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### Review

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between Rome and the Peoples on the Arabian and Egyptian Frontiers in  
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## Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
- ÄthFor* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995).
- AethFor* Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011); 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG (*ibid.*, 2011f.); 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI (*ibid.*, 2012ff.).
- AION* *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'*, Napoli: Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale' (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
- BSOAS* *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London, 1917ff.).
- CSCO* Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
- EAE* S. UHLIG, ed., *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A. BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- PdP* *La Parola del Passato. Rivista di studi classici*, Napoli 1946ff.
- PICES 8* TADDESE BEYENE, ed., *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa (26–30 November) 1984*, I–II (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies–Frankfurt am Main: Frobenius Institut, Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, 1988–1989).
- PICES 10* C. LEPAGE and É. DELAGE, eds, *Études éthiopiennes: Actes de la X<sup>e</sup> Conférence internationale des études éthiopiennes, Paris, 24–28 août 1988* (Paris: Société française pour les études éthiopiennes, 1994).
- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND, A.J. DREWES, and R. SCHNEIDER, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, I: *Les documents*, II: *Les planches* (Paris: (Académie des inscriptions et belle-lettres) Diffusion de Boccard, 1991).
- RRALm* *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Roma, 1892ff.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli, 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.

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larly found in this region. A similar situation can be observed with the linguistic traits originating from Radmān (in the east). The area north of Dhamār, despite being closer to the central Sabaean centres, was less influenced by Sabaic innovations than the area around Hakir, closer to Radmān, which, in turn, had been expected to share more innovations with the Radmanic dialect. Qatabanic influences, in lexicon, phraseology and graphic style, are now sometimes more noticeable (e.g. BynM 6 and BynM 88).

Epigraphic documents which can be assigned to the Late Sabaic linguistic phase are limited in number, but it is worth noting that they do not seem to adhere perfectly to the linguistic innovations documented in the Central Sabaic milieu for the same time (e.g. the *-n* augmented infinitive of the derived verbal stems, which continues to be irregular until the end of the fourth century CE).

Far from being marginal within ancient Yemen, Dhamār was often involved in the most crucial turning points in the pre-Islamic history of Southern Arabia, and the region is now characterized by a documentary continuity, spanning from the beginning of the first millennium BCE to the sixth century CE. From a social point of view, the relative stability of tribal groups is also worth noting, and can be observed until the sixth–tenth centuries CE.

The book includes a number of maps, and the inscriptions are accompanied by very good and readable photos. The study concludes with several detailed and helpful indices (index of proper names: individuals, royal names, toponyms, divine names, buildings, months; index of words organized under roots; index of sigla of other inscriptions cited with related bibliography). This study is a clear demonstration that an online textual database, while very useful for research involving a large and multifaceted epigraphic corpus such as the one from ancient Yemen, cannot replace more comprehensive and insightful analyses in traditional formats.

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JITSE H.F. DIJKSTRA and GREG FISHER, eds, *Inside and Out. Interactions between Rome and the Peoples on the Arabian and Egyptian Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, *Late Antique History and Religion*, 8 (Leuven–Paris–Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2014). xviii, 481 pp. Price: € 94.00. ISBN: 978-90-429-3124-4.

This rich book is the result of a well organised workshop held at the University of Ottawa on October 11–13, 2012, elaborating on the theme of ‘peoples on the frontier of the Roman Empire’ in Late Antiquity. It is a deliberate attempt at extending an approach fruitfully employed in recent

contributions concerning the eastern border of the Empire, namely the Sasanians, to the South and South East, notably Egypt, the Red Sea, and, in particular, Arabia. As clearly detailed in the rich introduction by Jitse H.F. Dijkstra and Greg Fisher (pp. 1–31)—who offer a clear summary of historical research on late antique culture and civilization useful to anyone interested in the broader historical context of Aksumite history—the idea originates in the classical nineteenth-century works of Theodor Nöldeke, continued in the twentieth century by Irfan Shahîd, and resumed later, by Christian Julien Robin to quote only one name, along with other authors who feature in this volume. The innovative aspect of the volume is to have included anthropologists in order to examine Late Antiquity models of state-tribe relationships and interactions, cf. Philip Carl Salzman, ‘The Meeting of the Twain: Tribe and State’ (pp. 83–90), and Greg Fisher, ‘State and Tribe in Late Antique Arabia: A Comparative View’ (pp. 281–297).

