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Although not concerned with Islamic archaeology, this book should be of interest to readers of the *Journal of Islamic Archaeology*, for two reasons. First, it is concerned, in part, with the immediately pre-Islamic period on the Red Sea coast of Africa. Second, it focuses on an area, the Aksumite kingdom, that was intimately associated with the early Muslim community, as it is recorded that a group of the Prophet Muhammad’s followers led by Dja’far ibn Abī Tālib fled persecution in Mecca in AD 615 and found asylum in the kingdom of Aksum (Cerulli 1988, 575).

The book presents the results of excavations completed by Francis Anfray at the site of “Adoulis” (henceforward Adulis) on the coast of Eritrea. Adulis was the port of Aksum and its gateway to the international trade networks in which the kingdom participated. It is mentioned in the *Periplus* about the mid-1st century AD. These excavations have not previously been published, at least not in any detail, so the volume is a welcome addition to the literature on the later archaeology of northeast Africa. The volume is nicely produced with good quality colour reproductions throughout.

The volume starts with a preliminary section describing the first European visitors to the site and in particular the attention that was focused on the inscriptions found there and the issues that they have raised. Chapter 1 commences with a discussion of historical mentions of Adulis from Pliny the Elder to Conti Rossini. This is followed by a consideration of prior archaeological work at Adulis before introducing the excavations that are the focus, those of Anfray in 1961 and 1962 near to the cemetery of Bet-Khalifa.

The archaeological evidence is presented in a conventional manner, though somewhat briefly considering the unit size was 28m x 26m. The urban character of the site is well attested by the residential and commercial buildings excavated and some detail on the architectural features recorded is provided. This comprised predominantly stone walls, some fired brick construction, and features such as a platform accessed by three steps and masonry columns. The possible Aksumite affinities of the architecture are then discussed. The presentation of the evidence is primarily via black and white photographs with only a single site plan provided. The absence

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of stratigraphic drawings and of more detailed plans of specific features recorded is unfortunate as these are vital for fully understanding the work and for any future re-excavation at the site.

The second section of chapter 1 focuses upon the excavated material recovered. This comprises ceramics of various types, metal objects, fragments of glass, and objects such as part of what might be a bronze balance, a piece of elephant tusk, a cameo with a lion depicted on it, and 141 Aksumite coins including one silver and two gold examples. The elephant tusk is illustrated in-situ and is important as representative of one of the main commodities, ivory, apparently exported from Adulis. Further detail on the finds, including their dimensions, is provided in an appendix. The ceramics are presented solely using photographs when including line drawings of the reconstructed vessel forms, particularly for those from the sherds, would have been useful. Moreover, and this is probably reflecting the era when the excavations were completed, or the time elapsed since then and the dispersal of the relevant records, there is no data presented on any faunal or botanical remains that may or may not have been collected. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion providing, for example, comparison between the material from Adulis and that from the inland site of Matara. Finally, the overall importance of Adulis is considered and the second chapter written by Chiara Zazzaro is introduced.

Chapter 2 presents the results of the examination by Zazzaro of, predominantly, 435 ceramic sherds from the excavations that are kept in the National Museum at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, presumably a historical legacy of Eritrea formerly having been a part of Ethiopia. The chapter begins by outlining the problems encountered in the analysis through the separation of the contextual data from some of the ceramics. This chapter is of value because Zazzaro brings her expertise in Aksumite ceramics to the analysis of the Adulis material so as to construct a typology. Of the 435 sherds, 350 were found to be locally made and the remaining 85 of foreign origin or “atypique” (p.80). However once again, the ware types are only presented using photographs and there is a need for line drawings of the vessel types as well. The chapter ends with the description of other objects from Adulis such as glass wares, and some metal items. This is brief and does not add significantly to the volume. The volume ends with a bibliography.

Overall, this is a useful volume in so far as it finally provides an account of the excavations at Adulis that were completed over 50 years ago. The book has shortcomings, first, in relation to how it is illustrated, and this could have been addressed by including plans and line drawings as previously noted, and second, in how the excavations and some of the material is described which reflects the time elapsed and/or the disappearance of the relevant records. A final concluding chapter should also have been included contextualising the Adulis excavations more fully in relation to other more recent research completed by, for example David Peacock and Lucy Blue (2007) at Adulis, and David Phillipson (e.g. 2000) and others at Aksum. These works are cited in the bibliography but the account of the research at Adulis would have been enriched by including this fuller comparative discussion.
References

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Peacock, D. and L. Blue.

Phillipson, D. W.