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Review of *In the Shadow of the Ancestors: The Prehistoric Foundations of the Early Arabian Civilization in Oman*, by Serge Cleuziou and Maurizio Tosi

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of movement and nine quakes—seven of them major—in less than 30 years, between 1939 and 1967). The book concludes its scary journey with examples and discussions of societal upheavals triggered by catastrophic quakes.

I have always lived atop the jittery San Andreas, often flung about by its violence. And I grew up on the California Institute of Technology campus, home of much modern seismology as well as much other science. All those sciences offer valuable help to the archaeologist. Yet how can one poor human learn them all? For half a century, I have argued that we archaeologists must learn enough of every science to be able to understand *when to solicit those scientists for their expertise and how to receive intelligently the help they offer*. Nur's book provides a clear, fast-reading, yet cautious and measured account of what archaeologists truly need to know about the geology and physics of earthquakes. Although concentrating on the very active Mediterranean belt, the text is liberally sprinkled with prime examples from both the Old and New Worlds. If you work in a seismic area, you owe it to yourself to curl up with this gem.

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IN THE SHADOW OF THE ANCESTORS: THE PREHISTORIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARLY ARABIAN CIVILIZATION IN OMAN, by *Serge Cleuziou* and *Maurizio Tosi*. Pp. 334, figs. 349. Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Oman 2007. Price not available. ISBN not available.

The Ministry of Heritage and Culture in the Sultanate of Oman is to be congratulated for producing this lavish, colorful, and highly interesting volume on the archaeology of Oman and the United Arab Emirates. These two countries (hereafter "southeastern Arabia") have seen an increase in archaeological fieldwork during the last 20 years that has fundamentally revised our understanding of how ancient societies operated in this area.

The titled authors, Cleuziou and Tosi, wrote most of the volume, but its usefulness is enhanced by a series of "windows" (small essays) by some of the many scholars who have worked in Oman. Three contributions are particularly useful: Weisgerber on all aspects of ancient metallurgy, Uerpmann and Uerpmann on archaeozoology, and Méry on ceramic technology.

The book proceeds along traditional lines. It opens with a detailed analysis of the environment and ecology of southeastern Arabia and then moves chronologically from the Paleolithic archaeology to detailed analysis of the Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages.

Cleuziou's and Tosi's own excavations at Ras al-Jinz in the Sultanate of Oman provide a springboard for examining cultural processes in each of these chronological periods. This is a potentially illuminating heuristic maneuver on the part of the authors. The Ras al-Jinz excavations are incredibly

important (S. Cleuziou and M. Tosi, *JOS* 11 [2000] 19–73). They have revealed remains that stretch from some of the earliest known Holocene occupations to beyond the end of the Iron Age. Not all periods are equally represented, but access to this evidentiary *longue durée* has prompted Cleuziou and Tosi to adopt an interpretative framework that contrasts with the dominant narrative used to explain the emergence of complexity in the ancient Near East. Like this reviewer (P. Magee, *BASOR* 347 [2007] 83–105), they emphasize notions of tribalism and nonlinear forms of hierarchy borrowed from Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* to explain resource exploitation and concomitant social reproduction. Central to this is Khaldun's notion of *assabiya*, sometimes translated as "social cohesion." By taking this approach, the authors emphasize the indigenous origins of "Arabian civilization."

The incorporation of this idea into such a text is an important development and one that ensures that the book is worth reading. However, throughout the volume, there are structural, evidentiary, and scholastic issues that detract considerably from the potential explicatory power that this approach provides. Ultimately, these detract from the scholarly worth of the volume as a whole.

The volume is idea- rather than data-driven. Such an approach is acceptable if the substantive data on which the thesis rests are already well known and/or well published and are therefore easily accessible to the reader. That is not the case with southeastern Arabia in general and with the Ras al-Jinz excavations in particular: the latter have not been published in any style that approaches a final report. Yet these excavations provide the basis for the interpretative framework that underpins the volume. Facts from the excavations are selectively introduced to support statements, but we are not given a complete analysis of artifacts from any of the sites excavated by Tosi and Cleuziou.

Another problem is a near absence of intertext references or foot/endnotes to any other work on Arabia or the ancient Near East. Tosi and Cleuziou are two of the grand men of Arabian archaeology. Together with younger scholars such as Potts (whose *Arabian Gulf in Antiquity* [Oxford 1991] presents a magisterial conspectus on east Arabian archaeology), these pioneers have laid the groundwork for much future research in the area. Nevertheless, regardless of perceived status, all scholars should be expected to provide the information necessary to allow details to be checked, reported facts to be followed, and interpretations to be disputed.

This becomes critical when contentious arguments are presented, some of which, like the advent of *falaj* irrigation, are central to the thesis underpinning this book. It is widely accepted that this technique is characterized by tapping aquifers and transporting the water via human-constructed, subterranean tunnels. The technique is well known in southeastern Arabia and in Iran, where it is called the *qanat*. Cleuziou and Tosi argue that the technology originates in Bronze Age Oman. That might well be the case; this reviewer has long argued for an Arabian, not Iranian, origin of the system. However, Tosi and Cleuziou argue that in contemporary Oman, *falaj* simply means any source of running water (157). Based on this, they argue that the possible surface canals found at Bronze Age Hili 8 are part of a *falaj* system. The lack of any evidence for a well with attached tunnel system at Hili 8, or any other Bronze Age site, does not seem to impede their interpretation. In replacing the more wide-

spread and accepted definition of *falaj* with their own, they render their argument of little relevance to broader debates concerning ancient irrigation. This is a great shame, since the region is undoubtedly critical in the development of the ancient *falaj* system.

