

# Bulletin of The Society for Arabian Studies

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# **The Society for Arabian Studies**

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## ***Bulletin of the Society for Arabian Studies***

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The *Bulletin* depends on the good will of its members and correspondents to provide news and contributions for the *Bulletin* which should contain: 1) the title of the research project, 2) the name of the organising body, 3) the name of the director or researcher and his/her institutional affiliation, 4) a short description of the project, stating when and where it was conducted, its main objectives, and results, 5) whether or not the project is expected to continue in the future, 6) full details of recent and forthcoming publications. In addition, news items of general interest, ongoing and completed postgraduate research, forthcoming conferences, meetings and special events are welcome. Please give the title or subject of the event, the name of the organiser, the date and the location. Submissions by email preferred to: [wendy.rix-morton@ntlworld.com](mailto:wendy.rix-morton@ntlworld.com). Transliteration of Arabic, where required, should follow the *IJMES* scheme. However, contributors may prefer to omit transliteration marks altogether.

### ***Applications to conduct research in the Yemen***

Applications to conduct research in Yemen should be made to the Society's sub-committee, the British Archaeological Mission in Yemen (BAMY). Contact The Honorary Secretary, BAMY, c/o The British Academy, London SW1Y 5AH, UK.

### ***Grants in aid of research***

Applicants are advised to apply well ahead of the 31 May and 31 October deadlines. Full details on p. 5.

### ***Applications for official sponsorship***

Expeditions and individuals may apply for official sponsorship from the Society for research projects if helpful in obtaining funds from other sources or permission from foreign governments. Sponsorship will signify the Society's approval for the academic content of the research project but will contain no element of financial support. Applications should be submitted on the relevant form, available from the Honorary Secretary at the address below, or downloadable from the website ([www.societyforarabianstudies.org](http://www.societyforarabianstudies.org)) and sent to Dr Derek Kennet, Chairman, Grants Sub-Committee, at the address below or to [derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk](mailto:derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk).

### ***Membership***

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Front Cover: Fuad al-Quturi (the last *qanbus* maker) working on the Horniman *qanbus* in his workshop at Sanaa.  
Photo: Samir Mokrani, courtesy of Paul Hughes Smith.



### A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This has been a most satisfactory year for the Society, with a successful third biennial Red Sea Conference organised once again by Mrs Janet Starkey (report on page 6). Mrs Starkey managed much of the conference arrangements from Cairo where she was supposedly enjoying a sabbatical. The Proceedings of the conference, edited by Mrs Starkey and her husband Professor Paul Starkey, are being published again by Archaeopress in time for the Arabian Seminar in July. The Society's next conference, organised by Dr Lloyd Weeks and entitled *Death and Burial in Arabia: From prehistory to today*, will be held in November 2008, points in a new, more archaeological direction.

The Society has sadly said goodbye to the editor of this Bulletin for the last nine years, Ms Jan Picton. Ms Picton greatly increased the scope and standing of the Bulletin for which we are most grateful. Gratitude also goes to the new editor Mrs Wendy Rix Morton; the present issue is testimony to her astonishing diligence, let alone computer literacy. I would also like to thank Mr Will Facey for his development of the book review section, a vital aspect of this year's Bulletin.

In this issue the Bulletin has begun to focus on the interest in Arabia in the contemporary cultural scene, in particular in literature, music and painting. The Society's literary interest was sparked by a 'conversation' organised eighteen months ago on contemporary Arabic literature (see Bulletin No. 11 for 2006, p.15) between Drs Peter Clark and Paul Starkey, both renowned for their translations of modern literature from Arabia. Margaret Obank, founder and editor of the periodical *Banipal*, introduces her journal which has featured many writers from the Arabian peninsula over the years, and we would hope to be able to sustain this link in the future.

The year has also seen some interesting artistic developments in the Arabian peninsula. Museum and gallery exhibitions are evidence of a growing cultural dynamism in the region. As Chairman I am most grateful to those who help us follow these events and

I entreat others, all over the peninsula, also to lend a hand. A revised website should encourage internet links.

The contemporary Muslim art world was highlighted commercially by two successful sales of mainly Arab, Indian and Iranian art in Dubai, organised by Christies in May 2006 and February 2007, but even more significantly by the British Museum exhibition, *Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East*, curated by Dr Venetia Porter as part of the *Middle East Now* season of events held at the Museum between 18 May and 3 September 2006. Quoting from the catalogue, 'a powerful theme running through all the works is how artists engage and experiment with the Arabic script ...' testifying to the strong calligraphic tradition of the Islamic world and 'the powerful and imaginative ways in which artists are using writing today'. The exhibition catalogue is by Venetia Porter, with contributions by Isabelle Caussé (London, British Museum Press, £16.99. ISBN (hd/bk): 07141-1163-6; (p/bk): 7141-1164-3. In March 2007 Dubai hosted the Gulf's first international art fair; details of the event are on the website at [www.gulfartfair.com](http://www.gulfartfair.com)

A longer-term development in Abu Dhabi is the project for the latest Guggenheim Museum of Modern Art, commissioned by the emirate for one of its offshore islands, to be designed by Frank Gehry, architect of the Guggenheim in Bilbao, and due for completion in 2012. Another development is the proposed 'Louvre in the Desert' announced at the end of 2006 during a visit by French President Jacques Chirac to Abu Dhabi. Sustaining that interest in the contemporary Arabian art world, in July 2007 Saudi and Yemeni artists will be exhibiting in the *Edge of Arabia: Contemporary Art in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* exhibition at the Brunei Gallery at SOAS in London, 11 July–22 September 2007 (see p. 45 for exhibition details).

