other household utensils. The Saar site is the only Early Dilmun settlement that has been extensively excavated by archaeologists, and as such it provides a valuable insight into the social and economic organisation of Bahrain during the Bronze Age. The

similarity of buildings, installations and finds does lead to some repetitiveness in the report. A short summary of the main characteristics of each building in a shaded box at the beginning of each relevant section alleviates the problem. Information on the location and distribution of household objects in each building are mentioned *en passant* and are not described systematically. This information will, however, be available in future within the online site archive.

There is a remarkable degree of similarity in building form and installation type at Saar. A striking feature of the settlement as a whole is that the buildings were constructed in rows, sharing communal walls: not a single building stands alone in the settlement. Built of uncoursed locally available rough limestone, the single-storey buildings contain rooms with ovens and hearths, plastered storage pits, benches and basins. Most buildings seem to have performed a similar domestic function. The microstratigraphic evidence demonstrates very distinctive characteristics within each room, changing within the space of 1-2m. The remarkable recurrence and similarity of the deposits within the two buildings studied suggests some regularity in spatial and social conventions amongst the Saar community.

A large proportion of the book is devoted to description of the archaeological deposits and their finds. It is a pity that not enough space was given to a detailed discussion of the wider significance of the Saar site in the concluding chapter. Did the term Dilmun apply to a much larger area than Bahrain including the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia? Although hints of economic and social relations between Saar and Qala'at al-Bahrain, the presumed capital of ancient Dilmun, are touched upon in the excellent pottery and animal bone chapters, there is no wider discussion of this key relationship. The interesting results of the metallurgical analysis provide an indication of the complexity of early metal exchange in the Gulf region which must have incorporated wide-ranging trade contacts.

Minor gripes are that it is not clear what the sizes of the scales are in some of the photographs, and there is no overall index. Standing aside these points, this volume sets a new precedent for standards of archaeological publication in the expanding field of Gulf archaeology. The monograph is handsomely produced and well designed. It makes good use of colour to illustrate archaeological plans which en-

hance our understanding of the spatial relationship between activities within the settlement. It is worth noting that a copy of the Saar electronic archive will be deposited with the UK-based Archaeological Data Service (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>) which should become available for online consultation in 2006.

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DONALD WHITCOMB. (ed.). *Changing social identity with the spread of Islam: archaeological perspectives* (Oriental Institute Seminars 1). x+101 pages, 45 figures. 2004. Chicago (IL): Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago; 1-885923-34-1 paperback \$17.95.

This book presents the results of a seminar held at the Oriental Institute in Chicago in May 2003 and includes an introduction by Donald Whitcomb along with five case studies from different regions of the Islamic world. In the first part of the introduction, Whitcomb discusses the problems of using archaeology to investigate conversion to Islam. The second part of the introduction contains brief commentaries on each of the papers presented in the volume and ends with a call for Islamic archaeology to enter the mainstream of modern archaeological study by developing theoretical frameworks.

A useful map on page 9 introduces the disparate location of the five case studies and also the immense size of the medieval Islamic world. Two of the case studies come from Africa (Gao and Shanga), though



separated by more than 2000 miles, two are from Palestine (Ascalon and Abu Suwana) and one from Central Asia (Samarkand). The first case study, by Jodi Magness, re-examines two rural Palestinian sites (Abu Suwana and Khirbet Ein 'Aneva) and proposes new dates (seventh to eighth centuries) for their occupation, based on her own ceramic chronology. Using these new dates, Magness posits a new type of rural architecture based on modular units which appeared soon after the Muslim Arab conquest of the seventh century. Although the dates suggested by Magness are convincing, her argument for modular architecture is less well developed and, as she admits, would benefit from a more systematic treatment.

The second case study, by Tracy Hoffman, is a discussion of the Islamic architecture of Ascalon which attempts to supplement the surprisingly meagre archaeological evidence from Islamic Ascalon with textual evidence, in particular a mid sixth century (i.e. pre-Islamic) legal text by Julian of Ascalon. Hoffman's interesting conclusion is that there appears to have been little difference between late Byzantine and early Islamic Ascalon. In other words, the changes in architecture and planning which Magness identified in rural Palestine are not evident in one of its largest cities, Ascalon.

Yury Karev's case study is again concerned with changes in architectural planning, though this time in the Central Asian city of Samarkand. Here Karev documents an increasing level of architectural planning in the early Islamic period (eighth century) both at a palatial level and within residential quarters of the city. Unfortunately Karev does not really discuss the issue of social identity with relationship to Islam; his observation that Samarkand lay between two major cultural blocks, Iran and China, suggests, however, that this would be a fruitful area of investigation.

The last two case studies discuss the archaeology of Islam in different parts of Africa from very different perspectives, though both authors come from similar backgrounds. Mark Horton's contribution (the fourth case study) presents his work in Shanga, an island site off the North Kenya coast, though his discussion ranges wider to consider the issue of Swahili identity. Horton's work is certainly one of the most interesting articles in the book, partly because of the many photographs and plans used in evidence, partly because of the incorporation of results from very recent fieldwork conducted after the seminar. One of

the most difficult problems discussed by Horton is the extent to which Swahili culture is either indigenous or Islamic. Certainly the evidence presented for the mosques at Shanga shows that Islam was present from the late eighth century and therefore has been a major component of Swahili culture for 1200 years. Horton's controversial discussion of the archaeological evidence for different sects within Islam is, on the other hand, less convincing.

The fifth case study, by Tim Insoll, focuses on the town of Gao next to the Niger river in Mali. Insoll argues in his introduction that archaeologists have too often been prepared to ignore religion as a structuring factor because archaeologists themselves tend to come from a secular tradition. Whilst this may be true for many archaeologists, many others have strong religious convictions – perhaps the problem is that many operate within a Christian cultural tradition which sees Islam as foreign or irrational. The material presented in the body of Insoll's paper is extremely interesting and provides a good insight into the potential of Islamic archaeology in West Africa.

One is left with the question of whether this book has done something more than present the result of research in diverse locations which happen to have been Islamic. Certainly in relation to sub-Saharan Africa this book has advanced the debate; for the other areas, more discussion is required before we can feel that Islamic archaeology has developed a real theoretical framework.

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HELEN WANG. *Money on the Silk Road: the evidence from eastern central Asia to c. AD 800, including a catalogue of the coins collected by Sir Aurel Stein*. xvi+308 pages, 8 b&w plates, 7 maps, 54 tables. 2004. London: British Museum Press; 0-7141-1806-0 paperback £65.

The 'Silk Road' is a significant construct in both the historical and historiographic sense and the name of Sir Aurel Stein is inextricably linked with it. Since his explorations, a vast body of research dealing with regions covered under the broad traverse of this construct has emerged. It concerns aspects of material culture, trade, religion and, most importantly, the syncretic elements that linked great civilisations such as the Hellenic, Persian, Scythian, Indian and Chinese

through interactions along the ancient networks collectively called the 'Silk Road'.

