détaillée des décors, qui s’apparentent à ceux mis en œuvre dans les sanctuaires et les monuments publics de la ville, en particulier à partir de la seconde moitié du Iᵉʳ siècle, amène A. Henning à conclure à un emprunt plus marqué aux domaines micrasiatique et hellénistiques lagide et séleucide qu’au monde romain. De leur côté, les aménagements et décors internes de la tour 13 témoignent de l’utilisation continue du monument, de sa construction en 103 de n.ᵉ au Iᵉʳ siècle, constatation qui peut être étendue aux autres tours étudiées. Contrastant avec cette brillante démonstration, les conclusions relatives aux rituels de commémoration ou à la représentation des défunts (Ch. 9) sont plus attendues. Enfin, l’étude des parallèles amène A. Henning à actualiser utilement le dossier des tours funéraires identifiées le long de l’Euphrate, de Doura-Europos à Halabiyeh, lesquelles fournissent les comparaisons les plus convaincantes (Ch. 10, Pl. 85-92). L’étude est suivie de trois catalogues, présentant la description détaillée de l’architecture des tombes tours (p. 137-292), la sculpture figurée de la tombe 13, l’une des mieux conservées de la série (p. 292-309) et les décors peints relevés dans l’ensemble des monuments (p. 309-313). Le texte est accompagné de résumés en allemand, anglais et arabe (p. 125-136). Un très bon travail donc, soutenu par d’excellentes illustrations et par un travail éditorial particulièrement soigné. La destruction volontaire des tombes tours « d’Elhabal, d’Atenatan, de Kitôt et de Jamblique, ainsi que de trois tombeaux anonymes », pour citer la triste liste établie par M. Gawlikowski, dans un hommage rendu à l’archéologue Khaled al-As’ad après sa cruelle disparition dans les abjectes circonstances que l’on sait, rend cette très belle étude douloureusement importante.