However, on a much less satisfactory level and of great concern to the Society is the issue of the looting of archaeological sites in the region and the greed of the international art market. On a recent trip to Yemen it was good to see the fencing and guarding of archaeological sites, not easy in that relatively fragile economy, and impossible in war zones. The Society supports all efforts for better protection throughout the region and would also like to give them as much publicity as possible. Please keep us informed!

The fragility of the Soqotran environment is a particular example of vulnerability, as tourism develops there; in the section on Yemen attention is drawn to the uniqueness of that environment, in the hope that the publicity will encourage its crucial protection.

**Sarah Searight**  
Chairman

## SOCIETY FOR ARABIAN STUDIES NEWS

### SOCIETY FOR ARABIAN STUDIES

The Society was founded in 1987 with the purpose of encouraging interest and research into the archaeology, history, culture and environment of the Arabian Peninsula – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The Society publishes an annual Bulletin, organises regular lectures, a biennial conference and supports field projects in and publications on this region. Full details of the Society's aims and activities can be found on its website which has been revised and expanded, at: [www.societyforarabianstudies.org](http://www.societyforarabianstudies.org)

### MONOGRAPH SERIES

In 2004, the Society launched its own Monograph Series with the aim of publishing research-based studies, conference proceedings, archaeological excavation or survey reports, and theses where the contents mark an important synthesis or a significant addition to knowledge. The Series now has four titles, published by Archaeopress:

- Kennet, D., with a contribution by Regina Krahli (2004) *Sasanian and Islamic pottery from Ras al-Khaimah: Classification, chronology and analysis of trade in the Western Indian Ocean*. Archaeopress B.A.R. S1248, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 1. ISBN: 1841716081. £32.00.
- Lunde, P. and A. Porter (eds) (2004) *Red Sea Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region: Proceedings of the Red Sea Project I held in the British Museum October 2002*. Archaeopress B.A.R. S1269, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 2. ISBN: 1841716227. £33.00.
- Starkey, Janet C. M. (ed.) (2005) *People of the Red Sea: Proceedings of Red Sea Project II held in the British Museum October 2004*. Archaeopress B.A.R. S1395, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 3. ISBN: 1841718335. £30.00.
- Durrani, N. (2005) *The Tihamah Coastal Plain of South-west Arabia in its Regional Context c. 6000 BC – AD 600*. Archaeopress B.A.R. S1456, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 4. ISBN: 1841718947. £32.00.

Forthcoming titles planned for publication in 2007 include:

- Phillips, C.S. and St J. Simpson (eds), *Softstone in Arabia and Iran*.

- Starkey, Janet C. M., Paul Starkey and A. Wilkinson (eds), *Natural Resources and Cultural Connections of the Red Sea: Proceedings of Red Sea Project III held at the British Museum October 2006*.

Series Editors Dr Derek Kennet and Dr St John Simpson would be pleased to consider any new proposals. Email: [derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk](mailto:derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk) or [ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](mailto:ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk).

Monographs can be ordered from: Hadrian Books, 122 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7BP. Tel: 01865-310431. Email: [bar@hadrianbooks.co.uk](mailto:bar@hadrianbooks.co.uk) Web: [www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

### GRANTS IN AID OF RESEARCH

Each year, the Society offers grants of up to £500 in support of research, or the publication of research, into the archaeology, history, culture or environment of the Arabian Peninsula. Awards are intended primarily for small projects and are insufficient in themselves to finance a major research project, although they may be used as grants-in-aid towards larger projects which have already attracted, or can reasonably expect to attract, further independent funding. Grants will not be awarded to fund university or other courses. Applicants must be members of the Society. Applications should be submitted by 31 May or 31 October each year. A decision will be made and the result communicated within 6 weeks of those dates.

Awards are tenable for one year from the date on which they are awarded. Grant holders will be required to provide a written report on their research with an account of expenditure, to be submitted within six months of the expiry of the period for which the grant was made. Successful applicants will also be required to submit a summary of their research for publication in the *Society for Arabian Studies Bulletin* following the end of the period during which the grant was held. The Society may also ask grant holders to give a talk to Society members on their research projects.