Helen Wang's contribution is a welcome addition, as it deals with a subject, though highly significant, that has attracted less attention. Money played a key role in the evolution of the networks, and understanding its presence and working over a broad chronological period helps to form a qualitative basis for 'Silk Road' studies involving economy, trading patterns, settlement, 'monetisation' and other uses of money. Coins constituted the predominant form of money on the 'Silk Road', and those collected by Sir Aurel Stein during his expeditions are particularly significant because they have well-documented provenances; this aspect can be used to develop a typology for coin finds that can serve as a tool for further studies. Wang concentrates on a particular geographic area (Eastern Central Asia) and her study focuses upon two salient elements – the Stein collection of coins in the British Museum and information on the use of money from other sources such as antiquarian expeditions (including Stein's own) and archaeological excavations.

The book could therefore be divided conveniently into two major sections: the first, divided into three parts ('Background, Sources and the Approach', 'The Numismatic Evidence' and 'The Documentary Evidence') deals with contextualisation and analysis of what the second section contains – a 'Catalogue of the Stein Collection of coins from Eastern Central Asia'. The book starts with a brief introduction to the 'Silk Road' and the importance of monetary studies. Numismatic aspects are discussed further in a section that categorises the coins from the Stein collection into groups belonging to 'Chinese', 'Western' and 'Local' traditions. The emphasis on numismatic tradition in classifying the coins makes this section comprehensive in taxonomic terms. Coins of the Banliang and Wuzhu types and those issued in the Wang Mang, Wei, Jin and Tang periods are described among those following the 'Chinese' tradition, while Parthian, Bactrian, Indian (Kushan), Roman and Byzantine coins are grouped as belonging to 'Western' traditions. The local coinages include the Sino-Kharoshthi issues and local lead coins from Khotan, 'Qiuci' coins modelled on the Wuzhu, and other varieties of coinages such as the Dali yuanbao, Jiazhong tongbao, Yuan and Zhong. Miscellaneous finds such as the Sino-Sogdian coins of the Turgesh tribe also feature here. Eight plates found at the end of the book illustrate a selection of the coins described.

A third section deals with ancillary documentary evidence on various aspects of money and its usage, including sources such as Chinese, Kharoshthi, Tocharian, Tibetan and Khotanese documents from a period ranging between *c.* first century BC and ninth century AD. This is a significant section where interdisciplinary approaches have been used to provide an excellent context for money use along the Silk Road. The conclusion marks the end of this analytical section and a bibliography is appended here.

Pages 125 to 286 are devoted to the catalogue of the Stein collection of coins from Eastern Central Asia in the British Museum. In part 1, the coins have been listed by their BM acquisition number, attribution (identification), weight and diameter, the means of acquisition (such as 'found', 'found at site', 'purchased at site', 'gift' etc.) and their acquisition or archaeological context. The last details appear as remarks; they are gathered from three lists of coins that Stein included as appendices to reports of his expeditions. These remarks are further elaborated upon in part 2, and the notes also provide Stein's interpretation of the numismatic evidence. A concordance of numbers that Stein used to list the coins with acquisition numbers of the British Museum follows these notes.

The book ends with seven maps of the regions under consideration, illustrative plates and an index. It brings a relatively under-researched and highly specialised aspect of Silk Road studies to scholarly attention and is undoubtedly a very significant contribution to Silk Road studies. It is recommended to every enthusiast in the field of Central and Inner Asian studies. It is also an important contribution to studies of Sir Aurel Stein. Helen Wang has accomplished a masterful task with the publication of this book and deserves to be congratulated for her achievement.

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TONY GOODWIN. *Arab-Byzantine Coinage (Study in the Khalili Collection Volume IV)*. 168 pages, numerous illustrations. 2005. London: The Nour Foundation; 1-97478-075-7 hardback £35.

This pioneering study, based on a thorough application of numismatic methods, sheds new light on early Islamic history, political geography and art,

where literary texts are silent. It will stimulate fruitful discussions on early Islamic iconography within the history of Islamic art.

Tony Goodwin begins with a summary of the state of research on early copper coins and coinages for Bilad al-Sham and the Diyar Mudar (Greater Syria and western Jazira) during the first five decades of Islamic rule before the decisive coinage reforms in 77-78 AH/AD 696-7. The body of the study consists of three in-depth studies of coinages from Ba'labakk, Iliya (Jerusalem) and Yubna (Yavneh), and two brief ones of Ludd (Lod) and of a group of Palestinian pseudo-Byzantine coins. The studies are based on an unprecedented number of coins in each case: Ba'labakk (87 coins), Iliya (45 coins) and Yubna (172 coins).



For the crucial period that saw the rise of the Arab-Islamic state from AD 622 to the end of the seventh century, almost all early literary sources date to the late eighth and ninth century; thus they reflect the later prevailing Islamic theology and law. Moreover, according to present knowledge, very little information within the rising Islamic theology and in particular its religious symbols seems to be firm and established in the first century of Islam. Coins therefore represent, excepting a few other non-literary documents, the only contemporary and continuous source for the study of the formation of the Islamic state and civilisation.

Explanations of methods and analyses, such as flan-preparation, style, die-comparison, analysis of overstriking, countermarks and hoard evidence are provided. One critical remark is appropriate in this respect: the mode and the median or the weight below which 90-95 per cent of all measured weights fall, are more meaningful for the search of an unknown intended weight standard than the average weight applied here. The overview establishes a practical terminology, reflecting current knowledge: the first phase corresponds to imports of Byzantine coppers up to *c.* AD 658; the second refers to imitations

of these coins without meaningful legends, called pseudo-Byzantine coins, dated to *c.* AD 650-670; the third phase consists of Umayyad Imperial Image coins depicting a Byzantine emperor, but now with meaningful administrative legends either in Greek or in Arabic; and the fourth comprises coins with the Standing Figure/Caliph used until the introduction of epigraphic coin types by Abd al-Malik in the year 77 AH/AD 696. The accepted view is that this fourth phase started in Bilad al-Sham in 74 AH/AD 693-4 together with the introduction of similar dated gold coins. Goodwin challenges this view, with far reaching implications: an Islamic iconography might have been applied in the Jund Filastin prior to this date in the second half of the 680s.

The analysis of the early production of Ba'labakk is based on a comparison of dies of about 1000 specimens of Umayyad Imperial Image coins. The most interesting result concerns mint organisation in the military district of Damascus, to which Ba'labakk belonged. After operating independently, a kind of cooperation between mints can be observed. Either the mint of Ba'labakk was closed down and the coins for Ba'labakk were produced in Damascus or – and this possibility is not discussed – only the die production in Ba'labakk ceased and dies were cut in Damascus and sent to Ba'labakk. The mints in Damascus and Ba'labakk were again operating independently in the period of the Standing Caliph.

For the mints of Iliya and Yubna, Goodwin argues that the production of an Islamic iconography – that of the Standing Figure copper types – seems to have begun prior to 74 AH/AD 693-4. This date is believed to be that of the introduction of the Standing Caliph/Symbol on Steps type. Two arguments are brought into play. First, the type from Iliya, Yubna and Ludd is different, its reverse shows the minuscule 'm', usually typical of the Umayyad Imperial Image coppers. The Standing Figure on the obverse is similar, but in some features distinct from the Standing Caliph type. Secondly, and this is Goodwin's main argument, one Yubna coin of this series shares the same reverse die with an Imperial Image coin; thus the Yubna Standing Figure type started when the Umayyad Imperial Image types were current (p. 109). The same is proposed for Iliya and Ludd.

