

Reviews

Aist, R. (2009) *The Christian Topography of Early Islamic Jerusalem: The Evidence of Willibald of Eichstätt (700–787 CE)*. Studia Traditionis Theologiae, 2. Brepols: Turnhout. ISBN 978-2-503-53013-0. Pp. xxiii+343, 3 tables, 18 maps. Soft cover. €65.00

This monograph comprises a detailed study of Willibald of Eichstätt's description of Jerusalem, which was based on visits made in the later Umayyad period between 724 and 726. In addition to providing an exhaustive analysis of the topographical information contained in the text, the author also discusses Willibald's religious imagination and how it relates both to Jerusalem and to the Christian life in general.

Willibald was an Anglo-Saxon, born in Wessex, who spent his early years as a child oblate in the monastery Bishop's Waltham in Hampshire. At the age of 20, he set out for Rome with his brother, Wynnebald, and their father, who died *en route* in Lucca. Willibald left Rome for Jerusalem after Easter 723, sailing from Gaeta to Naples and Sicily, then through the Aegean to Ephesus, whence he travelled overland through Asia Minor before taking ship once more to reach Cyprus and finally Tartus (Antaradus) in Syria. From there his journey took him to 'Arqa, Homs and Damascus and then through Galilee and the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem, which he reached on 11 January 724. At Christmas he was in Bethlehem, after which he proceeded to Gaza by way of Tekoa and the monastery of St Sabas, returning by St Zacharias (probably Kh. Sukriyya, on the Roman road from Gaza) and Hebron. Willibald's second stay in Jerusalem seems to have lasted from before Easter 725 until after Whitsun, when he embarked on another tour, travelling to Lydda (St George), Jaffa, Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli, Damascus and Baniyas (Caesarea Philippi), returning to Jerusalem for a third time in the late autumn. After Christmas 725 he set out once more, to Hims, Salamiya and Damascus, and returned for a fourth and final visit to Jerusalem in the summer of 726. That autumn, he took his final leave of the Holy City, passing through Nablus to Acre and Tyre, whence he took ship to Constantinople. Having spent some seven years in the East, Willibald returned

to the monastery of Monte Cassino in Italy, from which Pope Gregory III sent him as a missionary bishop to Eichstätt, where lived for the next 45 years until his death in 787.

Willibald's description of his travels was incorporated into the Life that was written of him by Hugeburc, an Anglo-Saxon nun and relative. It was apparently dictated around 778, some half a century after his time in the Holy Land, and was set down more or less verbatim, though in the third person rather than the first. The part dealing with Jerusalem is quite brief and leaves a lot out that might have been included. Aist is concerned about the omissions and ponders why, for instance, when speaking of Calvary Willibald fails to mention the tomb of Adam, the centre of the world or even the place of Crucifixion itself (pp. 114–18). Given the manner in which the description was composed and transmitted to us, however, such omissions may seem less than remarkable.

Aist's topographical analysis contains much that is innovative, but inevitably some points that are questionable. Willibald's description begins at 'the place where the Lord's Holy Cross had been found; there is now a church there, in the place that is called the place of Calvary' (*locus ubi inventa fuerat sancta crux; ibi est nunc aeclesia in illo loco que dicitur Calvarie locus*). This was evidently Constantine's basilica beside the Holy Sepulchre. By Willibald's time, however, the three memorial crosses which had formerly been inside the church had been relocated to stand under cover in the *atrium* against the east wall of the basilica. When Willibald later returned to Jerusalem from Gaza, he was cured of a temporary blindness as he entered the church from this direction. This and other considerations lead Aist to suggest associating the crosses with the Miraculous Healing, in which, according to tradition, St Helena was able to divine which of the three crosses found in the cistern was that of Christ by applying it to a sick woman (or in some versions a dead virgin or young man) and curing her. Perhaps more controversially, Aist also makes a convincing case for associating this site, on the north side of the *atrium*, with the column of the Miraculous Healing that Adomnán (c. 685) had earlier placed within the city, north of the Holy

Places (*Itineraria* 1965, 194–95), but which other scholars have attempted to identify with the column inside St Stephen’s gate (Bab al-’Amud) that is shown on the Madaba mosaic map. Aist describes as ‘amusing’ Willibald’s apparent statement that Helena had moved the place of Calvary inside the walls: *sed Helena, quando invenit crucem, collocavit illam locum intus intra Hierusalem* (p. 113). However, *collocare* does not mean ‘to move’, but to ‘put/place/set (someone or something) somewhere’; it would have been perfectly possible to have ‘placed’ Calvary inside the walls by rebuilding them in a different position — which is in effect what happened, though not by Helena’s doing.

Willibald provides a valuable description of the aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre. In particular, his statement, ‘The tomb had been cut from rock and the rock stands above ground and is square low down and pointed at the top’ (*Illa sepulchra fuerat in petra excisa, et ille petra stat super terram et est quadrans in imo et in summo subtilis*), has excited much comment. Aist appears to accept — albeit grudgingly — Martin Biddle’s view that the square part was inside the aedicule, while the pointed part related to the outside (1999, 71). Although the word *imum* has puzzled some commentators (pp. 127–28), it may be noted that it appears in later English medieval documents in its adverbial forms, *ime* (low, c. 1392) and *imius* (lower, c. 1470) (Latham 1965, 235).

All that Willibald says of the church of Holy Zion is that it was *in medio Hierusalem*. Aist sensibly takes this phrase to reflect Willibald’s picture of Zion as the centre of biblical or New Testament, rather than to mean that it was in the centre of the walled city, which it was not. It may be noted in passing, however, that there is no evidence to suggest that the ancient structure that is today associated with the tomb of David was originally a synagogue (p. 138 n. 389). As John Wilkinson has argued, it is more likely to have been part of the Byzantine church of Holy Zion (1978, 168–71; cf. Pringle 2007, 261–87).

From Mount Zion, Willibald went to the pool near Solomon’s portico: *et inde [from Mt Zion] ibat in porticum Salomonis; ibi est piscina*. Aist makes a convincing case for identifying this pool with the Sheep Pool beside St Anne’s church, rather than with Birkat Isra’il against the north wall of the Temple precinct. There remains the problem, however, of what Willibald meant by Solomon’s portico. In the New Testament this is usually located in the Temple precinct itself, but later texts are inconsistent. The 6th-century Piacenza Pilgrim associates it with the church of St Sophia on the west side of the Temple.