Laurent THOLBEQ


This monograph by Michaela Konrad is a detailed and thorough piece of research on a difficult subject. The book is based on the author’s inaugural lecture at Freiburg University in 2003, but is fully updated and referenced to serve as a comprehensive study of all the available evidence on the kingdom of Emesa in the first century BC and AD. M. Konrad has extensive archaeological fieldwork experience in the region and has for years published important research especially on Rome’s eastern frontier in northern Syria and the Euphrates region. The manuscript was completed in July 2013, the very month when my monograph *Images and Monuments of Near Eastern Dynasts (100 BC to AD 100)*, Oxford, reached the bookstores and could hence not be included here, as the author remarks (p. 1); likewise, I too wish my research could have profited from the author’s illuminating results. But it is interesting and somewhat reassuring to note that, despite differences on points of detail, we often reach fundamentally similar conclusions independently of each other. The kingdom of Emesa (Homs) on the middle Orontes occupied a key strategic position in central Syria. Its dynasty, which is first attested in our sources for the early first century BC, proved a reliable ally of Rome until the annexation of the kingdom to the province of Syria, probably in Flavian times. For the political history of this kingdom, the only
available literary evidence are stray remarks by authors such as Strabo, Tacitus, Plutarch and Josephus. The very fact that one is able to gather and analyse virtually all the evidence on the kingdom of Emesa between the covers of a fairly slim volume says much about the poverty of our evidence on this elusive kingdom. Unlike many of its royal colleagues, the royal dynasty of Emesa never struck coins. Nor are there inscriptions or building projects that can be ascribed to the kings. Its archaeological evidence is limited to finds from a number of tombs, which form the core material of this book. The book starts with an introduction on the political situation in early Roman Syria in which Konrad elucidates the relations between Rome and eastern “client kings” (p. 1-6). This is followed by a brief exposé on the Emesenian dynasty (p. 7). The author outlines the main thrust of her case study as an attempt to uncover “interkulturelle[n] Transformationsprozesse” (p. 2). As she rightly notes, local client kings often played a crucial role in this exchange, as the interface between imperial power and local populations. The material evidence shows that these kings, who often gave themselves epithets like \emph{philorhomaios}, were not only political mediators but also “Kulturträger”. To some extent, one could even say that client kings paved the way for the Romanisation and Hellenization that we see in the Roman period. Emesa is a particularly interesting case, as the kingdom had a strong, defensible citadel and was strategically situated on two important long-distance trade routes; it was also surrounded by fertile agricultural land which merged in the east with the steppe frontier zone. The main body of text is divided into five parts, of which the largest one is on the finds from 22 tombs in the necropolis Tell Abu Sabun (p. 9-42). Then come two chapters which expand on especially important finds from the tombs, one on the cultural history of Syria at the turn of our era (p. 42-46), the other on the “Spannungsverhältnisse” that Emesan dynasts had to master, juggling between tribal authority and Roman imperial power (p. 47-58). This is followed by a brief historical chapter on the identities of Emesenian kings (p. 59-66) and then by the conclusions (p. 67-72). The remaining pages (p. 73-108) contain very brief summaries in German, English and Arabic, a site register, bibliography, plates and index. The illustrations are generally of high quality, including some new drawings expressly made for this book. For the most part, the tombs contained items of clothing, jewellery, weapons and ritual objects. The mode of inhumation burial in pit tombs covered by stone slabs, and objects like golden face masks, are in line with Syrian and Mesopotamian traditions. On the other hand, Roman connections are also clear. One of the most stunning artefacts from the tombs, a well-known iron parade helmet consists of a visor in the shape of a face mask covered in silver and, connected through a hinge on the forehead, a shell covering the rest of the head that was originally covered in fabric. The proximity of this luxury item to imperial types is in fact so close that Konrad suggests, plausibly, close contacts with members of the imperial court at Rome. She further suggests that the helmet played a role in funerary rituals connected with the imperial cult. There is more. Konrad’s minute analysis of costumes and jewellery reveals striking similarities with tomb finds from central Asian nomadic cultures of the first century AD. While Henri Seyrig had already briefly pointed out some connections of this kind, the author sets out the arguments in full with copious evidence. While client kings in the Roman Levant moulded parts of their public self-image to mimic their imperial overlords, \emph{e.g.} through Augustan-style portraiture, this is never wholesale cultural adaptation, but
rather selective use of cultural elements. This left ample space for each dynast to construct their personal and dynastic identities as they saw fit. Through the style and type of their costumes and jewellery, the kings of Emesa showed distinct cultural leanings towards the Parthian / central Asian realm. M. Konrad interprets this to mean that the “local identity” of these kings, as of many other dynasts, was not an altogether “homegrown organic” product, but rather constructed with much care and deliberation. The author speaks of a “(pseudo)ethnische Identität” (p. 74) which quickly disappeared as soon as the kingdom ceased to exist. A case in point is a large mausoleum (destroyed in 1911) of one Samsigeramos at Emesa, built in *opus reticulatum* in AD 78/9. This man was probably a late offshoot of the dynasty who died soon after the annexation of the kingdom, but did not name any royal connections in his tomb inscription. Instead he put his Roman credentials to the fore. As for the architectural type, Konrad explains the relationship of this “Prunkgrab” (p. 64) with Levantine precedents and parallels, in combination with decoration that harks back to Hellenistic and Roman examples. These features, too, can be seen as typical of a Rome-friendly local elite in the Near East. This monument constitutes, according to Konrad, the spirit of a post-royal age that has left the peculiar Emesenian identity behind and set its sights on Roman imperial culture. One can agree with the author that the “Wandel von Wertesystemen und kultureller Identität” (p. 74) went hand in hand. The book by Konrad is a demanding but rewarding read that furthers our understanding of Emesenian culture. It contains research that is both thorough and original. Specialists of the history and archaeology of Roman Syria will read this book with profit.

Andreas Kropp


Ce petit livre constitue le point d’orgue de l’œuvre de Burton MacDonald (St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nouvelle-Écosse, Canada) qui a consacré l’essentiel de sa carrière à prospecter, sur les traces de Nelson Glueck, le plateau transjordanien. Écrit à la suite de plusieurs monographies régionales publiées avec une exemplaire régularité depuis trente-cinq ans et qui rendent compte de ces travaux – seule manque encore la publication finale de la prospection couvrant la région comprise entre Shammakh et Ayl –, l’ouvrage brosse en six chapitres les grandes étapes de l’occupation du segment du plateau correspondant peu ou prou à l’ancien Édom biblique et à ses contreforts occidentaux. La lecture diachronique couvre six millénaires et conclut à la manifestation, sur la longue durée, de pics d’occupation (« filling-up ») et de creux (« emptying-out »), ce qui n’est pas sans poser parfois quelques problèmes de méthode, dès lors que le développement s’articule en grande partie sur des ramassages de céramique – *quid* des populations nomades ? – dont la lecture reste de surcroît dans un certain nombre de cas mal assurée (cf. mon compte rendu de la prospection de Ayl à Ras an-Naqab / ARNAS, *BMCR* [2014].01.51). Elle permet par ailleurs de différencier les occupations observées sur le plateau et dans la