

presents a meticulous analysis based on archaeological methodology. The mobile stone vessels disappear faster than the architectural and rock hewn pools but the tendency of decline is obvious. R. Bonnie shows that although a lot of debate has evolved around the theory to link vessels and pools to the temple cult, it is basically correct, although R. Bonnie argues, because of the gradual disappearance, for a multi-causal model. In the last chapter, the author summarizes his results (p. 319-323) and then he presents three appendices listing post-70 synagogues, stepped pools and stone vessels. A bibliography follows with only few entries later than 2014 and a heavy bias on anglophone titles. In general, the picture that R. Bonnie draws of 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE Galilee is convincing and it is a welcome discussion of a Mediterranean micro-region that is well embedded in a regional and global world. The cultural profile sketched by the author is that of a regional society that is taken seriously in its *Eigenlogik* and not labeled as Roman in opposition to Jewish. Having said this, the book unfortunately is fatiguing to read, since it is full of lengthy discussions that deviate from the line of reasoning. Long discussions of Italic *atrium* houses although not a single Italic *atrium* has been found in the region do not contribute to the argument, no more than a lengthy but superficial and not up to date overview of temples and cults in the Decapolis. Sometimes one gets the impression that the author wants the reader to follow him step by step in his own learning about the broader context of the region. Sometimes comparisons are drawn from very distant places as in the case of the peristyle houses of Cyrrhus in Northern Syria (p. 252) and a much closer comparison, namely the peristyle house in Apollonia, is not mentioned. Not convincing is the identification of the public building at the intersection of two major streets in Sepphoris as a *macellum* (p. 58-60) and I would be much more comfortable with naming it an *agora* as suggested by an inscription relating to the « *macellum* » of Gerasa (cf. V. Evangelidis, « *Macella and Makelloi in Roman Greece: The Archaeological and Textual Evidence* », *Hesperia* 88 [2019], p. 304 with n. 141). This structure is well-comparable to the one in Sepphoris (as R. Bonnie himself shows). This criticism however should not diminish the value of the comprehensive study of R. Bonnie that draws a nuanced local picture of 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE Galilee and the variety of Judaism in antiquity. It is a useful contribution to the cultural history of Galilee and Judaism in the Roman period.

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Mariana CASTRO, *The Function of the Roman Army in Southern Arabia Petraea*. Oxford, Archaeopress Publishing Press, 2018. 1 vol. broché, IV-216 p., 34 fig., 38 pl. coul. (ARCHAEOPRESS ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY, 48) Prix : 40 £ (+ taxes). ISBN 978-1-78491-952-8.

This valuable M.A. thesis aims at proposing a better understanding of the role of the Roman army in southern Transjordan, through the utilization of advanced recording and interpretative landscape archaeology techniques. The study area extends from Petra down to Aila/Aqaba, basically including sites on both sides of *Via Nova Traiana*. The selection of the term “Arabia Petraea” is unusual; the term is ambiguous (see G. Bowersock, “The Three Arabias in Ptolemy’s Geography”, in P.-L. Gatier, B. Helly, & J.-P. Rey-Coquais [eds.], *Géographie historique au Proche-Orient*, Paris, 1988,

