

images captured the powerful spirit of the place and an important era in Levantine history. Every chapter is full of historical detail and travellers' reports. There are useful maps and sketch plans made by travellers, some of them reproduced in colour. The pictures belong to the last few years of the Ottoman Empire, before the Hashemite Emirate of Jordan was established in 1921: the earliest photograph taken in 1852.

There are nine chapters. The first outlines nineteenth-century travel with reproductions of drawings, including portraits of John Lewis Burckhardt, James Silk Buckingham and Léon de Laborde. There is an early photograph of the PEF Survey Team of 1867–1870 taken by Henry Phillips in 1867; and mention of numerous explorers, many of whom left us a rich legacy in their travel writings.

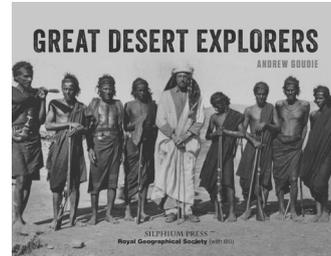
The second chapter describes the land and people of Transjordan. Chapters three to eight each cover a different geographical area: the Rift Valley; the North; the Middle Range and Ammon; the plateau including Moab and its environs; The Southern Range and Moab; and the South, that is Edom and the remains of the Nabateans. As someone who remembers Jordan from the 1960s well, many of the images portray a countryside that was still then familiar and evoke many memories: Jerash before its rigorous excavations; Dumas's panorama of Salt; the ruins of the *Umayyad winter palace* of al-Mushatta; Bedouin bayt al-sha'ar; the barley harvest or the citadel of Karak; and of course, the extraordinary archaeological site of Petra and the most delightful unspoilt site of Beidha: in my day, still only accessible by horseback from Petra. The final chapter portrays and describes a new era, that of the Arab Revolt – and many further PEF surveys. This chapter conveys the grim reality of war but also remarkable portraits of Sherif Abdullah and his entourage.

Of particular interest to ASTENE members, is a fascinating Appendix I that contains short biographies of traveller-photographers as well as a brief account of the changing face of photography. Many of them will be well-known to ASTENE members, such as the Bonfils family, Horatio Kitchener in the 1880s, the striking images taken by T.E. Lawrence, and Henry Phillips who worked directly for the PEF. The historical detail is sound and the book well edited (the only typo I noticed was 'Linat' instead of Linant de Bellefonds who explored Petra with Laborde in 1828 in the caption on p.181). There is also a useful bibliography but,

most unfortunately, no index of either place names or people.

Janet Starkey

Goudie, Andrew, *Great Desert Explorers*, Society for Libyan Studies, hardback, December 2016,. 350pp, ISBN 978-1900971454, £39.95.



This is a remarkable book about desert explorers both for the scope of the book and for the numerous incredible stories of the men, and occasional women, who feature in its pages.

As one who was inspired to explore the deserts of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula by Ralph Bagnold and Wilfred Thesiger respectively, I was delighted but hardly surprised to find entries for my boyhood heroes. Like many ASTENE members, having researched and written widely on the Sahara and other deserts in the greater Middle East I was not surprised to find the usual names popping up here: Burckhardt, Burton, the Blunts, Gertrude Bell, W.G. Browne, Doughty, Nachtigal, Rohlfs, Hornemann, and Philby.

Even if one were to limit oneself to explorers of – as the material is organised here – Arabia, the Middle East and Iran, and Egypt and Libya, “Great Desert Explorers” stands out among similar books because it shines a light on a number of individuals that are today all but forgotten. Among these I would mention Francis Chesney, an Ulster-born Royal Artillery officer in the British Army who fell into desert exploration somewhat by chance, after first travelling to Constantinople at the age of 40, in 1829, with some rockets for the Turkish sultan. While there, the British Ambassador, who was concerned about growing French influence in the Egyptian court of Muhammad Ali, suggested that Chesney travel to Egypt and Syria to report on the situation in those lands. After reconnoitring southern Sinai, he travelled up the Nile as far as Wadi Halfa. Clearly having caught the exploration bug, Chesney went on to explore the Syrian desert, before arriving at and navigating the Euphrates.