It is crucial for this interpretation to establish whether the local Standing Figure/m emission of Iliya, Yubna and Ludd is contemporary with the

Standing Caliph/Symbol on Steps type of all other mints or whether the Standing Figure/m type precedes it. Goodwin argues convincingly that the striking of the Standing Figure/m type may have started after AD 685 and before 74 AH/AD 693-4. Yet he also believes that the two types of standing images are contemporary (p. 93), as the Standing Caliph/Symbol on Steps type was never minted in the three named cities. But the possibility that only one of the types antedates the year 74 AH/AD 693-4 should not be dismissed lightly. Finally, the Standing Figure/m type might have continued to be struck after 74 AH/AD 693-4.

Who is represented on the Iliya/Yubna/Ludd type? The figure is accompanied by the inscription 'Muhammad is the messenger of God (*Muhammad rasul Allah*)'. In the Yubna series, the Standing Figure wears a halo on some dies, which in late Roman iconography indicates divinity. Considering the possibility of an image of Muhammad (p. 93, 110), Goodwin decides cautiously for a variation of the Standing Caliph type, which he believes to be contemporary. However, a reading of coin iconography and accompanying inscription in the late Roman, Byzantine and Sasanian tradition would suggest the first possibility. But this contradicts later Islamic theology as we know it from the eighth century onwards. In any case, it is a period of experimentation with new symbols and forms of state and religion. We know that Jerusalem was a particular centre for that, as the somewhat later Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (AD 691-2) proves (p. 149). It should also be considered that in AD 692 the emperor Justinian II introduced the image of Christ accompanied by an invocation of Christ on Byzantine gold coinage. A different interpretation as to who is represented by the Standing Figure would be strengthened, if the Iliya, Yubna and Ludd type preceded the Standing Caliph/Symbol on Steps type.

Yubna was hitherto regarded as a minor mint, because of the scarcity of surviving coins as well as the unsophisticated flan preparation and striking. The study revealed an unexpectedly high number of 47 obverse and 42 reverse dies for the Iliya/Yubna/Ludd type in a group of only 172 coins, quite within the range of the contemporary Umayyad Imperial Image coinage from the much more important city of Ba'labakk (48 obverse, 49 reverse). Goodwin explains – with necessary caution – such an extended coin production in a secondary city as possibly the result of military unrest in the wake of the Zubayrid

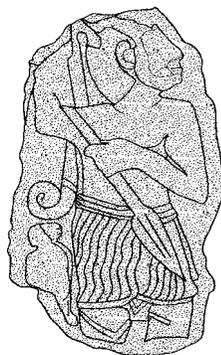
rebellion and suspected military activity in Yubna during the 680s (p. 148), a conflict which, according to the author, might also bring about the transfer of the mint of Ba'labakk to Damascus.

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BRUCE ROUTLEDGE. *Moab in the Iron Age: hegemony, polity, archaeology*. xvii+312 pages, 35 figures, 6 tables. 2004. Philadelphia (PA): University of Pennsylvania Press; 0-8122-3801-X hardback \$55 & £36.

When Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, he knew he would never enter the Promised Land. However, as Deuteronomy 34:1-10 relates, he had already selected Joshua to lead the tribes on the final leg of their journey. It was enough for Moses to look out across the Jordan and view the rich tapestry of awaiting territory from Dan in the north to Beersheva in the south. Like Joshua, Bruce Routledge leads the reader from the



traditional confines of historical (biblical) archaeology in one area of the Holy Land, to the most current lofty heights of hard-core theoretical archaeology. The geographic focus of Routledge's study is the territory immediately east of the Dead Sea in modern Jordan, a mostly semi-arid and arid region known since the Iron Age (c. 1200–500 BC) as Moab, containing isolated pockets of relatively well-watered Mediterranean land suitable for rain-fed dry farming. Moab was a very important player – perhaps the most important of the contemporary Transjordan polities (Ammon, Moab and Edom) – that interacted with the emerging Israelite and Judean states west of the Jordan River. With some of the most important extra-biblical inscriptional evidence from a neighbouring polity, the archaeology of Moab provides an important benchmark for testing both historical and anthropological models of the past. For, it is during the Iron Age that the first historical state level societies emerged in the southern Levant (today

Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian territories, southern Syria and Lebanon and the Sinai Peninsula).

Routledge's wish is to communicate with two specific audiences: on the one hand, those specialists interested in historical 'Moab', the 'Iron Age' and the southern Levant, and on the other those scholars whose eyes light up when they hear words like 'hegemony', 'polity', 'Hegel' and 'Nietzsche'. In other words, Routledge's broad aims are: 1) to apply some of the most contemporary developments in post-processual archaeology to the archaeological record of the southern Levant; 2) to utilise (providing his own translations) ancient textual data from the region pertinent to the Iron Age; and 3) to arrive at new and insightful anthropological models concerning Iron Age state formation. The question is whether Bruce Routledge achieves this with a stunning victory like Joshua's victories in Canaan, as portrayed in the Book of Joshua; in this scenario, Routledge would vanquish all preceding explanatory models for the rise of the Moabite kingdom. Or are Routledge's achievements in the archaeology of secondary state formation a more subtle victory, like the description of Joshua and the Israelites in the Book of Judges where many of the Canaanites (or processual archaeologists) are left in peace to coexist with the newcomers?

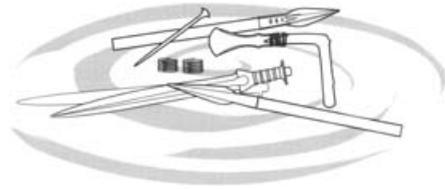
Moab in the Iron Age is bursting with good ideas, excellent summaries of the existing scholarly literature, and new insights on important textual data. However, many of Routledge's ideas are clouded by his adoption of post-modern rhetoric. While reading the book, I found myself asking just how necessary it was for the author to use heavy jargon to convey ideas about the nuances of power negotiation in ancient societies that existed on the periphery of the great empires of the first millennium BC? Just how in debt is Routledge to the ideas of Nietzsche or Gramsci to explain what really happened in Iron Age Moab? What really gives shelf-life to a book concerning archaeology are the data on which models are built. That is why Levantine archaeologists today continue to cite the works of Sir Flinders Petrie. Theories come and go; data has staying power. This book may in fact be the best regional synthesis of Iron Age Moab to date. However, more archaeological data from Moab might have been synthesised and published to bolster the models presented by Routledge. Mapping settlement patterns showing the ranking of sites by size and archaeological period would have helped to demonstrate the nuances in power relations on the ground during the late second–first millennia BC that

are at the heart of Routledge's study. This criticism should not deflect from the fact that anyone doing Iron Age archaeology in Jordan will have to read this book.

Rather than a heavy-handed post-processual victory 'creaming' earlier processualist explanatory models for the rise of the Transjordanian Iron Age complex societies, Routledge's achievement is more nuanced. One of the reasons for this is that the application of anthropological models to help explain secondary state formation in Iron Age Jordan (and the southern Levant as a whole) is still in its infancy. In the early 1990s Axel Knauf and then LaBianca & Younker (1995) were amongst the first to suggest the centrality of 'tribalism' in the formation of the Transjordanian Iron Age states. More recently, Bienkowski & van der Veen (2001) fleshed out, for late Iron Age Edom, many of the elements of tribal social relations that may have promoted increases in social complexity. While Routledge argues against such social evolutionary approaches, the jury is still out as to the utility of 'tribal' or what most anthropological archaeologists today would feel more comfortable referring to as 'segmentary society' models of social organisation. When Routledge admirably presents his new translation of the unique ninth century BC Mesha Inscription or 'Moabite Stone' discovered in Transjordan in 1868 and deconstructs it, he relies heavily on the notion of social segmentation that lies at the root of 'tribal' societies. It seems that, in spite of the nuanced environmental differences between the regions of Moab, Ammon and Edom, it is impossible for researchers to ignore the power of social segmentation in these semi-arid and arid lands.