Further information and application forms are available from Dr Derek Kennet, Grants Sub-Committee Secretary, via email at [derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk](mailto:derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk) or by post from Ionis Thompson, Honorary Secretary, Society for Arabian Studies, c/o The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Information is also available on the Society's website at: [www.societyforarabianstudies.org](http://www.societyforarabianstudies.org)

## SOCIETY GRANTS-IN-AID 2006

The Society awarded two grants of £500 in 2006:

- **Vania Isabel Carvalho Pinto**, a PhD student at Exeter University, received an award towards her research project entitled: *Narrative constructions of identity and agency: an attempt at explaining womens' mobilisation*.
- **Lamya Khalidi** was awarded a grant for travel expenses in connection with her research project entitled: *The formation of a southern Red Sea-scape in the late prehistoric period: tracing cross-Red Sea culture contact, interaction and maritime communities along the Tihamah coastal plain, Yemen in the third to first millennium BC*.

Reports on the progress with these research projects will be published in the 2008 Bulletin.

## GRANT-IN-AID REPORT 2006

Julian Jansen van Rensburg received a Society Grant in 2005 to support his research into the *hawārī* of Soqatra, which he summarises below.

### ***Hawārī*: Soqatra's hidden maritime treasure**

The *hawārī* are traditionally log boats carved from a single tree into a pointed double-ended vessel which can be propelled using either sails or paddle. The *hawārī* can be found throughout the Indian Ocean from India to East Africa, being used as ships tenders, fishing vessels and harbour launches yet, in spite of this, little detail about this ubiquitous vessel is known.

The aims of my research project sought to address this lacuna in our knowledge by documenting the rich source of *hawārī* present on the island of Soqatra. An initial visit to Soqatra allowed for broad analysis of vessel features to be undertaken using line drawings and photographs and combining these with interviews with the local fishermen still using these vessels. The results of this initial survey provided an interesting conundrum relating to the origin for these vessels. Through a grant kindly supplied by the Society for Arabian Studies I was able to return to Soqatra to survey those areas missed in the initial survey, obtain wood samples and have them analysed. The survey also discovered a unique sewn vessel type, the *shirkah*. Undertaking this survey allowed for a broader insight into the diversity of the cultural influences that were incorporated into the *hawārī* on Soqatra. While analysis of the wood samples undertaken at the British Museum provided conclusive scientific evidence for the Indian origin of the *hawārī* on

Soqatra, it has also identified the *shirkah*, a vessel for which little information is available and which could provide evidence for a vessel no longer believed to exist on mainland Yemen.

While this project has focused specifically on the *hawārī* of Soqatra, those *hawārī* on the coastlines of the Red Sea, Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf have also suffered from the neglect of researchers and it is planned that further studies of these vessels will be undertaken to provide a corpus of evidence for an ancient resource that is fast disappearing. Furthermore it is also planned to return to Soqatra in order to fully document the *shirkah*.

Julian Jansen van Rensburg

## BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2006

### **Red Sea Project III: Natural Resources and Cultural Connections of the Red Sea**

*The Society's third Red Sea Project conference was held on Friday 27 and Saturday 28 October 2006 at the British Museum, London.*

The Red Sea lies between Africa and Asia, a salty sea noted for its wonderful corals and desert hinterlands. Although in many ways an inhospitable region, it was an arena for many civilisations and commercial activities on both sides of or across the Sea. In 2001 members of the Society for Arabian Studies, aware that the Red Sea had long been neglected as a focus for study, gathered to explore the possibilities of setting up a series of events that focused on the Red Sea. The aim was to provide a multidisciplinary forum for a wide range of first-class scholars who were pioneering research on the region.

Phase III of the project was generously supported by the British Academy, the Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund, The Seven Pillars of Wisdom Trust, and the Thriplow Foundation, and followed two earlier successful Red Sea conferences, also held at the British Museum. The first conference took place in 2002 with the theme *Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region*, and the second in 2004 on *People of the Red Sea*. The first two conferences were timed to coincide with relevant exhibitions held at the British Museum and there may be scope to continue this trend, for example, in relation to the proposed Safavid exhibition at the British Museum.

Over a hundred people participated in Phase III, and came from Europe and the UK, the Middle East and the United States. Particularly encouraging were the many first-class presentations by a range of younger scholars from the UK and Europe and we look forward to hearing more from them in the future.

Many of the papers given at Red Sea III presented cutting-edge research and the latest new discoveries from the earliest times to the present day. They were provocative, thoughtful and well presented, casting light on a wide range of potential research projects and hitherto unexplored inter-connections and themes. Topics included maritime networks: commercial connections, traditions and industries, in particular, the location and significance of harbours, boats, boat-building and navigation; caravan routes across the Eastern Desert, and trade in coffee and spices. We heard about the latest discoveries of the cedar boat timbers and coils of ship ropes from the Egyptian coastal site of Mersa Gawasis, which confirmed that this was the sea port for Punt. Named sessions included:

- *The Ecological Environment of the Red Sea;*
- *Corridors of Cultural Contact;*
- *Early Red Sea Harbours and their Hinterlands;*
- *Ships and Boats of the Red Sea;*
- *Rise and Fall of Red Sea Ports from Pre-classical to Late Antiquity;*
- *The Red Sea and its Cultural Connections;*
- *War and Commerce in the Red Sea;* and
- *Navigation and Naval Expeditions.*

All the chairs (Professor Dionisius Agius, Dr Lucy Blue, Will Facey, Dr Jacke Phillips, Dr St John Simpson, Professor Paul Starkey, Dr Shelagh Weir, and Professor Tony Wilkinson) provided effective leadership for their individual sessions and had wonderful time management skills.