Neither of the published translations given on pp. 157–58, however, appears to be entirely accurate. A more literal translation might be: ‘We prayed in the Praetorium, where the Lord was tried, where there is now the basilica of St Sophia in front of the ruins of the Temple of Solomon, below the paved street which runs down to the Spring of Siloam beside (*secus*) Solomon’s portico’ (*Itineraria* 1965, 141). This text would appear to suggest therefore that Solomon’s portico was the wall of the Temple precinct itself and that the street ran beside it or parallel to it. Since Birkat Isa’il also lies next to the Temple precinct, this raises the possibility that it might be Willibald’s pool, a possibility that Aist also considers (pp. 155–56). The ‘beautiful portico with marble columns’ built by Solomon between the Dome of the Rock (*Templum Domini*) and the Aqsa (*Templum Salomonis*) that is mentioned by an anonymous 12th-century pilgrim guide (p. 159), however, was evidently the south *qanāṭir* (Maqām al-Nabī), which existed by the 10th century (Burgoyne 1976, no. 4), or its predecessor.

Like the monument of the Miraculous Healing, another Christian monument which appears to have been erected in Jerusalem after the time of the Persian occupation was a *magna columna* placed outside the east gate leading down to Gethsemane, at the point where, according to traditions surrounding the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, when the Apostles were carrying her body out of the city for burial they were accosted by a group of Jews, whose hands became glued to the bier when they tried to seize it. The degree of religious tolerance exercised by the Umayyads is illustrated by the cross which still surmounted the monument at this time. Although Aist identifies the church in Gethsemane that Eutychius (Sa’īd ibn Bīṭrīq) records being destroyed by the Persians in 614 as that of the Saviour’s Agony, rather than that containing Mary’s tomb (pp. 175 n. 607, 186), the text seems more likely to refer to the latter. Other Arabic sources, such as al-Masūdī and al-Idrīsī, also refer to St Mary’s as the church of Gethsemane (*al-Jismaniyya*) (Le Strange 1890, 203, 210). After the Byzantine reconquest, however, it seems to have been rebuilt by Modestus and was evidently the church of the Virgin which Theophanes says was threatened with destruction again in 685 (Mango and Scott 1997, 510; Pringle 2007, 288).

Further difficulties surround the identification of the church that Willibald saw in the place where Jesus prayed in the garden: ‘And on the Mount of Olives there is now a church where before His passion the Lord used to pray, and said to the disciples, “Watch and pray”’ (*Et in monte Oliveti est nunc aecclesia, ubi*

Dominus ante passionem orabat et dixit ad discipulos: Vigilate et orate [Matt. 26:41]). Aist argues that this church was on the site of the Byzantine and Crusader churches of the Saviour's Agony (now the church of All Nations). Willibald, however, could simply have been referring to the cave church in Gethsemane, despite the fact that the Gospels place Jesus's prayer and his speaking to the disciples in different places. Twelfth-century sources, for instance, mention Jesus as having prayed in the cave (as well as in the garden), and the cave's association with Jesus' prayer was endorsed by papal documents in the 14th century (Pringle 2007, 99–100). It seems more likely that the Byzantine church of the Agony would already have been destroyed by the time of Arculf's visit, reported by Adomnán (c. 685). The Franciscan excavations showed that it had been destroyed by fire, very likely by the Persians. Thus, whatever Willibald saw, it was probably not the original Byzantine church. If it was not the cave, it could perhaps have been a small chapel on the site of the destroyed Byzantine church, similar to the *oraculum* that was seen by Saewulf and Abbot Daniel in the first decade of the 12th century. The fact that no trace of any such chapel was found in the excavations is hardly conclusive. It may be noted, however, that even after the later Crusader church was destroyed in 1187, its site was still known and visited; and its position is marked on Marino Sanudo's plan of Jerusalem of c. 1320 (Pringle 2007, 358–65).

From Gethsemane Willibald went up the Mount of Olives to the church of the Ascension, which he found roofless with at its centre a bronze structure enclosing a glass lamp, which burned continuously; and from there he proceeded to Shepherds' Field and Bethlehem. As Aist concludes (pp. 227–28), the ordering of the places described constitutes strong evidence for the continued existence of a Jerusalem circuit for Christian pilgrims in the 8th century, beginning at the Holy Sepulchre complex and proceeding to Mount Sion, the Sheep Pool, the column outside the east gate, the church containing the tomb of St Mary, a church or chapel commemorating Jesus' prayer in the garden, and finally the Mount of Olives.

The book is very clearly written, with the main points flagged in advance and repeated again later — sometimes more than once — in case you missed them. In this it seems to betray its origins as a thesis, as also does its length: 264 pages of exegesis, compared with Willibald's description of three or one and a half pages, depending on the edition (Tobler and Molinier 1879, 263–66; Holder-Egger 1887, 97–98). Indeed, as Willibald's text is so short, it would have been useful to have had it reproduced in

an appendix, along with a new English translation. Another general point concerns the use of the term 'Early Islamic' when applied, for example, to Christian pilgrimage or sources of the Early Islamic period. This is somewhat like referring to the Muslim geographer Muḥammad al-Idrīsī as a 'Norman', just because he was writing in 12th-century Norman Sicily.

Aist sees Willibald's image of Jerusalem as of a strange and distant place, its distance emphasized by the hardships and perseverance involved in reaching it (pp. 228–55). Aist, too, might perhaps be seen as a *peregrinus ex patria*, who (as he tells us) left his native USA to travel to Wales for study, with long periods also spent in Jerusalem and on Papa Westray, Orkney. Willibald's view of Jerusalem as distant raises the intriguing question of whether it seemed more or less so to Westerners of his day than it did, say, to those living in the 12th century, after the First Crusade, or even today, in the age of television, internet and jet travel. To medieval Christians Jerusalem was the centre of the world and 'present' spiritually, even though distant physically. As far as modern travel is concerned, it may also be noted that while Papa Westray does at least have an operational airport (well, a field actually) with foreign flight connections, Jerusalem currently does not.

Denys Pringle
University of Cardiff

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Aliquot, J. (2008) *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie – Tome 11: Mount Hermon (Liban et Syrie)*. Beirut: Presses de l'IFPO (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 183). ISBN 978-2-35159-079-9.

Pp. 168, 106 b/w photographs, 5 maps. Paperback. €40.00

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Jesuit Louis Jalabert announced a reorganization of Waddington's *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Paris, 1870) and in 1929 the first volume came out.¹ In the course of the last 80 years, the corpus expanded — not only in the number of volumes, but also geographically. 'Syria' is referred to as a historical landscape in antiquity, which included the territories of several modern states in the Levant, mainly Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The volume under review here takes the expansion of the geographical range one step further. The title of Julien Aliquot's *Inscriptions of Mount Hermon (Lebanon and Syria)* (hereafter: *IGLS 11*) bears only two modern countries in its title. However, a large appendix (pp. 89–109) discusses the epigraphic evidence from those parts of the mountain which are now under Israeli control, since the 1967 war. By undertaking the difficult task of bringing all these together (the cautiousness of some of the included maps when it comes to modern political boundaries testifies to this, e.g. p. 5), Aliquot produced a volume which contains all inscriptions discovered in the area to date, the majority being dedicatory and funerary texts. Several are edited for the first time (nos 6, 10, 11, 16, 18, 19, 22, 31, 43, 44, 49–55, and A19 in the appendix).