Routledge argues persuasively against slapping social evolutionary models of band-tribe-chieftdom-state on to the archaeological data (something that the processual archaeologists noted above do not, in fact, do) and for the utility of taking an historical contextual approach to Iron Age state formation which parses out some of the unique local variables that shaped social power. Thus, Routledge has in fact brought the Iron Age archaeology of Jordan's Moab region into the Promised Land of global anthropological anthropology. However, like in the Book of Judges, Routledge's theoretical model will have to coexist with a wide range of competing paradigms concerning the nature of secondary state formation including 'tribal states' (La Bianca & Younker 1995; Levy 2004) 'patrimonial states' (Schloen 2001), 'ethnic states' (Joffe 2002) and others. That said, Bruce Routledge

is to be congratulated for producing a book that speaks to both local Levantine archaeologists as well as those scholars on the world scene interested in archaeological theory.



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DAVID R. FONTIJN. *Sacrificial landscapes: cultural biographies of persons, objects and ‘natural’ places in the Bronze Age of the southern Netherlands, c. 2300-600 BC* (Analecta Praehistorica Leidensia 33/34). xvii+392 pages, 120 figures, 59 tables. 2002. Leiden: University of Leiden Faculty of Archaeology; 90-73368-19-7 (ISSN 0169-7447) paperback €50.

The deposition of metal objects in northern Europe during the Bronze Age has attracted the interest of scholars since the birth of modern archaeology. How come that bronze objects were deposited in huge quantities in marshes, rivers and burials instead of being recycled? With this book, David Fontijn has made an important contribution to this discussion.

The first part of the book starts with a critical assessment of earlier attempts to deal with the problem of bronze deposition in northern Europe. One way of approaching the problem is to regard the

deposited objects as temporary stores that, for any number of reasons, were forgotten or unretrieved; others have interpreted the very same objects as ritual deposits, i.e. objects that were withdrawn from circulation as part of a ritual act.

Even though these two approaches are often conceived as opposites, they are – according to Fontijn – variations of a single common theme: an understanding of the bronze deposits in economic terms. Bronze objects are ascribed a prestige value by the great majority of scholars and, consequently, ritual deposition was a strategy used by an elite to reduce the amount of objects in circulation and thus maintain the prestige value of metal items. In this model, offerings are understood within an economic explanatory framework.

However, both approaches lack an understanding of why different objects were treated differently. How come that some items ended up in rivers while others were deposited in graves? Here Fontijn introduces a third approach – the notion of biography. Following the American sociologist Igor Kopytoff, he argues that different objects had different culturally desirable life-paths; that is, how an object was treated at one moment of time depended upon what had happened to the object earlier in its history.

The second part of the book is devoted to a comprehensive survey of the metal objects in northern Belgium and the southern Netherlands in the period 2300-600 BC. Emphasis is on how the objects were produced, used and deposited. The deposition pattern is summarised in tables that are easy to follow and understand. For those who want to go into details, there are several appendices that account for use traces patina and find contexts. References to further reading are also found there. These appendices are valuable to anyone with a research interest in the metal objects of Bronze Age Europe.

The third and last part of the book is a discussion of how the deposition of bronze objects is to be understood from a biographic perspective. Fontijn’s analysis suggests that different objects had different

life histories and were therefore treated differently. The use and function of the objects, their various symbolic meanings and their final deposition in the landscape are linked by this biographic perspective. Moreover, an object could change meaning and status during its life-course. An axe could for example start as a commodity and end up as a gift. From this viewpoint, David Fontijn challenges the traditional distinction between temporary stores and ritual deposits and successfully demonstrates the great potential of the biographic approach to generate new interpretations regarding Bronze Age deposition practice.

The book covers a range of issues, and many well-founded interpretations are presented. Dichotomies such as personal identity represented by ornaments/weapons and communal identity represented by axes are used. The distinction seems logical and similar interpretations have been made earlier. However, if the biographic perspective is used as a starting point, such dichotomies become problematic, since persons or objects can acquire several different identities during their life – and hence various identities can coexist in the same object.

The book discusses at great length those places in the landscape where the objects were deposited. Simplified categories are avoided and the landscape is divided into different zones. My only criticism is that a discussion of the landscape as a space perceived by living people is lacking. A discussion of the location of finds and their symbolic relations to various local landscapes could add even more substance to the understanding of deposition practice. But firm foundations have been laid for such future analysis.

In conclusion, the book combines great theoretical insights with a sophisticated understanding of the empirical evidence, thus leading to new and interesting interpretations. Its strength is that it introduces concepts that are usable by those who are not satisfied with the traditional understanding of bronze objects as primarily prestige items. I can recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the production, circulation and deposition of metal items in the Bronze Age of northern Europe.

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O. BUCHSENSCHUTZ, A. BULARD, M.-B. CHARDENOUX & N. GINOUX (ed.). *Décors, images et signes de l'âge du Fer européen. Actes du XXVI^e colloque de l'Association Française pour l'étude de l'âge du Fer, Paris et Saint-Denis, 9-12 mai 2002 – thème spécialisé* (Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France Suppl. 24). 280+i pages, 263 b&w & colour figures, 7 tables. 2003. Tours: FERACE; 2-913272-09-6 (ISSN 1159-7151) paperback €30 +p&t.

'It is not what you say, but the manner in which one says it which counts'. Thus the last author in this collection of

essays on new approaches to Iron Age art provocatively quotes Flaubert. The volume, based on a conference held in May 2002 at Saint-Denis near Paris, seeks to avoid an aesthetic manner of expression and replace it with alternatives. The alternatives presented in this volume are focused towards deciphering images.

Their overall aim is varied: to construct a systematic language of art by various means leading to new interpretations, to look at innovations, their development and the verbalisation of images, to define a decorative grammar, and to attempt to move from qualitative appreciation towards cultural and regional interpretation.

The first section looks at the origins and chronological development of signs. The first contribution, by Gomez de Soto, investigates the development of signs in pottery of Hallstatt Gaul. The second, by Adam, has a similar perspective but concentrates on metalwork at the transition from Hallstatt to La Tène, emphasising the Italian connection in its development. The third essay, by Delnef, addresses the intriguing theme of the depiction of vases in Iron Age art, constructing a typology of their associations and context in a pleasingly different slant on artistic representation of art within art.

At this stage, the volume moves to a more theoretical approach, towards a semiological study of abstract art. The first article in this section reinterprets what has often previously been considered mere decoration as communication, by examining transformations and developments in motifs from decorated swords found principally in France and Italy. The following paper takes a similar approach to the study of pottery, by identifying decorative motifs, looking at their



Review

combination, and following their spatial representation in the Aisne-Marne region. It is the contention of the next article that the form of vessels is not reducible to mere functionality but can also contain particular meanings, a decorative grammar developed in parallel with other materials such as wood and metal. After a further ceramic study, attention is switched to other resources – coral, coinage and metal-working – investigating the interrelationship between craftsmanship and the form of the decorated object. The greatest constraint is applied by the form of coinage, yet despite limited space, great invention and transformation of motifs can be traced through time and across geographical space. Following a regional analysis of art in Bohemia, there is an interesting technical article on how a pair of compasses was used to trace the decoration on La Tène *phalerae* in the Champagne.