One of the two focuses of the book is the variegated and shifting reality of the ‘Arabs’, from ‘barbarian’ allies to established partners of Rome (and Persia) on the frontiers, and to actors in their own right at the end of Late Antiquity (the latter label taken here in its narrow sense, that also corresponds to the core period under study in the volume, c. fourth–sixth centuries CE), i.e. on the eve of the rise of Islam in the seventh century CE. The other focus is the Egyptian frontier, extending beyond the First Cataract to include Meroë and Nubia: obviously with the kingdom of Aksum (placed by the editors in the introduction a bit imprecisely ‘in modern Eritrea’, p. 24) interacting on both the Arab and the Egyptian frontiers. ‘Inside and Out’ thus point to the twofold role of peripheral peoples interacting with the Roman Empire, either stressing the more ‘inside’ integrated role of the Arabs or the more articulated ‘outside’ relationship of the latter, notably Blemmyes and Noubades, with Aksum and Ḥimyar as independent states. ‘Inside’ versus ‘outside’ also makes use of recently emerged mainly epigraphic sources from ‘inside’, immensely enhancing our historical understanding previously based, to a large extent, notably for Arabia, on much later secondary Islamic sources.

Two of the contributions focus on Aksum, namely Pierluigi Piovanelli, ‘Reconstructing the Social and Cultural History of the Aksumite Kingdom: Some Methodological Reflections’ (pp. 331–352); and George Bevan, ‘Ethiopian Apocalyptic and the End of Roman Rule: The Reception of Chalcedon in Aksum and the *Kebra Nagaśt*’ (pp. 371–388); yet, scholars of Ethiopian Studies should also carefully consider the contribution of Christian Julien Robin, ‘The Peoples beyond the Arabian Frontier in Late Antiquity: Recent Epigraphic Discoveries and Latest Advances’ (pp. 33–79), where a selection of dated inscriptions providing fresh evidence for the understanding

of religious and political developments in the area are carefully analyzed: thus light is thrown on the domination of the South Arabian kingdom of Ḥimyar in Arabia in the period c.350–560 CE, the spread of ‘a monotheism of Jewish inspiration’ in the same period, eventually followed by the spread of Christianity from c.500 CE onwards, up to the eve of Islam.

Piovanelli’s paper, dedicated to the memory of Paolo Marrassini, can be regarded as a reliable and informative up-to-date introduction to Aksum in its cultural and historical setting, from the perspective of a scholar—*rara avis*—who is intimately familiar with both Ethiopian studies and broader mainstream disciplines, notably ancient and medieval Christian and Jewish studies. Piovanelli reanalyses the assumed sequence of Aksumite kings on the basis of numismatic evidence, places a series of precise *caveats* on the limits of the utilization of later literary traditions for the reconstruction of Aksumite history, and clearly focusing on a tyranny of sources that does not allow for much elaboration on a ‘Jewish-Ethiopian phase’ carried out, again, by scholars from Late Antique studies who are not sufficiently acquainted with the subtleties and dynamics of Aksumite and Ethiopian cultural history. Piovanelli’s criticism also applies to Bevan’s paper in this volume, which expands on recent proposals by Glen W. Bowersock and assumes that ‘the evidence of the single gold coin of MḤDYS may be reason to revisit the argument of Shahîd [...] that genuine Aksumite material is present in the *Kəbrä nägäšt* and that it is an ‘inside’ source of miaphysitism in Ethiopia in the fifth and sixth centuries’ (p. 388); furthermore, he adds that the aftermath of the Chalcedonian council of 451 CE might have opened ways for the apocalyptic claims of Aksum seeing itself as a successor to Constantinople: in fact, it should be noted that the author does not discuss the serious doubts raised about the authenticity of the *unicum* MḤDYS’s gold coin<sup>1</sup> and that he tends to minimize the importance of Ethiopic texts associated with the *Kəbrä nägäšt*, such as the Ethiopic versions of the *Martyrium of Arethas*, also attested in a second recension as *Acts of Kaleb*, that undoubtedly point in other directions.