Mount Hermon (*arab.* Jabal ash-Shaykh) is a mountain range which extends *c.* 57 km along the Lebanese-Syrian border, ending to the south in the occupied Golan Heights. The main city of the area was Paneas/Caesarea Philippi, named after the nearby spring of the river Baniyas, one of the tributaries of the Jordan river; the whole surrounding area was called 'Panion', referring to the main sanctuary of the god Pan. Aliquot demonstrates in his excellent introduction (pp. 3–26) that the term 'Hermon' referred to a landscape and not only to the mountain itself, which was not always distinguished clearly from the Lebanon or Antilebanon mountain range in the sources (p. 8). Mount Hermon, however, was an important geographical marker because it divided the coastal area from the Syrian steppe. Aliquot knows the epigraphic evidence very well, as it is closely connected to his doctoral thesis.² He evokes the imagery of a holy mountain 'surrounded by an aura

of sanctity' (p. 8) and embarks on a short survey of the Hermon as mentioned in religious texts, e.g. as the location of Humbaba's cedar grove in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the home of the god Baal-Hermon in the Hebrew Bible (p. 10). Aliquot discusses the importance of the area in biblical and apocryphal accounts of Henoah and Seth, and shows how the mountain evolved as a sacred place for Jews, Christians, Muslims, and likewise the Druze. He is enthusiastic about this perspective; however, one should not forget that the accumulation of cultic places celebrated by different religions and the veneration of a mountain as a sacred space is not uncommon in the Levant or the Near East in general.

Using information from the epigraphic sources, Aliquot goes on to draw a more concrete picture of the settlements in the area: the Western slopes show traces of a larger population living in small villages which were closely connected with the sanctuaries (pp. 16–17). He points to the prominent role of the temples and city of Paneas (and provides a new accurate map of the site, p. 20). Aliquot demonstrates that during the Roman period (all of the recorded inscriptions date to the first four centuries AD, with the exception of nos 26 and A/12) communities depended on and were influenced by Damascus, Sidon and, of course, Paneas. A useful map highlights the various political affinities in the area by displaying the different dating systems stated in the inscriptions (besides the Seleucid era, the eras of Paneas, Sidon and Tyre; p. 17). Remarks on two villages which were elevated to the rank of cities in late Roman times, Rakhla-Zenopolis and Barkousa-Justinianopolis (the modern Rakhle and Burqush), round up the introduction.

The publication of *IGLS 11* greatly contributes to our understanding of Mount Hermon. Like the sixth volume³ of the series, which deals with the adjacent Beqaa valley and Baalbak, *IGLS 11* has its basis in preliminary work executed by René Mouterde, who died before he could fully publish an epigraphic catalogue of the region. Due to the scattered nature of previous publications of the inscriptions and the tense political realities, bringing together the epigraphic material is a feat. With *IGLS 11*, Julien Aliquot has accomplished even more: he has meticulously checked all the older readings of the hitherto published inscriptions, suggesting several convincing corrections, and has presented the reader with 18 new

¹ Jalabert, L. and Mouterde, R. (eds) (1929) *IGLS 1. Commagène et Cyrhestique*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner (BAH 12).

² Now published as: Aliquot, J. (2009) *La vie religieuse du Liban sous l'Empire romain*. Beirut: Presses de l'IFPO (BAH 189).

³ Rey-Coquais, J.-P. (ed.) (1967) *IGLS 6. Baalbek et Beqa'. Commencée par Louis Jalabert et René Mouterde*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner (BAH 78).

texts. All inscriptions are translated and accompanied by very clear photographs; often with additional illustrations of the findspot or reproduced historical material from earlier editions. The corpus of 80 inscriptions is divided into three sections: western Hermon (pp. 27–45, ins. nos 1–17), eastern Hermon (pp. 47–87, ins. nos 18–55) and southern Hermon, the area today under Israeli control (pp. 89–109, ins. nos A1–A25). The excellent publication is supplemented by valuable appendices, the first listing the epigraphic mentions of Paneas outside of the city (pp. 111–12), followed by a detailed onomastic and various other indices (pp. 113–35). *IGLS II* closes with a concordance of previous references to, and publications of, the inscriptions (pp. 137–43), a concise bibliography (pp. 145–56) and an Arabic abstract/list of contents (pp. 168–60). Whereas the current territorial fragmentation of Mount Hermon still complicates larger archaeological endeavours, Aliquot's exquisite epigraphic corpus may hopefully lay the foundation for further studies of this fascinating and yet neglected area.

*Konstantin M. Klein
Brasenose College, Oxford*

Baghdo, A.-M., Martin, L., Novák, M. and Orthmann, W. (eds) (2009) *Tell Halaf: Vorberichte über die erste und zweite syrisch-deutsche Grabungskampagne*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (von Oppenheim-Stiftung 3,I). ISBN 978-3-447-06068-4. Pp. 132, 86 figures, 10 tables, 3 endplates. Hard cover. €48·00

Neo-Hittite archaeology is undergoing something of a revival. Long the neglected stepchild of Assyrian-dominated Iron Age studies, neo-Hittite archaeology is currently all the rage, prompted in no small measure by the stunning discoveries on the Aleppo Citadel. In recent years excavations have been restarted after a long hiatus at the iconic sites of Zincirli and Tayinat in Turkey, and now most recently at Tell Halaf in north-eastern Syria.

First excavated in the last years of the 19th and early in the 20th century by the celebrated 'railway spy', Baron von Oppenheim, the early Halaf excavations suffered much the same vicissitudes of fate as the parallel British excavations at neo-Hittite Carchemish. Both excavations originated in 'national rivalries' along the Berlin–Baghdad railway route, both were disrupted and ultimately wrecked in the often savagely fought-over border disturbances after the First World War, and the records and finds of both were much damaged in the aerial bombing raids

of the Second World War. Neo-Hittite archaeology has not had a particularly easy road to prominence.