The two following articles stand apart for their supra-regional interest and analysis of modes of embodiment across regional boundaries. Guillaumet, in the first article, recalling recent exhibitions in Germany, looks at the issue of cross-legged figures found from Amboise to the Glauberg and presents a catalogue of 17 finds, the essential preliminary to their interpretation, in his assessment as ancestors. The second article, by Arcelin and Rapin, considers the representation of the human form in southern Gaul, proposing a useful definition of the forms of representation – heads, warrior heroes, *orantes* – and a four-stage development which effectively covers the dimension of space (including links outside Gaul) as well as time. It is worth examining the volume simply for the way these two articles bring together old and recent information in ways that provoke new interpretations.

After two regional analyses of Brittany and the Carpathians and a more detailed examination of a La Tène cemetery from lower Austria, the volume closes with the most theoretical contribution, by Ginoux, from where the Flaubert quotation is taken. This article draws on approaches to the famous Mšecké Žahrovice head to illustrate the diversity of response to an iconic image, before proposing an interlinked analysis of language, iconology and formal analysis of art, in three stages, moving from identification to interpretation.

This volume successfully presents a range of manners of addressing interesting art-related issues. Its audience will be principally those who specialise

in the Iron Age, but scholars of other periods will find much of interest in the range of approaches presented. This great range, from the study of local detail to cross-regional interpretation, from technical analysis to theoretical discussion, shows the enormous potential the Iron Age data can provide and the vibrancy of current approaches to their study.

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GEORGE LAMBRICK & TIM ALLEN. *Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire: the development of a prehistoric and Romano-British community* (Thames Valley Landscape Monograph 21). xix+520 pages, 171 figures, 31 plates, 120 tables. 2004. Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology/Oxford Archaeology; 0-947816-66-6 hardback £34.95.

The publication of this classic rescue excavation, producing fundamentally significant evidence for the development of one particular area of the Upper Thames Valley in southern Britain from the third millennium BC to the first millennium AD, represents a significant landmark in the study of British later prehistoric and Roman archaeology. It is an important addition to the extensive information for Iron Age settlement in the region, building upon 30 years of excavation by Oxford Archaeology. It demonstrates how detailed archaeological work, including targeted environmental analysis, can provide a highly informative understanding of a past community and landscape. The excavation at Gravelly Guy took place during the 1980s and several interim reports have appeared since; but it is only with the publication of this substantial and excellently produced volume that it is possible to fully assess the significance of the project. The evidence for extensive organisation of the landscape and apparent continuity in the use of this land for well over a millennium is convincing and makes this report groundbreaking.



The most significant aspect of this site is the dramatic evidence for the evolution of an extensive area of landscape that involves a whole series of discrete monuments and settlements over an area comparable in size to a medieval parish (p. 483). The subtitle of the volume, *The development of a prehistoric and Romano-British community*, suggests that there was an essential continuity in the organisation of this landscape from the Bronze Age to the early Roman period. While monument types change – from the ritual structures of the Neolithic and early Bronze Age to the settlements of the Iron Age – the fundamental basis of land organisation appears to have survived relatively unchanged.

The extensive complex of prehistoric and Roman monuments and sites, of which Gravelly Guy is one element, forms a territory of about one square kilometre, close to the medieval and modern village of Stanton Harcourt (Figures 12.1 and 12.2). This area is defined by streams and gravel terraces, and during the Neolithic/early Bronze Age a major henge monument, the Devil's Quoits (whose excavation has already been published), was built close to its centre. A scatter of ring-ditches, representing the remains of burial monuments, subsequently developed around the henge. A number of these Neolithic/Bronze Age monuments were excavated at Gravelly Guy and the details of these are included in this volume. During the late Bronze Age and early to middle Iron Age, these ancestral monuments were respected, as a series of at least nine small unenclosed settlements developed around the periphery of the territory. The communities in the individual settlements probably exploited a common area of pasture in the centre that incorporated the earlier monument (p. 483). This evidence is taken by the excavators to suggest that earlier prehistoric land-use rights were embedded in the later prehistoric settlement landscape (p. 491). The arable land cultivated by the individual Iron Age settlements would appear to have lain just outside the territory defined by the settlement ring and was, presumably, exploited separately by the families within each settlement.

Many of the distinct areas of Iron Age and Roman settlement of the Stanton Harcourt complex are poorly understood, some having been destroyed by gravel extraction. But the work at Gravelly Guy enabled one of the constituent sites to be interpreted in detail: its excavators argue that various features of the early/middle Iron Age settlement can be taken to represent five or six distinct households

(p. 155). The report provides a summary of the structural evidence and finds from these households, including evidence for 'special deposits'. In the late Iron Age the settlement transfers across the boundary of the communal central pasture area in a remarkable manner, implying a deliberate encroachment onto the communal resource.

The careful excavation of Gravelly Guy and other sites in the neighbourhood suggests considerable continuity in organisation through time, with individual periods of change. During the late Iron Age and early Roman period, the landscape was transformed as individual settlements and their associated arable fields encroached upon the central pasture and Neolithic/Bronze Age monuments were flattened. Although this may suggest that the communal pasture was being alienated, some respect for ancestral rights to this land may have persisted (p. 492). Over a millennium and a half of continuity in the area appears to have broken down during the second or third century AD, when the settlement at Gravelly Guy was finally abandoned.

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NIGEL JONES, MARK WALTERS & PAT FROST.
Mountain and orefields: metal mining landscapes of mid and north-east Wales (CBA Research Report 142). xvi+192 pages, 140 figures. 2004. York: Council for British Archaeology; 1-902771-47-8 paperback £19.95.

This volume forms the publication of a series of 1990s field surveys of metal mines and mining landscapes, in what were then the counties of Clwyd and Powys, occupying the north-east quadrant of Wales. It is well-produced, well-illustrated, well-edited, and well-priced; the only technical criticism is that more use of colour (confined to the cover) might have improved the presentation and given a better 'feel' of the landscapes involved. Unlike most British 'mining history' literature, this volume is firmly archaeological in approach and illustrates the use of professional archaeological survey on mining sites; the methodology relies on EDM measured survey and aerial photography with limited building recording; the historical background is taken (with full acknowledgement) from the works of mining historians such as David Bick and George Hall. After

a brief introduction, the volume consists of four chapters.

Chapter 1 contains geological, historical and technological background. In mid-Wales (Powys), the veins (of lead, zinc and copper ores) are hosted by crumpled Ordovician and Silurian deep-sea sediments, forming virtually-unsettled uplands of heather moor and modern forestry. Although not brought out in the text, most of these mines form the eastern side of the larger mid-Wales orefield, whose remainder lies in the former county of Dyfed outside the study area. In north-east Wales (Clwyd), by contrast, the majority of mines (including all of those surveyed for the project) lie within the Flintshire/Denbighshire orefield, where veins of lead and zinc ores (not 'silver ores', at least at macroscopic level – the silver is an impurity in the lead ore, recovered by cupellation from the smelted lead) are hosted by gently-dipping carboniferous limestone, forming upland pasture with a reasonable amount of settlement. This orefield lacks surface water but lies close to the North Wales coalfield and the industry and transport of the Dee estuary, whereas most of the mid-Wales orefield has abundant surface water, but is remote from coal, transport and industry.