Other papers focus on Nubia either as an occasion for methodological reflexions—Stuart Tyson Smith, ‘Desert and River: Consumption and Colonial Entanglements in Roman and Late Antique Nubia’ (pp. 91–109)—or as a theme in itself—J.H.F. Dijkstra, ‘I, Silko, Came to Talmis and Taphis’: Interactions between the Peoples beyond the Egyptian Frontier and Rome in Late Antiquity’ (pp. 299–330), and David N. Edwards, ‘Creating Christian Nubia: Processes and Events on the Egyptian Frontier’ (pp. 407–431). A large part of the volume focuses on the Arab-Roman relationship, viewed historically, from ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ sources, with a deeper insight into first-hand sources and Roman historiography—Ariel L. Lewin, Rome’s Relations with the Arab/Indi-

<sup>1</sup> See G. Fiaccadori, ‘MḤDYS’, *EAE*, III (2007), 947a–949b, esp. pp. 947b–948a.

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genous People in the First–Third Centuries (pp. 113–143); Michael C.A. Macdonald, ‘Romans Go Home?’ Rome and Other ‘Outsiders’ as Viewed from the Syro-Arabian Desert’ (pp. 145–163); H  l  ne Cuvigny, ‘Papyrological Evidence on ‘Barbarians’ in the Egyptian Eastern Desert’ (pp. 165–198); Helmut Satzinger, ‘The ‘Barbarian’ Names on the Third-Century Ostraka from Xeron’ (pp. 199–212); Conor Whately, ‘Arabs, Outsiders, and Stereotypes from Ammianus Marcellinus to Theophylact Simocatta’ (pp. 215–233); Hugh Elton, ‘Writing the Histories of Romans and Arabs in the Fifth-Century Roman East’ (pp. 235–247); Geoffrey Greatrex, ‘Procopius and Roman Imperial Policy in the Arabian and Egyptian Frontier Zones’ (pp. 249–264); Robert G. Hoyland, ‘Insider and Outsider Sources: Historiographical Reflections on Late Antique Arabia’ (pp. 267–280). The traditionally more strongly stressed theme of ‘conversion’ dynamics is also present, but not pivotal in the volume, rightly so, given the variety of other aspects considered; cf. however Philip Wood, ‘Christianity and the Arabs in the Sixth Century’ (pp. 355–370). R. Stephen Humphreys, ‘Consolidating the Conquest: Arab-Muslim Rule in Syria and the Jaz  rah, 630–775 CE’ (pp. 391–405) marks the chronological epilogue of the time-span encompassed by this book.

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TIMOTHY POWER, *The Red Sea from Byzantium to the Caliphate, AD 500–1000* (Cairo–New York, NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012). xiv, 363 pp. Price: US-\$ 34.50. ISBN: 978-877-416-544-3.

With this book, Timothy Power hopes to fill a gap in the research on the civilizations of the Red Sea area and lay sound foundation for future field work of an archaeological character. The gap is between the overwhelming interest for the classic Roman period of Red Sea and ‘India trade’ on the one hand (c. first century BCE–first century CE)—it is for example apparent the huge interest raised by the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* (c. 60 CE)—and on the other for the Islamic period starting from the ninth/tenth century on. Consequently, the time span of the ‘long Late Antiquity’—a fruitful concept introduced by Averil Cameron, referring to the late Roman and early Islamic periods (c. 330–830 CE), which, like the concept ‘Late Antiquity’ has hardly been applied so far to research on the Red Sea area—is underrepresented in available studies. Power’s aim is to assess on the basis of a DBA (‘desk-base assessment’) the known or potential archaeological resources within a specific area, collating existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify their likely character, extent, quality and worth in a local, regional or international context (see p. 5). This attempt is part of an increasing and still developing global rethink on Red Sea in history (cf. for example for later periods, J. Miran, ed., *Space, Mobility, and Translocal Connections across the Red Sea Area since 1500 = Northeast African Studies*, 12/1 (2012)).