There was a strong focus on **natural resources and ecological connections of the Red Sea** — fish, corals, and plants. In *Products from the Red Sea at Petra in the Medieval Period* by Stephan G. Schmid and Jacqueline Studer, we learned that parrot fish from the Red Sea were a main component of the diet for Crusader soldiers controlling the Wadi Farasa in medieval Petra. A re-analysis of botanical specimens collected by the ill-fated Danish Expedition to Arabia in 1761–1763 was presented by Nigel Hepper in a fascinating presentation on *Recent Studies of Plants and Animals of the Royal Danish Expedition to the Red Sea 1761–1763*. An underlying theme was the spiritual and religious connections of the Red Sea region and beyond, with papers on *Bishops and Traders: The role of Christianity in the Indian Ocean during the Roman period* by Roberta Tomber, and on the *Red Sea in Voyages in the Red Sea by the Prophet Muhammad's Companions* by Adil Salahi. We were particularly encouraged by Paul Sinclair's paper *Evidence for External Trading Contacts on the East Coast of Africa in the First Millennium BC*, on external trading contacts of the East African and South Arabian coasts; by Rodolpho Fattovich's wonderful illustrations of ancient Egyptian maritime ropes and boats in *Sea Port to Punt: New evidence from Marsa Gawasis, Red Sea (Egypt)*, and by

David Smith's sobering but beautiful presentation of coral reefs of the Red Sea, *Coral Reefs of the Red Sea: The Ras Mohammed National Park*.

Papers on **environmental archaeology** presented some of the latest research in the field and included *The Changing Environment of the Tihama (Yemen) and the Neighbouring Highlands* by Neil Munro and Tony Wilkinson, and *The Formation of a Southern Red Seascape in the Late Prehistoric Period: Tracing cross-Red Sea culture-contact, interaction, and maritime communities along the Tihamah coastal plain, Yemen, in the third to first millennium BC* by Lamya Khalidi.

Eastern Desert communities were discussed in three substantial papers: *A New Route in the Eastern Desert of Egypt*, by Jonatan Krzywinski; *The Arabians of Pre-Islamic Egypt*, by Tim Power, and *The Arabaegypti Ichthyophagi: Cultural connections with Egypt and the maintenance of identity* by Ross Thomas.

A central theme of the conference focused on **boats** from a range of perspectives and with fascinating technical and visual detail. The earliest paper in this group, *How Fast is Fast? Technology, trade and speed under sail in the Roman Red Sea* was given by Julian Whitewright. Three outstanding papers discussing recent boats were presented at the last session on the first day by speakers who were clearly passionate about their subject: *Features of Ships and Boats in the Indian Ocean* by Norbert Weismann; *The Red Sea Jalbah: Local phenomenon or regional prototype?* by James Edgar Taylor and *Decorative Motifs on Arabian Boats: Stability and movement* by Dionisius Agius.

Several papers on **naval and commercial expeditions** used Arabic sources (as well as Turkish and Chinese material), including *Warships in the Red Sea, an outstanding phenomenon* by Sarah Arenson, who also showed video excerpts; *Arabic Sources for the Ming Voyages to Arabia*, by Paul Lunde and *From the White Sea to the Red Sea: Piri Reis and the Ottoman conquest of Egypt* by Paul Starkey.

The **hazards of commercial trade** were highlighted by *Red Sea Harbours, Hinterlands and Relationships in Preclassical Antiquity* by Kenneth A. Kitchen, whose paper opening the second day of the conference provided useful parameters for following papers such as *Red Sea and Indian Ocean: Ports and their hinterland* by Eivind Heldaas Seland. Two papers presented different periods in the history of the ports at Suez, *Aila and Clysma: The rise of northern ports in the Red Sea in Late Antiquity* by Walter Ward and *Shipwrecks, Coffee and Canals: Suez between 1547 and 1869* by Janet Starkey. Sarah Searight's *Charting a Hazardous Sea* brought us up to date with current charting challenges.