p. 47-53), spatially poorly defined and rarely used in antiquity. Throughout the work, Castro treats the study area as a frontier zone since east of *Via Nova* were just “Arabian deserts and nomadic groups threading the landscape” (p. 15). It is not the case. It has been for long convincingly argued that the Province of Arabia was coterminous with the Nabataean Kingdom (e.g., P.-L. Gatier & J.-F. Salles, “Aux frontières méridionales du domaine nabatéen”, in J.-F. Salles [ed.], *L’Arabie et ses mers bordières. 1. Itinéraires et voisinages*, Lyon, 1988, p. 173-187). Thus the direct Roman administration would have extended all the way south to at least Hegra (Madain Salih), although the means of maintaining the military control and securing peaceful conditions there would have been different than in “Arabia Petraea.” Flourishing major Hijazi oases within Roman Arabia, such as al-Bad’, Dumat al-Jandal and especially Hegra, would have been the nodal points of control and surveillance, an assumption reinforced by the presence of military inscriptions. At any rate, such understanding of the *entire* Roman Arabia makes the dispute on the internal vs. external threat in the study area, which Castro has admirably and critically assessed (p. 22-33), largely redundant, at least for the 2nd-3rd century period. It is only with the so-called “Diocletianic buildup,” associated with the construction of new forts and the reoccupation of the old ones, that southern Transjordan becomes a true “frontier zone.” The Romans must have withdrawn from the northern Hijaz some time towards the end of the 3rd century (e.g., the abandonment of the fort in Hegra; see Z.T. Fiema & F. Villeneuve, “The Roman Military Camp in Ancient Hegra”, in C. S. Sommer & S. Matesic [eds.], *Limes XXIII. Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, Ingolstadt 2015. Mainz, 2018, p. 702-711), as no garrisons in that region seem to be attested in *Notitia Dignitatum*. Castro perceives the phenomenon of increased militarization in southern Transjordan by the turn of the 3rd century as means to repel potential Persian threat and “a way of responding to the feeling of internal mistrust initiated by Zenobia’s ambitions” (p. 75-76). It may be so, but Persian invasions did not materialize in that part of the Roman East until the early 7th century and the impact of the Zenobia’s episode on populations of southern Transjordan, if any at all, cannot be realistically measured. The main part of the work is the spatial analysis of military and military-related sites in the study area through the application of visibility and distance analyses. By these means, Castro intends to “illuminate the function of the *military system* along the *Arabian frontier*” (p. 40, emphasis by me) and to explore spatial relationships between military sites, testing their integration into a larger system which would then determine their function. The analyses, conducted with considerable expertise, are, undoubtedly, the strongest element in Castro’s thesis. However, while it is perfectly legitimate to isolate a well-defined zone and to submit its sites to landscape analysis, the conclusions may be affected by the initial premise. Whether or not the fortifications there can be interpreted as a “military system,” the southern Transjordan was hardly a frontier zone in the 2nd-3rd centuries (*supra*) and the political, military and economic affairs in the study area cannot be effectively treated and understood separately from the arrangements in the entire southern part of the province. Given the increased expectations prompted by the title and the introduction, the conclusions are somewhat disappointing. Not surprisingly, the role of the army in “Arabia Petraea” is confirmed as being multifunctional. The author admits that “the results presented here approximate those of Parker in 1986, but a more thorough consideration of the army’s function

is offered” (p. 77). This statement is rather ambiguous and it seems to point in the direction of confirming the validity of the “external threat,” the “defence in-depth” and other concepts criticized on previous pages. At any rate, Castro convincingly maintains that the paramount function of the Roman army in southern “Arabia Petraea,” which underlies all others, was to protect and maintain the caravan routes, the major source of wealth in the East (p. 73). However, this emphasis lacks further amplification; a somewhat simplistic view of the Eastern trade overlooks the evidence of combined sea and land routes and the issue of control over the Red Sea shipping lanes. The Descriptive Catalog I is a very practical compilation of relevant ancient sources. Castro correctly observes that the 4th-6th century sources indicate a notable external/internal threat, which would have coincided with the “Diocletianic buildup” and other defensive measures taken during the Byzantine period. It remains to be seen whether this seeming abundance of sources mainly reflects the appearance of a great variety of chronicles and of hagiographic and ecclesiastical literature, often of an anecdotic and hearsay nature, or if the threat noticeably increased only during that period. Perhaps such incidents existed also earlier but are primarily known from ambiguous and notoriously difficult to interpret Safaitic inscriptions. The largest part of the volume is occupied by the descriptive catalog of military and military-related sites (forts, fortlets, road stations, roads, milestones, “granaries”, water sources etc.). Castro is fully aware of the major pitfalls associated with the creation of a catalog of military structures, and their assessment. These include: ambiguous terminology concerning “military” structures, inadequate descriptions, variations in systems of dating surface ceramics, etc. (p. 40-41). Yet, at least in some cases, the author appears to have accepted the definitions and assignments made by earlier explorers, without necessary verification. The sites of el-Mutrab el-Hammam are good examples of such procedure. The author firmly considers these as “forts” (p. 120-122), despite the criticism, seemingly known to Castro, raised by a recent explorer (G. Findlater, *Imperial control in Roman and Byzantine Arabia. A landscape interpretation of archaeological evidence in southern Jordan*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2003, p. 243-248) who convincingly rejects any military function of these structures. The “system” of fortifications along the southern part of *Via Nova Traiana* is but a part of military infrastructure in the Roman East and its full understanding depends on the overall examination of the Roman policy and military measures attested in Palestine, Arabia and the Red Sea region. Castro’s thesis is an useful micro-level modern study, which produced insightful observations. It is hoped that the author continues the investigations of the area in order to produce a vastly expanded and updated image also reflecting a wider perspective on the Roman presence in the East.

Zbigniew T. FIEMA

John LUND, Rita LARJE & Harald NILSSON, *Carthage II: The Swedish Mission to Carthage. Part of the UNESCO Project “Pour Sauver Carthage”. Results of the Swedish Excavations 1979-1983 directed by Birgitta Sander and Carl-Gustaf Styrenius for the Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet) in Stockholm*. Stockholm, Editorial Committee of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome, 2017. 1 vol. relié, 239 p., ill. n/b et coul. (ACTA INSTITUTI ROMANI REGNI SUECIAE 4°, 54.2). Prix : 636 SEK. ISBN 978-91-7042-185-3.