Another Irishman to feature in the Arabia, Middle

East and Iran chapter is George Forster Sadlier. Born in Cork, like Chesney, in 1789, Sadlier (also sometimes Sadleir) joined the British Army at the age of 16 and would, in his military career, spend 22 years in continuous service overseas. What makes Sadlier stand out in the annals of desert exploration is that he was the first European to cross the Arabian Peninsula from east to west. Following a (temporarily) successful campaign by Egyptian troops, under the command of Ibrahim, Muhammad Ali's second son, against Sa'ud-Wahhab forces in Arabia, Sadlier was chosen by the British governor general in India to make contact with Ibrahim, to offer him congratulations, to gauge Egyptian intentions, and to get Egyptian help to deal with pirates in the Persian (here Arabian) Gulf. Travelling from Bombay, Sadlier would eventually land in Qatif before setting out on his 1,000-mile, 84-day crossing of Arabia, via Riyadh and Medina to Yenbu, in June 1819.

Organising the book into geographical regions makes perfect sense, of course, but what added to my reading pleasure was that these larger chapters were then broken down into a series of neat, bite-sized entries, one per explorer. In this way the reader can easily explore individual characters without struggling through material that may be of less immediate interest. I took this opportunity to first find out what the author's opinion was of my favourite explorers, before moving on to other, lesser known territories and names.

Although I'm aware of my audience here, it would be a disservice to this wonderful book not to elaborate on its global scope. Apart from those sections already discussed, the hot deserts of the world are arranged here into chapters on South America, Australia, China and Central Asia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, India and Pakistan, Southern Africa, North America, and North Africa, i.e. the Sahara west of Egypt and Sudan. It was a real treat to step outside my usual regions of interest, and discover some of the pioneering desert explorers of, in particular, North America, Australia, and India and Pakistan. The map of Europe superimposed over a map of Australia on page 101 was particularly useful in fixing in mind a previously only half-known scale.

Over the years, I've found that describing a publication as a coffee table book can divide opinion. Many people like the term, creating as it does a feeling that the book under review is a glossy, usually substantial, and sumptuously illustrated work that

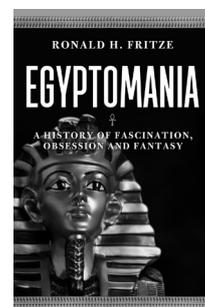
one can dip in and out of at leisure. Others harbour a fairly intense dislike, not so much of the term but of what it stands for. Typically, would-be detractors are critical of those very same characteristics just mentioned, that are hailed as marks in the pro column by supporters of the coffee table book.

Critics of the form tend to believe that for all its weight and rich illustrations, the coffee table book lacks real academic or literary weight. Andrew Goudie's *Great Desert Explorers* must surely make the naysayers think again, because this is both a serious work of scholarship and a richly-illustrated volume that would be the pride of coffee table or bookcase alike.

Produced jointly by the Silphium Press (an imprint of the Libyan Studies Society) and the Royal Geographical Society, the writing throughout is lucid, and the multiplicity of maps, photographs and other illustrations make this a coffee table book for anyone who loves deserts, the armchair traveller and the serious scholar alike.

Eamonn Gearon

Fritze, Ronald H., EGYPTOMANIA: A History of Fascination, Obsession and Fantasy. Reaktion Books Ltd, London, 2016, 448 pp., £25, 978 1 78023 6319.



The subtitle of Prof. Fritze's book promises a history of fascination, fantasy and obsession related to "Egyptomania", so his understanding of the term is critical. Also known as the Egyptian Revival, Egyptomania is normally defined as inspiration by ancient Egyptian art and architecture for new works within other cultures. The applications are architecture, monuments, the arts and decorative arts. The Egyptian Revival uses original forms, elements and motifs in new ways that remain identifiably Egyptian, but that may convey new meaning and symbolism.

The author's definition unfolds incrementally within the introduction, leaving it to the reader to piece