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ALESSIO AGOSTINI, Sapienza Università di Roma

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Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg and Siegbert Uhlig

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- 2003 “Alämayyāhu Tewodros” [pp. 189–190], “Ali Alula” [p. 199], “Ali Musa” [p. 202], “Ali Umar” [p. 203], “Arägawī Säbagadis” [p. 310], “Attəṭägäb” [p. 395], “Badamma Yaläw” [p. 429], “Bərru Goššu” [p. 542], [with BAIRU TAFLA] “Bərru Petros” [p. 544], “Coffin, William” [pp. 765–766], in: *EAE* I.
- 2005 “Dīnī Muḥammad Burhān”, in *EAE* II, p. 165.

In memoriam Alessandro de Maigret (1943–2011)

ALESSIO AGOSTINI, Sapienza Università di Roma

Alessandro de Maigret (born in Perugia, Italy, 14 August 1943) was among the archaeologists who contributed the most to the unveiling of Pre-Islamic history in Southern Arabia. This sad loss, at only 67 years of age, deprives us of a scholar who, without a doubt, could have still contributed greatly with more discoveries and historical reconstructions. He died on 14 February 2011 near Perugia after a long and courageous battle with his illness, the first symptoms of which were revealed just a few days before leaving on an archaeological mission to Yemen.

De Maigret arrived in Yemen for the first time in 1980, after his studies at the University “La Sapienza” of Rome, where he had been member of the Italian Archaeological Mission to Syria, which was digging at Ebla and Tell Afis (direction of P. Matthiae). After a period in London, where he expanded his knowledge of theoretical archaeology at the University College, he became aware of the great potential Yemen had for an archaeologist: the country was, in fact, still marginal within ancient Near Eastern studies. Since 1980 he had been an associate professor of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology at the Istituto Universitario Orientale of Naples, the position he kept as full professor from 1990 until his retirement in 2010. With the support of Sabatino Moscati and under the sponsorship of the *Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente* of Rome directed by G. Gnoli (IsIAO, at that time IsMEO), he set up the first exploratory mission to Yemen. From the beginning the first results were very encouraging: prospections of Ḥawlān at-Ṭiyāl region on the Highland,

south-east of Ṣan^{ca}, in fact revealed traces of settlements that were differentiated both from Prehistoric culture as well as from the “Classical” South Arabian culture. He had, for the first time, identified traces of the Bronze Age in Yemen, a cultural phase that was totally unknown at the time and that could have helped in defining the formation of the subsequent 1st millennium B.C. civilization. Clarifying this formation phase, and giving it a sounder chronological setting, were in fact the major issues de Maigret concentrated around, and they remained amongst his most valuable objectives throughout his career. In 1987 he discovered the site of Yalā (until that time only known to the locals), which seemed to be just perfect in dealing with these questions. This discovery was not only a turning point for his career, but also for South Arabian studies. His profound knowledge of pottery led him to immediately realize that this site had been abandoned during an ancient Sabaeen phase, and that its investigation could turn out to be very precious. A very difficult and quick mission (the region was, and still is among Yemen’s most unsecure), with a probe in a private house, revealed pottery fragments with South Arabian letters. Carbon-14 dating clearly indicated that they originated from the strata of the very beginning of 1st millennium B.C. This discovery put an end to the harsh debate of the South Arabian chronology and confirmed that High Chronology was to take its place. This also had important consequences not only for South Arabia, as it helped to redefine the Sabaeen phase in Ethiopia, still considered in connection with South Arabian Low Chronology by most scholars.

At the end of the 1980s he received the concession of Barāqish, the ancient Minaean Yathill, an extraordinary site in the Jawf valley, that was still archaeologically virgin. Barāqish is a great challenge for an archaeologist: she has very well preserved structures and a very long history to be reconstructed, spanning from the ancient Sabaeen period, to the Minaean up to the Islamic one, which lasted to the 18th–19th centuries A.D. During several missions to Barāqish (1989–1992) he brought the Minaean temple of Nakrah to light, a structure extraordinary preserved up to its roof covering. Yemen’s civil war during the 1990s forced him to stay away from the country. During that period, however, he was appointed Cultural Counsellor to the Italian Embassy in Riyāḍ, and thanks to this position he was able to reflect upon his previous discoveries and to interpret them in the broader context of the Arabian Peninsula and the Near East. Later on he accepted the supervision of the archaeological investigation within the French Archaeological Mission lead by Christian Robin at the Yəḥa temple in Təgray (Ethiopia). His previous experience at the Barāqish temple was found to be very useful in defining the continuity and the differentiations between this temple and the South Arabian tradition from which it presumably originated.