The **final session** of Red Sea Project III, coordinated by Francine Stone, who initiated the



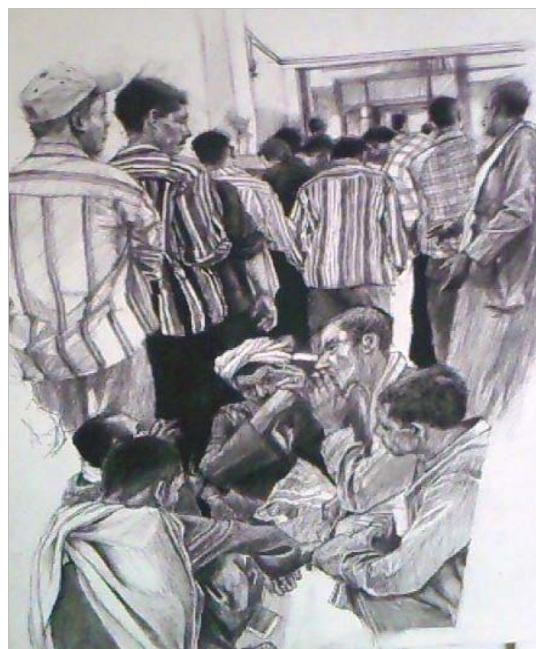
Red Sea Project in the early 2000s, and myself, was dedicated to the **discussion of the first three stages** of the project and was **followed by an open forum** on what to do next with the Red Sea Project. A wide range of topics that might be of interest for further development by the Society for Arabian Studies was suggested. Possible subjects for discussion either at small workshops or future major conferences included fishermen's cultures, particularly their songs and music; architecture and the conservation of sites such as Suakin, Mokha and Massawa; the use and distribution of conch shells; the various manifestations of the *hajj*, as well as more on boats, navigations, routes and cultural links. The need for future emphasis on the importance of indigenous knowledge on these topics for any clear understanding of maritime cultural traditions and interpretation of archaeological data was stressed. The peninsula is a crossroads of complex cultural and natural connections with the Red Sea, the Gulf, Arabian Sea, the East African coast, the Indian Ocean and beyond. Whatever else is planned, it is important not to lose sight of Arabia as a focal point with much of its fascinating archaeological and cultural heritage still remaining to be explored.

The dynamics of the interdisciplinarity of the conferences associated with the Red Sea Project is part of the key to their success. Scholars and interested members of the Society were able to exchange ideas and broaden approaches to their own subject interests. At all three conferences we have encouraged the participation of speakers from the countries of the Arabian Gulf and around the Red Sea but more needs to be done to incorporate such scholars into future events. There are many exciting possibilities for collaboration with other relevant academic organisations, societies and funding bodies yet to be explored by the Society for future events.

The topic of the next Arabian Studies conference is ***Death and Burial in Arabia: From prehistory to today*** proposed by Dr Lloyd Weeks (Nottingham University), who has recently joined the Society for Arabian Studies Committee. Associated activities on Arabia are an ongoing part of the lecture and workshop programme developed by the Society for Arabian Studies.

There was also an associated exhibition by David Martin, entitled ***Sketches from the northern Red Sea***. David Martin's encounter with the Red Sea, in June 2006, came as part of a longer journey, travelling across land, from Cairo to Central Europe. This project was the result of his success in receiving the prestigious Alastair Salvesen Travel Scholarship from the Royal Scottish Academy, and involved working in sketchbooks as he travelled looking at themes of cultural and personal change and transformation. The sketches were works-in-progress and have been developed into paintings forming an exhibition entitled ***The Cusp of Change: A journey through the Middle East*** at

the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh from 16 March–15 April 2007.



'Nuwaiba'

© David Martin

The proceedings of the first two conferences were published by Archaeopress in 2004 and 2005. These are: Lunde, P. and A. Porter (eds) (2004) *Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region* (Society for Arabian Studies, Monographs No. 2), B.A.R. International Series 1269. Oxford: Archaeopress, and Starkey, Janet C. M. (ed.) (2005) *People of the Red Sea* (Society for Arabian Studies, Monographs No. 3), B.A.R. International Series 1395. Oxford: Archaeopress. Visit: [www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

The third volume of proceedings (for Red Sea III), jointly edited by Janet Starkey, with Professors Paul Starkey and Tony Wilkinson, will also be published by Archaeopress and should be available by July 2007. Background information can be found at the Red Sea Project website at Durham University that is linked to the Society for Arabian Studies website. Visit: [www.dur.ac.uk/red.sea](http://www.dur.ac.uk/red.sea)

Particular thanks are due to St John Simpson for his unflappable calmness and all the support provided by the British Museum; to our new Treasurer, Douglas Stobie, for his effective financial management; to Rob Carter, Sarah Searight and St John Simpson for finding financial support for the Project; to Dr Francine Stone for her support in the final session; to Ionis Thompson for her continuing support in setting up all the relevant committee meetings as secretary to the Society; and especially to Christine Lindner for all the logistical hard work and enthusiasm, especially when I was organising the event for much of 2006 via internet cafés in Cairo, down the Red Sea, Sinai and Lebanon.