In some other cases, the lack of referencing leads to incorrect statements. For example, the authors argue that the Iron Age settlement of Muweilah is associated with an Iron Age *falaj*. Fourteen years of excavation and survey at that site by this reviewer have yet to reveal any such evidence. Similarly, their statement that “no iron objects have been found so far” (291) does not accord with this reviewer’s reports of evidence for the use of iron (P. Magee, *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 9 [1998] 112–17). Similarly, their statement that an Umm an-Nar grave has been excavated at Muweilah (229) is simply wrong.

At other points, the text seems to simply wander without any real purpose. In discussing the Neolithic period, they write:

It resembled what the English very appropriately call “peer-polity” adjusting the latin expression *primus inter pares* “first among equals”, to describe the crisis of Medieval royalty that compelled the Plantagenet King John “Landless” to sign the Magna Carta in 1214 AD. Recalling the legends written in those times, but still loved nowadays through endless re-visitations by Hollywood, it was all like Camelot, Arthur, the Round Table and the King to come. In the Assyrian myth on the origins of dynasties, one of the first kings is named Kullusina bêl: “they were all Lords” (64).

Better editing, proofreading, and a process of peer review may have helped Tosi and Cleuziou overcome these problems and turn their worthwhile and powerful ideas into an important scholarly document.

Despite these academic problems, the usefulness of the short essays on specific topics and the book’s aesthetic appeal are undeniable. Hundreds of full-color images grace the volume, and David’s carefully drawn line figures are particularly useful (even if some are mislabeled or misattributed). The production values and visual appeal of the book are excellent, and for that we should be grateful to the Ministry of Heritage and Culture in the Sultanate of Oman.

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IRAKLION ARCHÄOLOGISCHES MUSEUM: SAMMLUNG GIAMALAKIS, edited by *Walter Müller* and *Ingo Pini*, prepared by *Agnes Sakellariou* (*CMS* 3). 2 vols. Pp. xlvii + 708, numerous figs., color pls. 2. Philip von Zabern, Mainz 2007. €210. ISBN 978-3-8053-3533-1 (cloth).

The latest volume in the *CMS* series presents the Giamalakis Collection of Minoan sealstones now housed in the Heraklion Museum. Stylianos Giamalakis (1899–1962) received

almost all his seals as payment from his patients, and this has meant that no seal has a sure provenance. Xenaki-Sakellariou (1922–1995) first published his collection in 1958 (*Les cachets minoens de la collection Giamalakis* [Paris]). It was a highly informative book, with digressions on iconography, shape, material, and technique sprinkled throughout the catalogue, which divided the material into the now-canonical four main periods: Prepalatial, Protopalatial, Neopalatial, and Postpalatial. All the seals, however, were illustrated in tiny 1:1 photographs (the few drawings were larger).

This latest *CMS* volume presents the Giamalakis Collection in its typical format: usually one seal per page, with (large) photographs of the face and the impression, a drawing of the impression, and a concise description of the seal and its iconography. A *Kommentar* assesses the quality of engraving. Comparanda and bibliography follow.

In the introduction, Pini discusses authenticity, provenance, iconography, style, technique, composition, and the few imports (1–9). Müller presents an exhaustive list of the materials (11–22) and a thorough discussion of the shapes and their stringholes (23–34), often complicated for the early material. Then follow the necessary concordances. Five indices close the introduction (stated provenance [in quotation marks], material, shape, motive, and suggested dates).

Pini says in the introduction, “Der Band enthält relativ wenige Highlights” (1), but he is being too reserved. Some pieces in the collection have been published several times, but they still deserve our attention: for example, number 2, a squatting ape of hippopotamus ivory with spirals and paisleys; number 31, a thin cylinder of cornelian with bands of beautifully engraved palmettes; number 234, a gold four-sided prism with neatly spaced hieroglyphs; and number 237, a four-sided prism of agate with hieroglyphs, a “gorgon” head (cf. no. 238), and neatly carved patterns.

A few other seals have not garnered the attention they deserve: number 17, a disc of hippopotamus ivory, carries an interlocking quadripartite design that looks Early Helladic, and the editors cite appropriate parallels (*CMS* 5, nos. 80, 97; 5, suppl. 1A, no. 381).

The main interest of the collection, however, is its large collection of early hardstone seals. Some are datable toward the end of the Protopalatial period (e.g. nos. 19–22, recumbent animals of cornelian and quartz; nos. 92–4, foliate-backs of cornelian; no. 101, a half-cylinder of agate with a design resembling axes on the face). But most of these are datable to the early Neopalatial period, and here the collection is rich. Four are of special interest: number 65, a box-shaped seal of cornelian engraved on two faces with an acrobat and an agrimi; number 140, a ringstone of chalcedony with a goat perched on a mountain peak; number 357, an amygdaloid of cornelian with a man holding a monkey on a leash; and number 377, a lentoid of cornelian with two monkeys flanking a kantharos.

There are other interesting seals as well. I mention here only four: number 100, a half-cylinder of gold foil over steatite with a pattern of Xs; number 239, an amygdaloid of cornelian with a figure in a skirt whose linear quality (wrongly called “Talismanic”) reminds me of *CMS* 11, number 20, with a woman holding a papyrus stalk; and a pair of amygdaloids, numbers 372 and 382, whose material (agate) has similarly narrow and convoluted veining—might they be carved from the same stone?

A couple of seals in the collection are modern, and these prompt interesting questions. Number 285, a lentoid of clear