Chapters 2 and 3 are case-studies of individual mines in mid- and north-east Wales respectively. The mid-Wales sample includes the Bronze Age workings at Nant yr Eira, and the multi-period workings with hushing at Craig-y-Mwyn and Pen Dylife; the former in particular forms a major and dramatic site, with the water channels and hush dams used to form a massive (seventeenth century?) hushed opencast, under which later underground workings have been driven. Remaining sites are largely nineteenth-early twentieth century in date. In north-east Wales, no site evidence has yet been identified for Roman (or earlier) mining, although inscribed pigs of lead and excavation evidence for smelting sites near the orefield show that a Roman mining industry remains to be located. Many of the sites, notably Halkyn Mountain, form extensive medieval-eighteenth century earthwork landscapes of multiple small shafts and spoil tips, with horse-gin winding circles, small buildings and some ore-dressing areas, overlain by varying extents by nucleated and mechanised nineteenth-twentieth century workings. The difference between these workings and those from mid-Wales, and the similarities between north-eastern Wales and English limestone orefields such as Derbyshire and the Mendips, are notable; at the same time, no evidence has been identified for the flat-

buddle ore-dressing areas so common in Derbyshire, nor for the massive medieval 'mineries' (ore-dressing and smelting areas) of the Mendips.

Chapter 4, 'Managing Mining Landscapes', discusses conservation issues, albeit briefly. Mining landscapes are seen as lessons on environmental issues. A few sites in both study areas have been excavated and actively conserved, and guided trails and display boards have been put in at others. Threats from afforestation and land reclamation are seen as much reduced; the degree of later-twentieth century destruction of heritage and local distinctiveness from (in many cases) unnecessary reclamation stands out to this reviewer, and could have been more strongly emphasised.

The volume as a whole is an important contribution to the archaeology of mining. It is arguably the first widely-disseminated regional corpus from the UK (since the pioneering and invaluable surveys of the Cornwall Archaeological Unit have concentrated in more detail on smaller areas, and are little known outside Cornwall); its publication should be a wake-up call to English mining regions such as the Mendips, Derbyshire, the Yorkshire Dales and the North Pennines to do likewise – and of course to colleagues in the major Continental orefields. At the same time, it shares the weaknesses of 1990s mining archaeology, still overwhelmingly processual in its underlying interests and assumptions. The underground landscape is totally omitted, and so (virtually) is smelting. There is little comparison with other Welsh or English mining landscapes, and no broader academic discussion of issues such as Welsh and English cultural influences (a crying omission in Flintshire, where the political and cultural history is so complex), the archaeological visibility of mining law and other social and tenurial factors (as Martin Roe is demonstrating in Yorkshire, for example), or the role of mining in the broader social, settlement and agricultural archaeology of the study areas. There is still much to do!

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GÉRARD CHOUQUER & FRANÇOIS FAVORY.
L'arpentage romain: histoire des textes, droit, techniques.
491 pages, 174 figures. 2001. Paris: Errance; 2-87772-216-3 € 42.68.

The *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum* is one of those literary by-products of the Greco-Roman world – if



literary is the right word – which is at once fascinating and frustrating. It is a hotch-potch of technical treatises on land surveying by authors otherwise unknown (except perhaps for Frontinus), difficult to date individually and collectively, sometimes fragmentary, couched in generally

woeful Latin, and often badly corrupted textually. But it contains unique material of the highest interest, could we but tease it all out.

The oldest manuscript – the Arcerianus of the late fifth century, heavily illustrated with miniatures – is old indeed. While its general tenor was always recognisable, much of the background and the detail long remained incomprehensible. Aerial photography and inscriptions gradually clarified the picture, and Dilke (1971) was a turning-point in *Corpus* studies. In recent decades the pace of research has accelerated, and now within a single year three books have appeared on Roman surveying, too close in time for any of the authors to have consulted the others. Campbell (2000) supplies the first complete English translation of the majority of the texts, together with a commentary. Lewis (2001) discusses the instruments available to the surveyors. And Chouquer and Favory, under review here, offer an overview of the whole subject.

Theirs is in effect a handbook or a companion to the *Corpus*. They tell how, from far back in Republican days, conquered lands were divided into grids (the famous centuriation), how the plots were assigned to settlers, and all the many complexities of land tenure. They dwell on the *formae*, or maps, which resulted and discuss the most famous surviving example, the Orange cadasters. They deal with surveying instruments, though briefly; uncertainties still remain about exactly how the *groma*, much the most widely used and still the only one attested archaeologically, actually worked in practice. They explain orientation, and alignments, and the geometry which underpinned the setting-out of boundaries and the calculation of areas, though without much historical discussion of the geometrical and mathematical tradition. They examine boundary marks, the legal and administrative intricacies of

maintaining accurate land registers, and the role of surveyors as arbitrators in disputes.

All this is highly useful. But perhaps Chouquer and Favory's most original contribution lies in the *raison d'être* of the *Corpus*. They discuss the identities and dates of the various authors and plausibly conclude that the collection was assembled earlier than is usually assumed. They argue that it represents the Flavian and Trajanic response to the chaos of AD 69, the Year of the Four Emperors when, especially in Italy, land was grabbed in a free-for-all and, at the same time, central and local records were destroyed. The period between about AD 70 and 120, it seems, saw a systematic attempt to reconstitute the lost archives, to return land to its rightful owners, and (no doubt most important) to restore public finances by putting the payment of land taxes back on a proper footing. Thus the main treatises in the *Corpus*, with their very different approaches, were written by specialists to meet a particular need; and not surprisingly this basic collection attracted later additions all the way down to late antiquity.

The book ends with 174 illustrations of miniatures from the manuscripts and explanatory diagrams. The appendices give a detailed listing of topics in the sources under 47 headings, a valuable glossary of no fewer than 1300 technical terms, and a list of the passages from the *Corpus* translated in the text. All three serve as an index to the treatises, but sadly, in line with French practice, there is no index to the book itself.

Land surveying and engineering surveying are not the same thing, and there is virtually nothing here on how Roman engineers laid out, for example, their roads and aqueducts. Nor should there be, for the *Corpus* is silent on these matters. Its subject, so well illuminated by Chouquer and Favory, is the work, otherwise largely unsung, of a different kind of specialist; work that was less obvious and more mundane but yet utterly essential, for it underlay the day-to-day administration of the Roman Empire.

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JOANITA VROOM. *After Antiquity: ceramics and society in the Aegean from the 7th to the 20th century A.C. A case study from Boeotia, Central Greece* (Archaeological Studies Leiden University 10). 412 pages, 187 figures, 5 maps. 2003. Leiden: Faculty of Archaeology; 90-76368-10-4 €40.00.