At least new excavations are possible at many (if not all) of the more prominent sites of neo-Hittite settlement, and the last 10 years have seen many important advances. Barring British work at Carchemish, Oppenheim's five seasons of excavation at Tell Halaf were arguably the most important for the initial definition of neo-Hittite art and architecture, burial customs and settlement pattern. Here elaborate fortifications and gateways, palatial architecture and sculpture-bedecked tombs were uncovered in excellent states of preservation. The palace and gatehouse areas were graced with an extensive array of sculptured orthostat blocks containing beautifully executed mythological and secular scenes, rich in motif and detail. And from the first discovery, controversy has reigned as to the cultural origins and changing socio-political orientation of the rulers and the ruled.

Nearly a hundred years of study has not satisfactorily resolved these issues, which boil down to the puzzle of overwhelmingly Imperial Hittite artistic traditions being employed by linguistically Aramaean political (and apparently ethnic) cultural units. To square this circle, early analysts (Oppenheim, Frankfort) had to assume that the 9th/8th century BC rulers of, apparently, Aramaean Bit Bahiani employed, extensively, both architectural and sculptural materials manufactured for, then, entirely hypothetical 11th/10th century BC neo-Hittite palatial complexes. This art-historical juggling act was not aided by the confused political history of the Iron II Halaf neighbourhood, independent until the mid-9th century BC, Assyrian-controlled (but perhaps lightly) for much of the next half-century, then independent again for a short time in the late 9th/early 8th century BC, before finally becoming an integrated province of the later Assyrian empire. In such a whirlwind of changing ruling ideologies, it may be that cultural ascription became very much a politically charged act, of necessity more plastic and multivalent than the mute testimony of stone can ever capture.

The present volume reports on the first two seasons of fieldwork, and is, not unexpectedly, a very preliminary statement of results to date. The volume is organized in 14 sections, although strangely not labelled as such in the mute Table of Contents. The eight key concerns of the renewed Syrian-German excavations, in the field since 2006, are stated in the Introduction (pp. 7–12) to be Prehistoric Settlement (the iconic Halaf-period remains), IA Chronology (specifically the pre-9th century Dark Ages), Urban

Structure and the relationship of the Citadel area and the Lower Town (this explored through geomagnetic survey), architectural history and the origins of the Hilani, the nature of Aramaean acculturation, the process of the transformation of Aramaean Guzanu into an Assyrian province, the history of Guzanu under Assyrian rule, and the environmental and economic underpinnings of the Aramaean-Assyrian state.

There are four excavation sectors (A–D), three quite large, and one (Sector D) a small probe into the famous ‘Kultraum’ complex, to further investigate the date and history of use. The Citadel/West Palace/Brick Terrace excavation area (Sector A) isolated 11 stratigraphic phases (although summary charts list a 12th), the upper five being Hellenistic and later, and the lower six relating to the Early Aramaean through Achaemenid periods, with most coherent structural remains being either neo-Assyrian or neo-Babylonian/Achaemenid in date. A splendid neo-Assyrian glazed ceramic beaker and a number of Achaemenid-period fibulae were highlighted finds.

In Sector B (located north of the famous Scorpion Gate), expanded probes in and around the original Oppenheim sondages revealed intriguing Early Iron (‘Voraramaisch’) mudbrick architecture, overlying scrappy Late Chalcolithic 1–3 (Uruk and Ubaid 3) materials, and more substantial Middle/Late Halaf building remains. Earlier Halaf strata are indicated by residual ceramics. Here featured finds were limited to several Late Halaf figurines, two splendid stamp seal fragments (one Halaf, one Ubaid in date), along with normative Late Halaf/Ubaid painted pottery.

The extensive excavations in Sector C focus on the neo-Assyrian/Achaemenid North-East Palace/Assyrian Governor’s Residence complex. Ten stratigraphic phases were isolated in the renewed excavations, the upper four post-Achaemenid, and the lower six ranging from the later Iron I/‘Fruh Aramaisch’ through late Achaemenid periods. Featured finds include neo-Assyrian hard stone sculptural fragments in basalt (human) and diorite (animal), an ivory incised pyxis lid, and several fibulae. Post-Assyrian copper and iron weaponry include several neo-Babylonian ‘Scythian’ arrowheads (alluding to the Cimmerian invasion?), and a goodly collection of Achaemenid-period arrowheads and the occasional spearhead.

The small sounding (Sector D) in the famous Kultraum, located beside and beneath the Oppenheim dighouse, was placed so as to clarify the stratigraphic and chronological relationship of the Kultraum to the nearby architecture and city wall. Four phases were isolated, two post-Achaemenid, and two relating

directly to the ‘Kultraum’ complex, a construction phase in the 9th century BC, and a later-use phase, probably 8th century BC in date.

The next four chapters are short treatments of Iron Age glyptic (Elsen-Novak) and Iron Age ceramics (Sievertsen), the fragmentary Hellenistic remains (Katzy), and a short section on Guzanu’s Iron Age history (Novák). Thereafter, short chapters on survey (Hörner *et al.*) and geophysical remote sensing (Hübner and Hemeier), and a more substantive chapter on archaeobotanical analysis (Riehl and Deckers), are followed by a general summary and concluding remarks.

The four chapters on stratigraphic excavations show to good advantage the meticulous care with which modern fieldwork is undertaken. In-text plans (and splendid end-papers) are beautifully drawn, but the complex greyscale shading (no doubt reduced from full colour originals) often obscures more than it illustrates, and should be used sparingly. The short survey chapter on contouring and trench/sector locations probably should have been at the front of the book, and not consigned to the back, as this would have helped reader orientation during the four excavation chapters, especially as Sectors A and B are somewhat interleaved.

The Iron Age ceramics chapter identified the presence of the Early Iron Age ‘Rillenkeramic’, residual in later 10th century BC (?) strata, pointing to a possible resolution to the vexed question of Iron Age origins, with its implied LB/EIA links to the eastern Anatolian plateau. Whether this may be seen to support Tiglath Pileser’s account of mass movements of Muski, is quite another question. Certainly, much previous commentary on the Halaf ‘Aramaean’ material culture (especially its art and architecture) has drawn links to the LBA of south-east Anatolia (the original Hittite heartland?). Perhaps we begin to detect the Anatolian (post-Hittite refugees displaced by, and/or perhaps including elements of the Muski) element that, combined with local/sedentarizing Aramaean tribal groups, came to form the multi-ethnic multi-cultural Bit-Bahiani federation, with whom the later Assyrians came into conflict.

Kohlmayer and Hawkins recent revelations on relations between Aleppo and (northern Philistine?) Unqi, underline our profound ignorance of the evidently complex and dynamic events occurring in north Syria in the Iron I period. The, as yet, scant hints from the pre-palace IA strata at Halaf provide yet more evidence to illustrate this point. Together with other recently renewed excavations in the neo-Hittite cities, the new excavations at Tell Halaf

promise many exciting revelations in the years to come. For Syrian Iron Age scholars, interesting times indeed.