Janet Starkey  
University of Durham



## **BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2008**

### **Death and Burial in Arabia: From prehistory to today**

The Society for Arabian Studies would like to announce the next in its series of biennial conferences. Representing a change of theme from the highly successful Red Sea Conferences I–III, the Society is planning its next biennial conference on the subject of **Death and Burial in Arabia: From prehistory to today**, to take place between 27–29 November 2008 at the British Museum, London. It is envisaged that the conference will cover a wide range of themes, including but not limited to:

- specific geographically or chronologically defined burial traditions of Arabia (eg Umm an-Nar burial traditions, Nabataean burial traditions, etc);
- ancient attitudes to death and the afterlife;
- implications of burial data for society (eg religion; gender and kinship; social complexity; cultural contact and interaction; occupations/professions, demography etc);
- landscapes of death and burial;
- health and disease in the past;
- the recording and preservation of ancient burial sites;
- recent and contemporary ideas and practices relating to death and burial.

Contributions will be welcomed from a wide range of disciplines, including archaeology, physical anthropology, epigraphy, history, cultural anthropology and ethnography. Geographically, the conference will focus upon the Arabian peninsula, ie modern-day Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman, although adjacent regions (such as Iran, Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt) where specific traditions of death and burial can be linked with Arabia will also be discussed. Chronologically, papers will span the period from the earliest prehistory of the region to the modern day.

Details of abstract requirements, submission deadlines, and other aspects of attendance at the conference will be announced in the coming months. However, initial enquiries can be directed to Dr Lloyd Weeks at the University of Nottingham. Email: [Lloyd.Weeks@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Lloyd.Weeks@nottingham.ac.uk)

## **BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION IN YEMEN (BAMY)**

BAMY is a semi-autonomous body operating under the auspices of the Society for Arabian Studies and is responsible for screening all British research carried out in Yemen in the fields of archaeology, history, epigraphy, numismatics, pre-Islamic and Islamic architecture and all manuscript and museum-based studies.

All UK applications for permission to carry out research in the Yemen in the above mentioned disciplines should be referred to the BAMY Committee who will be happy to advise potential applicants on any aspect of their application. The applications it approves will become official BAMY projects and BAMY will apply for permits from the General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM), Ministry of Culture, Sanaa on behalf of applicants. Application deadlines are 30 April and 30 September each year. Further details can be obtained from BAMY, c/o The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1H 5AH.

Below are reports on fieldwork carried out during 2006 on two projects which have received support from BAMY. First, Sebastian Prange, a PhD student at the School of Oriental and African Studies, reports on fieldwork he undertook in Yemen as part of his research on 'Arab trading communities of the medieval Malabar coast'. This is followed by an account of preliminary excavations carried out at al-Kashawba' by Carl Phillips.

### **Arab Trading Communities of the Medieval Malabar Coast: A summary of fieldwork in Yemen 2006–07**

Supported by grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund, I undertook fieldwork in Yemen in late 2006 and early 2007 for my research on the Arab trading communities of the medieval Malabar coast. Genealogies and inscriptions collected during earlier fieldwork in India confirmed my impression of especially close links between the Malabar coast and Yemen, and in particular its Hadhramawt region. After preparatory research in Sanaa, I spent most of my time at the al-Ahqaf Manuscript Library in Tarim. There I found some narratives related to maritime trade as well as genealogical material that I hope to connect with the Indian sources. The Maktabat al-Ahqaf is now a congenial place for research, with a number of as yet undescribed manuscripts, easy access, and the possibility of digital reproduction. I also had the opportunity to view the manuscript collection of the private Markaz al-Nûr centre, which is part of Tarim's Dâr al-Mustafa Institute and runs a project to restore and preserve manuscripts.

The results of my fieldwork and their relevance to the history of the Arab trade diaspora on the Malabar coast will be described in detail in my thesis, which I hope to submit to the University of London by September 2008.

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### Preliminary Excavations at Al-Kashawba' 2006

In April 2006 a small-scale excavation was conducted at the site of al-Kashawba'. The site is located approximately 10 kilometres north of Zabid where it spans the main Zabid-al-Mansuriyah road. The greater part of the site (or sites) appears to be on the west side of the road, where pottery can be found on the surface over a distance of more than three kilometres. On the east side of the road the site is not so extensive but the amount of surface pottery is far greater and there is a distinct low mound measuring about 60 x 60 m where the sherd cover is most dense. This is the part of the site chosen for the trial excavation.

It is also the part of the site where a number of surface collections have been gathered in recent years, notably by the Canadian Expedition led by Ed Keall who published a representative selection of sherds in the *Zabid Project Pottery Manual 1995* (B.A.R. International Series 655, Oxford, 1996: 20–38). On the basis of this publication it has been suggested that the site represents a period from about 1500–500 BC. This time range spans an important period in the development of the South Arabian Kingdoms since it encompasses the late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, the beginning of the historical period which saw the appearance of the first Kingdoms and adoption of writing. The Tihamah, however, has long been excluded from the perceived course of these developments until recent years when German excavations at Sabir and al-Malayba' (both near Aden) have established a Bronze Age tradition extending back to the third millennium BC, and British excavations at al-Hamid (near Bajil) have indicated an early Sabaeen presence at this and one other site, Waqir, unambiguously indicated by a number of *in situ* monumental inscriptions. The precise relationship, if any, between the Tihamah Bronze Age tradition and the early Sabaeen period nevertheless remains to be fully investigated. If, as suggested, the site of al-Kashawba' spans these two main periods it could add significantly to an awareness and interpretation of this crucial stage in the history of South Arabia. The primary aim of the first excavation at al-Kashawba' was, to see what evidence there is for periods of occupation, based on stratigraphy, and how these relate to other sites, based on a comparison of pottery assemblages. In addition, it was considered important to see what evidence

relating to the ancient economy and the surrounding environments might also be retrievable.