One important outgrowth of the proliferation of regional studies in the Aegean in the past twenty years is



an increasing interest in the medieval and early modern periods previously little explored by archaeologists and considered the more-or-less exclusive preserve of the textual or documentary historian. In keeping with their explicitly diachronic 'brief' to cover

all periods from earliest prehistory to the present, such projects experienced some difficulties in dealing with post-Roman periods. First, post-Roman ceramics have been systematically understudied in comparison to their Roman or earlier Greek equivalents (although studies by John Hayes or Haralambos Bakirtzis, for example, stand out as exceptions). Second, the emphasis on text-based history in these periods is somewhat at odds with the broadly Braudelian intellectual framework within which many regional projects in the Aegean have worked, emphasising long-term change (the *longue durée*). There was a need to combine systematic study of post-Roman ceramics from well-defined archaeological contexts with a redefinition of an approach to later periods that makes use of archaeological data in conjunction with available texts. This book, Vroom's Leiden doctoral thesis, represents her attempt to realise these goals; her aim is to use the systematic study of a body of material derived from archaeological survey to elucidate economic activity and changing cultural practices between the seventh and the twentieth centuries in Boeotia, central Greece.

The book pursues this dual goal in five parts. Part I introduces the problems of studying post-

Roman ceramics and summarises prior research and the current state of our knowledge. In chapter 1, the author proposes a periodisation spanning the third to the twentieth centuries that reflects meaningful changes in ceramic technology and style, rather than historical events (Table 1.1, p. 28). Chapter 2 charts the history of the study of post-Roman ceramics in the Aegean, with a summary of classifications by previous scholars in an appendix. An overview of the major sources of material published or currently under study, Chapter 3, is a particularly useful source for information about what post-Roman material has been studied and where.

In Part II, the longest section of the book, we move onto the Boeotian case study. Vroom first outlines the context in which the ceramics under study were collected, namely the Boeotia Project, directed by John Bintliff and Anthony Snodgrass. The project had collected about 12 000 pieces of post-Roman ceramics from a total of 74 sites within the survey region (Table 5.1, p. 88). From these, Vroom identified 2779 diagnostic fragments, from a sub-set of 30 sites (Table 5.2, p. 88), ranging in size from 'small' (9), through 'medium' (14) to 'large' (7) (using the Boeotia project's size criteria, unfortunately not made explicit here). Twenty-two of these sites had multi-period occupation; twenty had been sampled intensively, ten selectively (by 'grab sample'). The next three chapters take us from a catalogue of the collected material from the 30 sites, through a detailed presentation of the 48 ceramic types (or 'wares', in Vroom's terminology; Table 6.1, p. 136), to a concluding summary charting the changes in the ceramic repertoire in the region over the period under study.

Parts III and IV bring us to a level of analysis that seeks to use the ceramic data to explore broader questions. In Chapters 8-10 Vroom draws on models for the relationship between ceramic assemblages proposed by Hugo Blake and Clive Orton in the 1970s and 1980s, ultimately situated within a Wallersteinian World-Systems framework, to sketch the economic environment in which ceramics were produced, distributed and consumed within Boeotia and beyond. There is enough material here for a book in itself and so the treatment appears somewhat superficial. Chapters 11 and 12 are more successful because they are focused more closely on consumption practices ('dining habits'), first in the Late Roman and Byzantine, then in the Ottoman and early Modern periods. Vroom draws on iconographic and textual evidence to suggest shifts in styles of dining, which she

then links to the material from Boeotia. She detects macro-scale shifts from communal (Late Roman – Byzantine) to individual or small-group (Late Byzantine/Frankish) dining, proposing a mixture from the sixteenth century onwards of ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ styles. At a more detailed level, the appearance, albeit in very small numbers, of the coffee cup and the tobacco pipe reflect important, culturally charged, innovations within Ottoman society.

Part V concludes with Vroom’s ‘integrated perspective’, an excellent summary of the overall arguments. A five-page summary in modern Greek is a welcome addition.

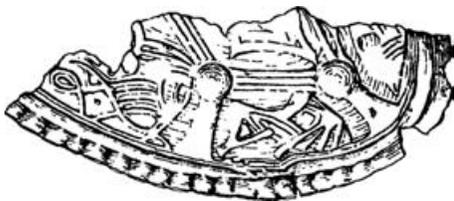
There is an element of evangelistic enthusiasm in Vroom’s writing that is not undeserved. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study of its kind in the Aegean to be published. Vroom acknowledges that many of her specific proposals might be modified in future, but she has certainly defined, by her example, a profitable approach to the study of medieval and early modern Greece, while also presenting a significant body of material.

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MOGENS BENCARD, AINO KANN RASMUSSEN & HELGE BRINCH MADSEN. *Ribe excavations 1970-76, Volume 5* (Jutland Archaeological Society Publication 46). 287 pages, 185 b&w & colour illustrations, tables. 2004. Moesgård: Jutland Archaeological Society; 87-88415-25-2 hardback DKr.248.

Excavations in the southern Jutlandic town of Ribe hold a special significance for the history of Scandinavian urbanism. The tree-ring date of



AD 704/10 for a timber-lined well associated with the first planned structures indicates an exceptionally early planned market place. Extrapolating perhaps a little too far, some commentators have taken this

as evidence for the existence of a unified Danish state from the early eighth century. It has also been suggested that if the development of international trading sites is a defining feature of Viking activity then Ribe provides further evidence that the start of the Danish Viking Age needs revising to a century earlier than its traditional AD 800 kick-off.

Much discussion of the urban sequence in Ribe has been based on interim reports of Stig Jensen’s 1990-1991 Post Office excavations. These have not yet been fully published, although all the excavations from 1984 onwards – 23 sites in all – are being published by Jensen’s collaborator, Claus Feveile; the first two volumes are expected in 2005-2006. However, major excavations also took place from 1970 to 1976, under Jensen’s predecessor as Director of Ribe Museum, Mogens Bencard. These have gradually been brought to full publication in a series of volumes of which this is the fifth. With the exception of a catalogue of the still outstanding 2000 items of glass and, we are informed, analysis of a ‘large amount of (calcified) dog turds’ (p. 16), the present volume completes the task of publishing the work of the 1970s.

The stratigraphic sequence was published in Volume 4; this volume mops up the key outstanding reports on the eighth- and ninth-century finds, notably the bronze, silver and lead artefacts (Karen Høilund Nielsen), the ironwork (Patrick Ottaway), the smithing debris (Helge Brinch Madsen), and the pottery (Hans Jørgen Madsen). Ribe is important for its bead manufacturing evidence, and although the report on the beads is still awaited (to the obvious frustration of the editors), Torben Sode has contributed an important discussion of the glass bead making technology. There is also a commentary by Marie Stoklund on the runic inscription found on a skull fragment, dated to the 720s – surely one of the earliest examples of Danish literacy – and a report by Flemming Rieck on an early anchor from Sct. Nicolaigade, compared to other early anchors. The volume begins with a contribution on the dating of a bronze casting workshop which is important for two reasons: first that it demonstrates that oval brooches were being cast in Ribe before AD 720, i.e. thirty years before their earliest dating in Scandinavian graves, and second that the recovery of Frisian style keys in the earliest levels shows that Frisian craftsmen and merchants were active in Ribe from the beginning. Was Ribe really founded by an unnamed early Jutish king, as is generally held, or was it the result of a consortium of Frisian merchants? Finally,

Review

the volume is completed by short reports on the few human remains, wooden objects and clay daub. Given the absence of any definable buildings from the excavation, the presence of daub from houses is important evidence for permanent timber structures.