Stephen Bourke
University of Sydney

Greenberg, R. and Keinan, A. (2009) *Israeli Archaeological Activity in the West Bank 1967–2007 A Sourcebook*. Jerusalem : Emek Shaveh. Pp. 180, 12 figures, 4 maps, 1 CD. ISBN 978-965-91468-0-2. Paperback. 200 New Israeli Shekels

This publication presents the full dataset of excavations and surveys carried out in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (part of the occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) to use the United Nations' terminology). It consists of three parts: the first is a historical survey, the second is a discussion of the database itself and the third is a gazetteer in hard copy (the book is accompanied by a CD with the latter information in digital format). The research was born of a political need 'to provide a factual foundation for the deliberations of the [Israeli-Palestinian Archaeology Working Group] on the future of archaeology in the event of a final status agreement' (p. 2), but it will also meet an academic need (so far as these can be separated) for greater clarity on who conducts archaeological projects in the West Bank and what kind of projects these are. Much of the dataset featured in the volume has been previously published in Hebrew only, if at all. Publication in English will allow an increased number of archaeologists access to the dataset, although an Arabic translation would obviously be of greater benefit to Palestinian archaeologists who will ultimately be the custodians of such cultural heritage under a two-state solution.

Archaeologists from outside Israel and Palestine are often at a disadvantage. Archaeological research is often published without full disclosure as to which side of the fence a site lies on. Thus the ethical and political issues become further blurred. Accordingly, this book needs to be read alongside an earlier paper, Greenberg and Keinan (2007), which clearly sets out the framework under which excavation occurs in the oPt and East Jerusalem.

As Greenberg and Keinan point out (p. 7), an independent Palestinian approach to archaeology exists and thrives. Both the Palestinian Department of Antiquities and Palestinian universities and institutions carry out excavations where they have access and oversight, mostly Area A, that is, 17% of the

West Bank (see al-Houdalieh 2010 for a review of the status of Palestinian research). A great number of Israeli and international organizations fund, direct and take part in excavations in the rest of the oPt and interpretation of international law and what constitutes a 'legitimate authority' varies considerably. For example, this journal does not currently publish work undertaken in the West Bank unless that work has been undertaken under the auspices of the Palestinian authorities.

Accordingly, the political thrust of the present volume will not be welcome by many. Israeli archaeology is now a highly developed discipline and the subject of internal scrutiny (see Kletter 2006). The present volume can be seen as part of Greenberg's personal commitment to a more vigorous internal debate on the ethics of archaeological practise (e.g. Greenberg 2009) and the authors' belief that archaeology cannot be seen as apolitical in the present context:

The six-day war of June 1967 marked the beginning of a process that was to revolutionize the archaeological investigation of the central highland regions, leading to the addition of thousands of sites to its inventory, hundreds to the list of its excavated places, and changing some of the central paradigms of archaeological interpretation of its history ... In Israel the fields of archaeology and historical geography had long been linked, and academics in both fields had an intimate and mutual relationship with military historians and with the IDF itself. (p. 4)

This link between the gun and the trowel ensures that archaeology is part of the occupation and not separate from it. In fact, archaeology has never been apolitical in other contexts (Meskell 1998) and it is clear from Palestinian responses to Israeli archaeological work that Palestinians themselves perceive Israeli archaeology as overtly political (Abu el-Haj 2001; Masalha 2007).

Nevertheless, the data produced here is presented for a broad audience and in the hope that Palestinians will be able to make use of the data for their own purposes. This reviewer found the discussion of the level of survey coverage (fig. 5, p. 11) to be of real value, and the overview of survey method and design will be particularly helpful for those seeking to use the data in an academic context. Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of the way in which the data are collated is the use of the Palestine or New Israel Grid references. This means that the data in the excel spreadsheet cannot be simply uploaded into ARC GIS, but has to be first converted. As the authors

must have had to convert the data to UTM in order to run it in ArcView, it seems odd not to provide those conversions and save the user the trouble. The spreadsheet itself is divided into three separate sheets: surveys, excavations and an excavation licence list allowing the user to manipulate the data for a variety of purposes.

The authors offer a number of case studies to demonstrate the utility of having the data in these forms. The first revolves around questions regarding Iron Age chronology and settlement, the second about the extent of the Neapolis (Nablus) hinterland in the Roman period and the third relates to mosaic floors and cultural resource management. The volume is focused solely upon the West Bank and East Jerusalem. One would hope that the Gaza Strip will receive increased attention in the near future. This lack does not devalue the contribution of the work before us — it provides us with data and references on nearly 6000 archaeological features and 1600 excavations and, as the authors state, the most wide-ranging summary of Israeli activity in the oPt. But the true value of the book is that it is reflexive and reflective, and one can hope that both Israeli and Palestinian archaeology will be the better for it.

Jaimie Lovell

Council for British Research in the Levant

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Nakhai, B. A. (ed.) (2008) *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. ISBN 978-1-443-80030-3. Pp. xviii + 215. £39.99

In 2000, Beth Alpert Nakhai established a session at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) entitled the *World of*

Women: Gender and Archaeology. The aim was to encourage papers on the lives of ‘real’ women in the ancient and classical Near East, filling a supposed gap in scholarship, which has focused on the world of men as presented through the ‘andocentric’ documents of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, and other historical texts (p. x). This volume is a collection of nine of these ASOR papers (among 29) presented between 2000 and 2007, with a further 12 having been published elsewhere (see list on pp. xvii–xviii). Utilizing archaeological, textual and ethnographic evidence, the articles deal with issues related to the ancient woman in Egypt, the Levant and Mesopotamia, from the Predynastic through to Byzantine periods. The exception is a chapter which focuses on a children’s writer from Edwardian-period England.

In the first article of the volume, ‘Dark Men, Light Women: Origins of Colour as Gender Indicator in Ancient Egypt’ (ch. 1), Mary Ann Eaverly attempts to argue that the colour differentiation between men (dark brown/red) and women (white/yellow) in the art of Dynastic Egypt was related to the ideology of *maat*, rather than simply being a reflection of different sun exposure due to male activities outdoors and female activities indoors. The concept of *maat*, ‘a carefully balanced cosmos with pharaoh serving as guarantor’ (p. 1), represented order within the dynastic political framework and relied upon the unification of opposites according to Egyptian literature (p. 10). While the union of male and female was central to this ideology, Eaverly’s arguments that their red and yellow colouring respectively were opposites are not altogether convincing, largely because she fails to explain the significance of the colours and provide evidence for why they should be considered in opposition to one another (p. 10). Nevertheless, her discussion of the engendering of colour in Egyptian art and questioning of why colour convention was lacking in the pre-Dynastic period raise important points for further research (p. 7).