**Results from the excavation** It was decided that the most suitable place for a trial trench would be on the mound covered by a dense layer of sherds, as described above. Near the centre of the mound, two adjacent 5 x 5 m squares were established along a west-east axis. The mound and immediate surroundings were designated as Kashawba' 1 and the mound itself as Area A. The two squares were numbered 55 and 56. After clearing the surface pottery from both squares, a deep trench measuring 2 x 1 m in square 55 and a larger trench, measuring 4 x 4 m, in square 56 were excavated.

**The results from Square 55** The excavation in this square was intended primarily as a sounding in order to reveal the depth of deposits. Close to the surface, a hard layer of mud-brick debris and silt was uncovered. This proved to be the fill of a pit that extends for a metre below the surface. Beneath this pit was an ashy deposit followed by a loose sandy deposit that lay directly above a more compacted clay and sand layer. The clay and sand layer was quite distinct from the deposits above and was approximately 70 cm thick. It was observed that the pottery from this deposit appeared distinct from that found in the levels above. Beneath this was a very hard layer of sand which contained no pottery or animal bones and after removing approximately 50 cm of this deposit bed-rock was reached. The total depth of deposits at the site, as shown by the excavation in square 55 appears, therefore, to be approximately three metres. Throughout the excavation of square 55 abundant pottery was recovered, along with a large quantity of animal bones. The deposits also provided a number of carbon samples and material for botanical analysis.

**The results from Square 56** In square 56 the same pit as excavated in square 55 was also revealed. However, given the wider extent of square 56, the deposits in which the pit was cut are more clear and substantial. It was shown that the deposits into which the pit was cut lie above a substantial mud-brick wall which is orientated north-south and divides the excavated area in two equal parts. The wall is 1.10 m wide and is built from well-formed and compacted mud-bricks measuring 50 x 30 cm and 6 cm thick. Either side of the wall was a distinct layer, about 10–20 cm thick, lying above a hard clay surface that presumably represents the floor surfaces associated with the wall. This surface was removed in one corner of the square to see if it could be correlated with the deposits in square 55 and it appears that it can be compared with the lowest anthropogenic deposits in that square. As before, it was observed how the pottery from this deposit, which clearly dates earlier than the construction of the wall, is different (though with some similarities) from the pottery above which is contemporary with the wall.

In addition to pottery, abundant animal bones were collected from the different levels of square 56 as well as charcoal samples. Soil samples were also collected from all the deposits and from floor surfaces and these were subjected to flotation and rigorous sorting in order to acquire samples for archaeobotanical analysis.

**Summary of initial findings** The limited excavation has shown that there are at least two phases of occupation at al-Kashawba' evident from the stratigraphy and also from the pottery assemblages. It is also evident that there are well-preserved architectural remains. The pottery which goes with the wall/building in square 56 appears to be the same as that found at, for example, al-Hamid and dates from the early first millennium BC, the beginning of the Iron Age/early historic period. The pottery from the earlier levels needs now to be compared with that from the Bronze Age sites excavated near Aden (eg Sabir) to see if there are any similarities. Initial impressions are that there are indeed some similarities, though importantly, it appears that there is also a degree of continuity in the pottery found in the later period.

The presence of substantial mud-brick architecture in this part of the Tihamah is significant since little is known of the early architectural traditions in this region and how they compare with the rest of Yemen. It is important to note also the occurrence of a few fired bricks, similar to examples found at al-Hamid and Waqir.

In addition to pottery, a number of other finds might also be helpful in confirming the date of the earliest levels at the site. Foremost amongst these is part of a clay figurine found in the lowest level of square 56.

Many stone objects were also recovered. These comprise mainly grinding-stones which hint at the processing of plant foods. The animal economy of the site is well attested by the abundant bone remains and it is hoped that the analysis of samples collected from all the deposits will provide further evidence about what was being consumed and details about the surrounding environment. So far, the presence of dates has been confirmed, the earliest archaeological evidence from the Tihamah and the exploitation of *zizyphus* is also evident. Several species of *gramineae* are also present.

The charred plant remains will also provide good source material for C14 dates. It is hoped that at least three radiocarbon dates can be obtained since suitable samples have been collected from the earliest pre-occupation deposits and from the two phases of occupation.

In conclusion, all of the defined objectives for the 2006 trial excavation were fulfilled and positive results obtained. It is hoped that the work at al-Kashawba' can be continued. If so, specific research objectives will need to be further defined, but given the existence of well preserved architecture, the

extension of the trenches excavated in 2006 will be one important objective. By doing this further details relating to cultural and economic aspects of the site will be obtained. It will also be important, however, to initiate a number of trial trenches elsewhere in the vicinity of the site in order to confirm its extent and to see what spatial and chronological differences there might be.

