

RBL 9/2002

Phillips, C.S., D.T. Potts, and S. Searight, eds.

***Arabia And Its Neighbours: Essays on Prehistorical and Historical Developments
Presented in Honour of Beatrice de Cardi***

Abiel 2

Turnhout: Brepols, 1998. Pp. 372, Cloth, EUR 70.00, ISBN 2503506658.

David F. Graf
University of Miami
Coral Gables, FL 33124

These essays are in tribute to Beatrice de Cardi, an archaeologist and prominent administrator who had a great impact on a wide array of scholars of diverse specialties in the Middle East and, in particular, Arabia. As a student of economics at University College in London University, she encountered Mortimer Wheeler and participated in his excavations at the great Iron Age fort at Maiden Castle in southern England. In 1944, she joined the Allied Supplies Executive of the War Cabinet in China based in Chungking, where she traveled extensively in India and western China. After World War II, she became Britain's assistant Trade Commissioner in Karachi, Delhi, and Lahore, a position she utilized for conducting archaeological surveys in western Baluchistan for second-millennium B.C.E. sites. These enterprises led to excavations with Sylvia Mathieson at Bampur in southeast Iran that produced a ceramic sequence for the Lower Gulf in the third millennium B.C.E. From 1949 to 1973, she served as secretary of the Council for British Archaeology that was founded after the War, where her pioneering archaeological efforts were reduced to smaller projects with a narrow focus, but with similar spectacular results. After the Danish discovery of Iranian grey wares in Abu Dhabi, she launched a number of expeditions in the United Arab Emirates that yielded the first examples of Ubaid pottery in the Gulf. These enterprises led to a more precise

chronology and typology of the Stone Age industries in the region. With Mortimer Wheeler, Michael Rice, and others, she helped found the Committee of Arabian and Gulf Studies, which eventually became the Society for Arabian Studies, and provided impetus to establishing museums throughout the region. In 1993, she was awarded the Burton Memorial Medal by the Royal Asiatic Society, and in 1995 she was made an Honorary Fellow at University College. Her eclecticism and wide interests are reflected in the diverse contributions of this volume offered by her contemporaries and the numerous younger scholars influenced by her work.

Twenty-three essays on the Arabian Peninsula are arranged alphabetically, followed by a small group of five studies on South Asia. The appearance of D. T. Potts's *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity* (1990) dramatized the recent intense and extensive archaeological investigation of the Arabian Gulf and northeastern side of the Arabian Peninsula. Beatrice de Cardi's involvement with the Council for British Archaeology and later the Society for Arabian Studies is highlighted by H. Cleere and Michael Rice in two brief essays.

Most of the essays focus on Oman and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). C. Vita-Finzi discusses the possible prehistoric changes in the ancient shorelines of Oman and Qatar. The prehistoric distribution of *terebralia palustris* maritime mollusks in mangrove forests in eastern Arabia are analyzed by E. Glover, who attributes their decline in historic periods to changes in rainfall. Petroglyphs or rock engravings are the theme of two essays, one by G. de Ceuninck focusing on the rather abstract anthropomorphic and animal Iron Age depictions found at Fujairah in the extreme east of the peninsula of the U.A.E., and the other by E. Haerinck on the ithyphallic figures and riders in Oman. Iron Age glyptic art from Rumeilah in the U.A.E. is examined by P. Lombard. B. Vogt focuses on the funerary customs at Ras al-Khaimah in the U.A.E. during the second millennium B.C.E. and their possible connections with central and southwest Arabia. R. Bocharlat and M. Mouton discuss the funerary practices between the third century B.C.E. and fourth century C.E. at Mleiha south of the inhabited area in the Oman Peninsula. D. Kennett describes two

new Sasanian sites of the fourth and fifth centuries at Khatt and Ras al-Khainah in the Oman Peninsula, where only a handful of such sites were previously known. The results of a survey conducted between 1993 and 1995 in the western islands of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi are reported on by G. R. D. King and C. Tonghini; although pre-Islamic data is abundant, the remains from the early and middle Islamic period are scarce.

Trade connections between Asia and the West are the subject of a few essays. P. R. S. Moorey reviews the evidence for the contacts between Mesopotamia and Egypt during the fourth millennium B.C.E. and the possibilities of contacts by sea rather than overland. Some southeast Arabian finds of Namord ware produced in the Kerman region of Iran are viewed by D. T. Potts as a product of domestic trade on the local level. S. Searight suggests the finds of fourteenth- to seventeenth-century B.C.E. Mamluk pilgrim flasks at Julfar in the U.A.E. have an Iranian provenance. Finally, the abandoned early twentieth-century fishing villages in the now-inhabitable zones of Qatar are discussed by D. Kennett.

The remaining essays are focused on the islands in the Arabian-Persian Gulf, the larger Arabian Peninsula, or the more remote area of South Asia. The state of Dilmun in the central Gulf, centered on the island of Bahrain, is discussed in three essays. H. Crawford discusses eight clay circular pellets with seal impressions found at the early settlement at Saar that may have served as tokens of authorization or receipts, based on some Bronze Age parallels from Crete and the Near East. S. Méry, C. Phillips, and Y. Calvet analyze the finds of Dilmun pottery in Mesopotamia and Magan as well as Barbar funerary jars and domestic ware that circulated in Oman and Mesopotamia. Finally, C. Velde discusses a collective burial system of rock-cut tombs of approximately 1800 to 1700 B.C.E. found beneath a Hellenistic grave mound at Karanah on the island.

Other essays focus on other parts of the Arabian peninsula or Arabs in general. The emergence of town settlements in the highlands of Yemen in the early third millennium B.C.E. are examined by T. J. Wilkinson. Some interesting

observations about the representations of Arabs in Neo-Assyrian reliefs at Nineveh and from the paintings in the Assyrian palace at Til-Barsip in Syria are made by J. Reade. Nor are Arabia's abundant epigraphic remains neglected. T. Mitchell discusses an interesting South Arabian bronze seal inscribed with the name *gryšm* as possible background for the Quraysh tribe at Mecca. Three new inscribed Sabaean stone pedestals for statues dating to the third and fourth centuries C.E. are the subject of an essay by K. A. Kitchen. Finally, in a brief methodological essay, W. Dostal explores the potential dialogue between anthropology and archaeology by examining two aspects of village society: the legal rights of foreign craftsmen in Arabian towns and the transformation of farmers into ceramic specialists.

The essays on South Asia are grouped together at the end of the volume. D. K. Chakrabarti discusses the gap between the Harappan Indian fords in Mesopotamia of 2600 B.C.E. and those of approximately 2200 to 2000 in Oman, the U.A.E., and Bahrain-Failaka. L. Flam reports on the discovery of twenty previously unknown prehistoric sites on the Sindh side of the Kithar Mountains. Neolithic and Chalcolithic pottery finds in Baluchistan are discussed by J.-F. Jarrige, and U. Franke-Vogt suggests the early wares at Niai Buthi in southeast Baluchistan are more variegated than previously thought. G. Possehl argues that if the Sarasvati River in the Great Indian Desert was ever connected to the Sea, it was prior to 3800 B.C.E.

Beatrice de Cardi's bibliography of twenty-nine articles published between 1950 and 1997 is conveniently listed after the foreword and is index enough of her varied geographical and chronological interests. The rich diversity of these contributions amply and fittingly attests even more to the keen and wide-ranging interests of this outstanding archaeologist. The studies will be a valuable compendium for future inquiry on the regions where she worked. It is therefore a pity that the publishers failed to mention her name on the cover of the volume.