Chapters 2–5, which deal with women’s domestic activities and how these define their status in the ancient household and community, work well together and are a valuable contribution to the volume. Aubrey Baadsgaard’s article, ‘A Taste of Women’s Sociality: Cooking as Cooperative Labor in Iron Age Syro-Palestine’ (ch. 2), examines the spatial distribution of ovens and their associated features in the Iron Age house in order to reconstruct the activities and movements of women. She argues that cooking occurred in conjunction with other domestic activities (p. 30) and since the facilities were shared between

women of neighbouring households it served a social purpose and was a means for forming relationships and networks of women (p. 42). In chapter 3, 'Baking and Brewing Beer in the Israelite Household: A Study of Women's Cooking Technology', Jennie Ebeling and Michael Homan explore the relationship between women and the production of beer in Israelite society based on artistic, literary and archaeological evidence from Egypt and the Near East. Particularly useful is their identification in the archaeological record of the implements used, including fermentation stoppers which they argue have erroneously been identified as loom weights (pp. 57–60). While this study sheds light on beer brewing in antiquity, its conclusion that women were empowered by being in control of such a task is perhaps overstated.

In addition to cooking, the ancient woman's other traditional task of spinning and weaving is considered by Deborah Cassuto in chapter 4 — 'Bringing Home the Artifacts: A Social Interpretation of Loom Weights in Context'. Specifically, Cassuto focuses on the findspots of loom weights in Iron Age II Levantine houses to further understanding of the 'gendered' use of domestic space (pp. 70–72), revealing that weaving, cooking and other domestic activities took place in the elongated central room of the house. The argument for the centrality of women to the Israelite household (p. 76) could have been strengthened if specific examples were given of 'societies that restricted women's social contact, and which situated women and their activities in the more isolated rooms' (p. 77). Elizabeth Willett's article, 'Infant Mortality and Women's Religion in the Biblical Periods' (ch. 5), first deals with the evidence for the fear of infant mortality and short female lifespan, then tries to demonstrate that this resulted in a particular role for women in household religion, about which we hear little of in the Bible. However, some might find the argument difficult to follow as the various sections are disjointed and the point of the paper comes rather too late.

Chapters 6 and 7 cover aspects of the 'world of women' in the Classical and Byzantine Near East. Cynthia Finlayson's article, 'Mut'a Marriage in the Roman Near East: The Evidence from Palmyra, Syria' (ch. 6), provides a possible explanation as to why a number of women and children appear in the corpus of Palmyrene funerary busts without mention of husbands or fathers in the accompanying inscriptions. She suggests that a type of temporary marriage was taking place, later known as *mut'a* marriage in the Islamic period, resulting from the need to produce children in an environment in which permanent

marriage was not always practical, such as a desert trading city like Palmyra (pp. 110–12). In particular, this seems to have been in the hands of the elite women of Palmyra who wanted to establish a matriarchal line (p. 121). Textual evidence (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*), possibly indicating that Queen Zenobia practised this sort of marriage, strengthens the author's conclusions about the inscribed funerary portraits (p. 122). Treatment of the latter could have been usefully extended with the addition of a table or list of all relevant examples. The ideas raised in this article have implications for our understanding of female-owned tombs at the Nabataean site of Hegra (Mada'in Salih) in modern Saudi Arabia, which have inscriptions which also refer to children but not husbands (see al-Fassi 2007, 56–59). Thus, this chapter suggests a new research question, that is, whether similar marital practices were taking place in both Palmyrene and Nabataean society as a result of the tribal structure and male absence for lengthy periods (as a result of involvement in long-distance trade).

Marica Cassis' article, 'A Restless Silence: Women in the Byzantine Archaeological Record' (ch. 7), emphasizes the importance of using archaeological data and gender theory in order to elucidate the lives of ordinary women in the Byzantine period. Current knowledge of Byzantine women is largely based on texts and concerns only distinguished women from religious contexts (p. 140). Cassis's work includes reassessing sites, such as Çadır Höyük in Turkey, to find out about spaces devoted to women (pp. 150–53). The framework she provides for the 'archaeological investigation of female space' (p. 146) is particularly useful for the analysis of monastic sites, such as Aya Thecla in Turkey and Hurvat Hanni in Israel.

The final two chapters of this volume seem out of place since they do not deal directly with the ancient woman. In 'Fe(male) Potters as the Personification of Individuals, Places, and Things as Known from Ethnoarchaeological Studies' (ch. 8), Gloria London discusses ways of identifying the gender and individuality of potters based on ethnoarchaeological studies of modern female pot-makers in Cyprus and the Philippines. Some of her conclusions, such as those concerning the seasonal aspects of pottery manufacture and the home as a locus for craft specialization by Filipino and Cypriot women (p. 179), will nevertheless be informative to those working on ancient ceramic technology. Equally interesting, but less relevant to the aims of this book, "Working Egyptians of the World Unite!": How Edith Nesbit Used Near Eastern Archaeology and Children's Literature to Argue for

Social Change' (ch. 9) by Kevin McGeough and Elizabeth Galway explores how a female writer in Edwardian-period Britain used Near Eastern scholarship in her children's stories to 'help argue for the cause of social justice' (p. 189). The connections drawn between ancient Near Eastern societies and British society in Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet* are analysed in detail by the authors and they successfully demonstrate Nesbit's utopian vision for Britain in the future (pp. 201–02).

Overall, the articles in this volume are a welcome contribution to our knowledge of the lives of women in the ancient Near East, including the spaces they inhabited, the activities they were involved in, how they were represented, and the social functions they fulfilled. The book is well laid out with a clear presentation, however the quality of several figures could have been improved.

Lucy Wadeson
University of Nottingham

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Peter van Dommelen and Carlos Gómez Bellard (eds) (2008) *Rural Landscapes of the Punic World*. Monographs in Mediterranean Archaeology 11. London/Oakville: Equinox Publishing Ltd. ISBN 13-9781845532703. Pp. xi+283, many b/w photographs, plans, and maps. Hard cover. £60.00

This is an excellent book, which deserves to be read not only by those with an interest in survey and rural archaeology, but also by anyone with an interest in the western Mediterranean between the 6th and 1st centuries BC, whether historian or archaeologist. Van Dommelen and Gómez Bellard, together with their collaborators, have synthesized a vast range of archaeological fieldwork undertaken across much of the western Mediterranean in the last century; furthermore, in doing so they have developed a sophisticated (and potentially provocative) set of arguments regarding the label 'Punic' and some key aspects of Carthaginian hegemony in the western Mediterranean; and, they have managed that semi-mythical feat of producing an edited volume that is truly coherent and consistently easy to read. They themselves call it a 'hybrid model', by which they signify extensive editorial intervention, including rewriting, and it is an approach which undoubtedly pays off. Of course, no book is perfect, and plenty will find things to disagree over; but I rather suspect that

most, if not all, of those working on the Punic world are going to find themselves treating this book as something of a benchmark in any future discussion.

