

University of Southampton

Abstract

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Archaeology

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A new assessment of ceramics from the site of Al-Ukhdud in Najran, and its implications for the economy of South Arabia (500 B.C. – A.D. 600)

by

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Pottery is one of the most numerous and durable archaeological artefacts collected during surveys and excavations, and it can provide significant evidence about human activities. Pottery is likewise the most abundant archaeological materials at the site of Al-Ukhdud, which is located in the region of Najran, South of Saudi Arabia along the border with Yemen. However, no detailed modern study of material from this area currently exists to present new thoughts about the society and economy of South Arabia. With the absence of literary sources on the history of settlement and economy in this area, the aim of this study is to apply quantified pottery data and its implications to the economic question concerning the occupants of pre-Islamic Al-Ukhdud. My research is concentrated on the pottery from the pre-Islamic period, in particular materials discovered during the seasons of survey and excavation undertaken by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, Antiquities and Museums Sector in 1996 and 2000. Specifically, I have considered the impact of trade and exchange in Al-Ukhdud in order to understand the nature of economic exchange and communications between local society and surrounding area. How can we understand the implication of traded vs local pottery for the economic system of Al-Ukhdud, with regards to the movement of people, materials and goods between communities, and the influence of transportation on interaction and connection? This research also is a step to understand and compare the patterns of local and/or non-local trade vs consumptions of domestic pottery that emerged in Al-Ukhdud between 500 B.C. and 600 A.D. This research is an attempt to understand the economic system through pottery in the light of very little

knowledge of both Al-Ukhudud's pottery, and South Arabian pottery in general. However, it is hoped that the body of data and analysis within this thesis will represent a first step along the path to addressing these fundamental concerns.