The finds catalogues will provide important sources of comparison for all early medieval finds specialists, although several of the reports were submitted in the 1990s, and have not been updated since. This raises some interesting questions on how we publish urban archaeology, particularly when interim statements have already entered the secondary literature. Although a fascicule approach has its own problems, it is unfortunate that authors – and readers – have had to wait up to fifteen years from completion of their research before these primary data can be accessed.

For Viking scholars, however, it is probably the introduction by Bencard that holds most interest. In discussing the historiography of Ribe, Bencard does not hide his frustration that Danish writers have largely ignored Ribe Volume 4 (published 1990), preferring instead to cite Jensen's 1991 popular volume; his harshest words are reserved for Jensen himself who, in a 1998 report 'found room for all his own publications until 1991, but not even a reference to the volumes of Ribe Excavations 1970-76' (p. 8). For the student of archaeological politics this is an extraordinary case of 'battle by excavation report', although it is a charge to which – since his tragic death in 1998 – Stig Jensen is unable to respond. Nonetheless, after a detailed and valuable concordance between Jensen's phasing of the Post Office site, and his own phasing of the 1970-6 excavations, Bencard is able to conclude that he is in agreement with Feveile and Jensen's final dating. Each site goes through an identical build-up of layers, demonstrating that there was a similar sequence across the town. The earliest horizon on both sites is a layer of blown or drifting sand, no longer seen as deliberately deposited as once believed. The first ditch systems and workshops are then established in the period 704-722, securing an essential place for Ribe in the history of European medieval urbanism.

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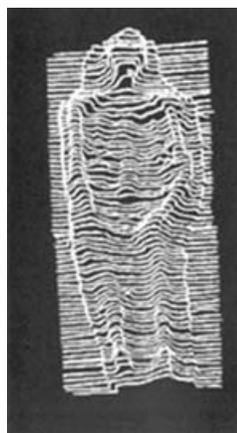
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GARY LOCK. *Using computers in archaeology: towards virtual pasts*. xv+300 pages, 58 figures, 1 table. 2003.

London: Routledge; 0-415-16620-9 hardback, 0-415-16770-1 paperback.

HARRISON EITELJORG II, KATE FERNIE, JEREMY HUGGETT & DAMIAN ROBINSON. *CAD: a guide to good practice* (Archaeology Data Service). vii+103 pages, 22 figures, 11 tables. 2003. Oxford: Oxbow; 1-900188-72-4 paperback £12.

Computers are, for better or for worse, now central to many tasks in interpretative archaeology and archaeological management. Edited volumes on the subject are relatively numerous, often concentrating on the application of a particular technology to archaeology, but, with the exception of Richards & Ryan's *Data*



Processing in Archaeology (1985), now substantially out-of-date, computational archaeology has not been served by a comprehensive textbook. As such, Lock's *Using computers in archaeology* will be welcome equally by those who wish to (or have to) use computer methods in their archaeological tasks, and by those who teach computational methods as part

of archaeology courses. It is particularly welcome given the author's reputation as one of the foremost proponents of computational approaches to archaeology and his considerable contribution to maintaining connection between theoretical and practical aspects of this sub-discipline.

The book is non-technical and explanatory in nature, never resorting to unnecessary jargon and usually placing the technology within a broad theoretical and practical archaeological context. It prioritises archaeological tasks as the subject matter, with the appropriate technologies discussed within those chapters. After an introduction to Archaeology and Computers, placing the adoption of computer methods by archaeologists in some historical context, the volume is divided into a further seven chapters dealing with Survey and Prospection, Excavation and Computers, Post excavation, Geographic Information Systems, Cultural Resource Management, Communicating Archaeology and Virtual Futures.

'Survey and Prospection' (Chapter 2) includes methods for handling aerial survey data, satellite remote sensing, geophysical survey and surface collection data as well as more traditional topographic survey data deriving from theodolite or total station instruments. GPS survey is introduced briefly, and the basics of CAD, GIS and digital elevation models are explained. 'Excavation Recording' is covered in its own chapter (Chapter 3), including computer-based methods for handling written records such as context recording, stratigraphic data and spatial information. This obviously provides a strong focus on database management systems, but also discusses applications of (for example) GIS and CAD to excavation records. 'Beyond Excavation' (Chapter 4) deals with post-excavation analysis and interpretation such as dating methods, archaeological illustration and statistical methods. Further treatment of databases (this time under 'specialists') follows as well as some discussion of the relevance of artificial intelligence and of simulation and modelling. Three-dimensional reconstruction and animation methods are also examined. 'Digital Landscapes' is the title of Chapter 5, dedicated to GIS and related methods. This is the subject area that is probably best covered by other sources and Lock takes an essentially chronological approach, starting with early applications of site catchment analysis and predictive modelling and moving through the theoretical developments of the 1980s and 1990s towards visibility analysis and 3d-GIS. The strength of this is that it maintains a clear connection between developments in ways of thinking about landscape, and methods for landscape analysis using GIS; it also provides a context to the edited volumes and books published on this subject. Chapter 6 considers Cultural Resource Management (CRM) and again situates the use of databases and GIS within a wider story – this time of the origins and development of archaeological archives, with a section also dedicated to the use of IT in museums. 'Communicating Archaeology' (Chapter 7) introduces the internet and display technologies, focusing on the advantages of interactive and non-linear presentation afforded by computers, on the development of teaching and learning systems for archaeology. Communication of archaeological research such as online research databases and issues related to electronic publication is also discussed. The final chapter, 'Virtual Futures', is more reflective; here the author explores in more depth the development of the 'information society' and the implications of this for archaeology. It becomes clear that, while

rejecting simplistic technological utopianism, the author remains convinced that archaeology can and must grasp the professional, practical and intellectual challenges that the information revolution presents: as he says in his conclusions (p. 268): '*One certainty is that computers are not going to go away*'.

The book is excellently illustrated with a combination of diagrams, screen shots and photographs and makes some useful use of 'info boxes'; however, these sometimes run over several pages which rather dilutes their effect. The text is well referenced, selectively, with relevant websites listed in the accompanying notes. The decision to deal with the subject in archaeological themes has resulted in the various technologies (GIS, CAD, databases etc.) being discussed across several chapters; this may, to some, be slightly frustrating but does reinforce the essentially archaeological content of the book. The volume is essential reading for any practitioner or student involved with archaeological computing, and will – quite rightly – instantly become required reading on many an undergraduate and postgraduate course.

The Archaeology Data Service's *CAD Guide to Good Practice* is one of a series of publications whose aim is to document and share best practice in the creation, preservation, and reuse of digital resources. The full text of this publication is also available from the ADS website (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk>). In this case, the volume is designed to provide guidance for individuals and organisations involved in the creation, maintenance, use and long-term preservation of CAD(computer aided design)-based digital resources and – as is usual – it incorporates contributions from a range of experts and practitioners. The volume deals in turn with an introduction to CAD, data capture, choosing CAD systems and formats, documenting CAD projects, digital archiving and depositing CAD data in a repository. Although this and the other guides do not pretend to offer a comprehensive introduction to the subject, they are essential reference material for those actively using digital data within archaeology. This volume is well put together, and provides much essential advice necessary to successfully complete a CAD-based project and deposit the resulting files. The only serious question is whether the separation of this guide from the related guide for geographic information systems is sustainable as the two technologies substantially overlap.

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