The volume is very reader-friendly, with the chapters broken down into clear subsections, extensively illustrated, and footnote free (most chapters have 2 or 3 endnotes, which truly are 'notes', rather than continuation of the main text). The hasty reader could get by on some 60 pages, reading chapters 1 (with succinct and valuable discussions of the terminology of 'Punic' and of the 6th-century crisis), 8 (analysis of the evidence), and 9 (overarching conclusions); but to do so would be a mistake, since the five regional surveys which make up the core of the book (chapters 3–7) are rich in detail but also lucidly and consistently organized, such that the reader is genuinely in a position to engage with the editors' own syntheses when they get to chapter 8. The survey chapters in turn generate a consolidated bibliography of some 30 pages, which by itself makes this book an invaluable point of reference.

The editors set out their stall in chapter 1, with a clear justification for focusing upon the rural archaeology of the Punic world — principally, the largely unchallenged, but stereotypical set of views which portray the Punic world as one based upon wealth deriving from agricultural exploitation, in no less stereotypical contrast to the preceding maritime commerce of the Phoenicians, and founded upon an increasingly territorial and colonial Carthaginian empire in the west. Such views remain unchallenged since the existing archaeological fieldwork of the 'Punic world' has been subject to a very pervasive, and only gradually and recently shifting, urban bias. This aim is succinctly reframed in chapter 9 (p. 231) as '[...] to assess and to contextualize the claims of the [...] classical sources on the basis of the archaeological remains'. In principle, the ground is prepared for this by chapter 2 on the classical sources (V. Krings), but this chapter is much the least cohesive with the volume as a whole, and disconcertingly narrow in its focus on a handful of texts that deal almost entirely with Carthage in the era of the Punic wars, and its emphasis upon the moralizing and propagandistic tone of later Greco-Roman authors. Krings is keen to contextualize references to Mago the agronomist, but Mago himself, even if undated/undatable surely needs a context; it would help, for instance, for an understanding of the West, to know that Hieron II, king of Syracuse from c. 265 to 215 BC, also wrote an agricultural handbook.

Almost disarmingly, the editors suggest as a second motivation the plain fact that the rural Punic world

has been largely ignored to date; in many ways this looks to be a sounder justification, since the stereotypes of historiographical tradition increasingly look like a straw man, and what we really need is data. Chapters 3 to 7 more than make up for that shortfall, with detailed surveys of surveys (and no lack of methodological rigour along the way), as well as documented cases of rural excavation and, rather more briefly, rural burial practices and rural ritual sites. This last, in particular, seems almost to be in there as a plea for further study, since the material to date appears to be so limited and so unyielding to analysis. The regions covered are Ibiza, Spain (i.e. Andalusia and the gulf of Cadiz), North Africa, western Sicily (with the islands of Malta and Pantelleria) and Sardinia.

It is, of course, unarguable that in a basic sense these five regions constitute 'the Punic world' (cf. pp. 2–5 for due discussion). But one might ask whether there is not a risk of circularity. In arguing for a 'Punic world' (in this instance the material and practical culture of rural exploitation principally in the 4th to 1st centuries BC), the 'world' has to some extent been predefined and blinkers fitted. This slips out occasionally in generalizations such as the 'fundamental question' posed at the start of chapter 9: 'why did people decide to go and live away from the main urban centres and establish rural settlements roughly in the same period all across the western Mediterranean?' (p. 232). Granted, the five regions do cover much of the western Mediterranean, but they can hardly be described as 'all'. Italy is the most striking absentee from this party, but the whole of Sicily east of Himera/Akragas is a blank map (fig. 6.2), and the entire northern coast of the western Mediterranean between Reggio di Calabria in Italy and Baria in Spain never features. The only serious consideration of the other peoples or cultures of the Mediterranean world comes in the final page and a half. For the task in hand this is of course perfectly reasonable, indeed necessary and sensible. But it does pose some problems. The rural 'Punic world' is envisioned as a connected world (post-Horden and Purcell 2000) with a major role for regional indigenous peoples in some sense operating within a (post-Whittaker 1978) Carthaginian hegemony (see esp. pp. 232–38), and one which shows many consistencies and patterns (such as near universal rural expansion in the 4th century — although one has to wonder whether that basic pattern might not be repeated elsewhere in the region). Amongst these, a persuasive case would seem to be made for farmsteads with a central courtyard as being a potentially

'Punic' type (see pp. 206–07), distinct from practices elsewhere. But the contrast with practice elsewhere is not commonly made, and one might, for instance, wonder whether the richer estates that are noted as a feature limited to the south-western Sicilian and Tunisian 'Punic world' from the 3rd century onwards, might not be so much a 'Punic' feature as a development that has a rather different footprint that overlaps with other regions. Most obviously, it might include other parts of Sicily, or Italy; as the editors note, roof tiles are a distinctively Sicilian (i.e. Greek) and thence Sardinian, feature of rural buildings within the wider 'Punic world'. In this respect, amongst the often-cited literary sources not mentioned in this volume one might note Diodorus (13.81) on the agricultural wealth of Agrigentum in the 5th century, often sweepingly linked by historians to subsequent north African developments. The 'Punic world' may well be definable on primarily historical (but also material culture) grounds; but it needs a further set of arguments to claim or justify the view that particular site-types or distributions, or patterns of rural organization and exploitation are themselves identical to, or specific to, that world.

However, before one starts complaining too much, I imagine the editors would respond that this is precisely the point: let the debate begin, since thanks to this volume we now have the materials with which to undertake such comparisons, and an argument with which to engage.

Jonathan Prag
Merton College, University of Oxford

Yon, J.-B. and Gatier, P.-L. (eds) (2009) *Choix d'inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*. Beirut: Presses de l'IFPO (Guides archéologiques de l'Institut français du Proche-Orient 6). ISBN 978-2-351159-080-5. Pp. 223, 85 b/w illustrations, 57 colour illustrations, 6 maps. Paperback. €30.00

In 1991, the Institut français du Proche-Orient launched a new book series, *Guides archéologiques*, aiming to provide guidebooks to specific sites for both interested tourists and specialists. The two most recent publications in this series, one of them under review here, refer to a wider geographical area and broader topics.⁴

⁴The seventh volume in the *Guides archéologiques* series is Abdul Massih, J. and Bessac, J.-C. (eds) (2009) *Glossaire technique trilingue de la pierre. L'exploitation en carrière*. Beirut: Presses de l'IFPO.