At the end of the 1990s research resumed in a unified Yemen and this led to the investigation of the vast site of Tamna^c (23 ha), the capital of the ancient

kingdom of Qatabān – until then in former South Yemen. The Mission, which was set up with the collaboration of the French Mission for the study of epigraphic documentation, lasted until 2009 and was successful in unearthing a temple dedicated to the goddess Athirat as well as several private houses around an open space (the so-called “Market Square”). The definitive report was the main work de Maigret concentrated his efforts on during his last months. Investigation of the nearby site of Ḥayd ibn ʿAqīl, the official necropolis of the Qatabanian capital, was also pursued. Interest in the funerary practices was nothing new for de Maigret, as he had already directed explorations of the hypogeal tombs of the Highland, as well as of the so-called “Turret Graves” in the desert fringe. During his last years he was also able to identify a first necropolis connected with the Minaean Yathill; its excavation was directed by S. Antonini. In 2003, in fact, he managed to return to Barāqish and, after promoting the restoration of the Nakraḥ temple – unprecedented in this area for techniques and materials used – he began the excavation of the contiguous temple of ʿAthtar dhū-Qabḍ. Again, this temple revealed close similarities to the Yəḥa temple, strengthening his conviction that a connection was plausible between Minaean architectural style and the first South Arabian phase in Təgray. His last year in Barāqish was devoted to a deep probe in front of the Nakraḥ temple, and thanks to that, we now have one of the most extensive stratigraphies which, for the first time, reveals the length and extension of pre-Minaean Yathill with more clarity.

In his final years, political struggles forced him to stay away from Yemen more than his illness. He never lost his curiosity and still looked forward to new projects and objectives. This attitude led him to organize a first Mission to the site of Ġaymān, south of Ṣanʿāʾ (conducted by S. Antonini in 2010), and a far-seeing Mission to the site of Dūmat al-Jandal in Saudi Arabia, probably the Adummatu cited in the Assyrian texts (now Italian-French-Saudi Archaeological Mission).

I had the rare privilege of working at de Maigret’s side for several seasons and, besides the formative opportunity that this offered me, I had the chance to admire his qualities both as an archaeologist and as a man. He was endowed with a strong intuition – a useful quality in several disciplines, but one that really makes a difference in archaeology. He also had some rare human values that rendered him a bright, reliable and respectful person with everyone. Local workers preferred to call him Iskandar (Alexander) rather than *mudīr* (Director) because of the great sympathy and closeness he was able to establish with people from the most different backgrounds. He also was a very reflective man, because of his philosophical attitude in interpreting the past, and always had an insight mixed with a touch of his sane irony. He will be greatly missed by all of his colleagues and collaborators for whom he will remain an enduring example of scientific commitment and rectitude.

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In memoriam Arthur Kinloch Irvine
(1935–2011)

DAVID L. APPLEYARD, Bath

Arthur Kinloch Irvine was a quiet and unassuming man, a scholar of “the old school”, whose name is perhaps not as well known to the world of Ethiopian Studies as it should be. In formal contexts he preferred to use only his initials and not specify his first names, but was of course always simply known as Arthur to close colleagues and friends. He was a member of faculty at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) from 1961 until 1998, throughout the 37 years of his academic career. He retired formally in 1992 as Reader in Semitic Languages, but continued to do some teaching for six more years. His teaching focused on Ethiopian Semitic, especially Amharic and Gəʿəz, but in his research he specialized in Ancient South Arabian languages and culture, including links with Ancient Ethiopia.

Born on 23 August 1935 in Glasgow, where his father was Professor of Music at the university, he received his secondary education at the famous Hutchesons’ Grammar School in the city and matriculated in 1952 in the Scottish Higher in Latin, Greek, Mathematics, English and History. From there he went to St. Andrews, where he read Classics. It was at university that he first studied Arabic, under Edward Ullendorff, who by then had been at St. Andrews for two years. They remained life-long friends and colleagues after Ullendorff, too, moved to SOAS in 1964 where Arthur was already Lecturer in Semitic Languages.

After graduating in 1956 he went on to St. John’s College, Oxford, where he worked for his doctorate on Old South Arabian, the group of languages that was to remain the principal focus of his research for the rest of his life. In those days supervisors were less a regular part of a research student’s life than they are now, but at St. John’s he was fortunate enough to work with the renowned Arabist and Old South Arabianist, Alfred Felix Landon Beeston.