The *Selection of Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Syria* was arranged by a team of renowned epigraphers headed by Jean-Baptiste Yon and Pierre-Louis Gatier, with contributions by Julien Aliquot, Jean-Claude Decourt, Denis Feissel, Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais and Maurice Sartre. The editors chose to arrange the inscriptions thematically and not geographically which helps to place them in their context. The geographical framework of the *Selection* coincides with the borders of the Syrian Arab Republic (p. 11); an equation which is justified for a guidebook, even though the modern political boundaries, naturally, do not reflect any ancient provincial borders. The chronological distribution of the 64 inscriptions is less balanced: the introduction promises a range ‘from the fourth century BC to the eleventh century AD’. However, more than 70% of the texts date from Hellenistic times (although none of them from the 4th century BC) to the 4th century AD, about 25% date to the 5th to 7th centuries. The rest, a mere two inscriptions, dates to the 10th and 11th centuries, respectively: One of them is a building inscription from Qal’at Sim’an (no. 20) belonging to the short-lived Byzantine reconquest of Syria under Nikephoros II Phokas, the other a tomb inscription from Gabala (no. 64). In both cases it is not clear why these texts were included as they hardly contribute to the overall picture of Graeco-Roman Syria.

The main aim of the selection was to keep a balance between exceptional and ordinary texts (p. 16), a task which was well accomplished by the editors. The selection also reflects the contributors’ own scholarly focus, which should be seen as a strength of this volume. Unfortunately, due to the large number of contributors and perhaps a lack of stringent copy editing, the book displays some inconsistencies: no. 37 states that the inscription bears leaf-shaped division markers, whereas these are graphically displayed in the editions of nos 10 and 30; no. 5 provides a continuous numbering of lines for the Greek and (Palmyrean) Aramaic text, whereas in nos 4, 32 and 55 the numbering starts anew with the beginning of the Aramaic text. For the numbering of lines, (Western) Arabic numerals are used, whereas rather incomprehensibly no. 63 uses Eastern Arabic numerals (as in use in Syria today) and no. 56 mixes both systems. These are minor but easily avoidable slips. The commentaries range from embedding the texts in their historical context to specialized palaeographic studies, which seem somewhat out of place in a publication aimed at visitors.

The choice of chapters covers eight very important fields of inscriptions in Syria. The introduction

(pp. 11–22) points to the implications of the subject for historical and prosopographical studies. The general distribution of Greek and Latin inscriptions in Syria is well represented in the present volume; 73% of the chosen examples were written in Greek, 22% (most of them Roman milestones) in Latin, and 5% in Aramaic, included in this selection in several bilingual and two trilingual texts (nos 32 and 55). The introduction continues with a brief overview of the history of epigraphy in Syria, starting with the first travellers and the formation of the corpus *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie (IGLS)*. It is followed by notes on the writing systems and — more usefully — on the different chronological systems. A timeline (pp. 19–21) which places the dated inscriptions in their chronological and historical context is an excellent idea; however, it is irritating that already the first entry, Alexander’s victory at Issus, is misdated to 331. The first chapter (pp. 23–58) covers topics such as public life, emperors, governors and cities. No. 4 cites the tax tariff of Palmyra followed by a comprehensive discussion of this important inscription. Whereas all the examples in the first chapter date from the times between the emperors Domitian and Gordian III, chapter 2 (pp. 59–81), which deals with the army, makes use of the whole time range of the collection. No. 14 refers to the ‘perpetual peace’ between Byzantines and Persians (532), and no. 15, a building inscription of the Arab al-Mundhir, provides the reader with information on the Christian tribes in the region. The title of the third chapter (pp. 82–93), ‘Fortifications and Public Buildings’, is slightly misleading, as only no. 71, recording the restoration of a bath, belongs to the latter category. All examples in this section are drawn from the Byzantine period. Chapter 4 (pp. 94–115), entitled ‘Rural life’ (largely on city boundaries), and chapter 5 (pp. 116–35), on routes and milestones, could have been improved by more accurate maps. Chapters 6 (pp. 136–73) and 7 (pp. 174–90) discuss pagan and Christian inscriptions. Both chapters fulfil the aim of the study to give a representative mix between exceptional and regular texts. This task was also accomplished in the eighth and last chapter (pp. 191–214) on grave inscriptions, contrasting, for example, the tomb pyramid of Samsigeramos at Emesa (no. 56) with common pagan (nos 57/58) or Christian (no. 63) tomb inscriptions.

The selection is a well-chosen *tour d’inscriptions* of Syria and a truly readable digest derived from much scholarly work of the *IGLS* volumes. The various illustrations and photographs, many of them in colour, are particularly well chosen. However, it is

not entirely clear for which readership this publication is intended. Compared to Tyler Landsford's epigraphic walking guide of Rome⁵ or a previous title in IFPO's series, *Inscriptions de Palmyre*,⁶ which invites the reader to enjoy a cold drink on the terrace of Palmyra's famous *Hotel Zenobia* while planning own walks through the ruins with their rich epigraphic evidence, this volume is only of little help for travellers: the complete lack of any suggested itinerary to find and read the inscriptions *in situ* or in the museum is clearly its biggest weakness. The included maps are very general, only two site plans point to localizations of inscriptions for Palmyra and Dura Europos (p. 42/67), though both are on such large scale that they are not particularly helpful. Locating some of the inscriptions is made even more difficult: no. 2 states that an

inscription is in 'Qal'at al-Mudiq' without mentioning that this is the museum of Apamea (as then correctly stated in no. 3).

Thus, the *Selection* falls short of presenting a valuable epigraphic guidebook for the region. It is a first step into the fascinating world of epigraphy for readers unfamiliar with inscriptions and interested in Syria. The good choice of texts, the illuminating commentaries, and the numerous illustrations contribute generally to a pleasant volume; it is just unfortunate that epigraphy — as displayed in this volume — is once more confined to libraries and desks and not — as the series' intended — for use on a journey in the country itself.

Konstantin M. Klein
Brasenose College, Oxford

⁵ Cf. Landsford, T. (2009) *The Latin Inscriptions of Rome. A Walking Guide*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

⁶ Cf. As'ad, Kh. and Yon, J.-B. (eds) (2001) *Inscriptions de Palmyre. Promenades épigraphiques dans la ville antique de Palmyre*. Beirut: Presses de l'IFPO (Guides archéologiques de l'Institut français du Proche-Orient 3).