It remains to acknowledge the support provided by a number of individuals and institutions. These include Ms M. Veitch, the Dean's Fund University College London, The Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund, The Seven Pillars of Wisdom Trust Fund, The British-Yemeni Society and the Yemen Embassy (London). Essential support was also provided by our Yemeni colleagues at the General Organization for Antiquities and Museums, the British Council (Sanaa) and the Centre Français d'Archéologie et de Sciences Sociales de Sanaa (CEFAS).

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## LECTURES AND LECTURE REPORTS 2006

**19 January 2006**

***The Re-discovery of Madâ'in Sâlih, Ancient Hegra, Saudi Arabia***

Dr Laïla Nehmé

Joint lecture with the Palestine Exploration Fund and the Council for British Research in the Levant

*Laila Nehme has been working at the Nabataean site of Madâ'in Sâlih, in Saudi Arabia, since 2001. In 2002 the project was officially designated and financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with Dr Nehme as Director. She also works as a researcher at the CNRS in Paris, in the Laboratoire des études sémitiques anciennes. A summary of her talk is given below.*

The site of Madâ'in Sâlih, ancient Hegra in the Nabataean and Roman periods, was explored, between 2001 and 2005, by a French team of archaeologists and specialists of other disciplines directed first by J.-M. Dentzer in 2001 then by the author since 2002. The project operated under the aegis of the Deputy-Ministry for Antiquities and Museums of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and was undertaken within the framework of the *General Board of International Cooperation and Development* of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, from which it received the majority of its funding. It also benefited from the support of the Institute for Semitic Studies of the CNRS in Paris.

Hegra, which lies some 400 km northwest of Medina, is probably the most important Nabataean site after Petra, and it is certainly as fascinating. The

site is known under three different names: Hegra, which derives from the Semitic *Hijrâ*; *al-Hijr*, which is the modern Arabic name; *Madâ'in Sâlih*, which is the best known name among tourists but which does not appear before the 18th century. The city of Hegra is mentioned in a few ancient sources such as Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Ptolemy and Stephanus of Byzantium. However, the sites referred to in these sources are one site or several sites bearing the same name, especially if we consider that in two instances, it is said to be on the sea shore.

The aim of the project which was created in 2001 was to study the site through various non-destructive methods, that is without proper excavations. The expected result was a re-examination of all the rock-cut monuments, from betyls to tombs; a study of the natural potential of the site in terms of water and agriculture; a geophysical survey of the residential area; a re-examination of the epigraphic evidence; an analysis of the pottery collected on the surface, as well as other more specific studies, such as those devoted to the carving techniques.

The site is composed of four main groups of remains: necropolises of monumental and ordinary tombs (all around the settlement), sanctuaries (mainly in the northeast), an urban settlement (in the centre) and finally an oasis mainly in the west and north-western parts of the site. Since the rock-cut monumental tombs have already been widely shown and commented upon, the lecture focused either on specific aspects related to the tombs or on other groups of remains at the site.

On the subject of the oasis, it should first be noted that, despite a very low annual rainfall in *Madâ'in Sâlih* itself ( $\pm 50$  mm), the rain which falls on *Jabal 'Uwayrid*, west of the site, and on the hills east of it, feeds a water table which is accessible through wells. The team has recorded 130 wells, most of which are dug partly in the rock and partly in the alluvial deposits. Their average width is 4 m although some of them are wider, up to 7 m. Fragments of canals found beside the wells show that they were probably used for irrigation. In Antiquity, they were certainly part of a network of farms which transformed the site into a vast cultivated area. This means that Hegra was certainly not just a frontier post on the southern edge of the Nabataean kingdom but that it was also an agricultural centre which supplied the whole region with food products.

Thus, much as in Petra, there was in Hegra an area which was used to provide food to those who lived in the city or those who travelled across it. Very much as in Petra, also, the city of the living in Hegra is far from being the most visible part of the site. It lies in the central part of the plain and forms a trapezium which is closed, on the west side, by the *Hijâz* railway, and on the other three sides, by a mudbrick city wall, large sections of which are clearly visible and along which are built a few

strongholds. The surface enclosed by this wall reaches 0.61 square kilometres but it is not certain whether only part or all of it was built with houses and other buildings.

The religious monuments at *Madâ'in Sâlih* are almost all built or carved inside and on the outskirts of a group of high rocky outcrops which dominate the site from the northeast and which bear, since the 10th century AD, the name *Ithlib*, which means 'stone' in the *Hijâz* Arabic dialects. Outside *Ithlib*, there are only nine monuments with a religious character. Three of them only are small independent sanctuaries and one of them, in the *Jabal al-Mahjar*, mentions for the first time the 'mountain of *al-'Uzzâ* and the Lord of the house, probably *Dûsharâ*'.



*Niche with two betyls*

The typology of the religious monuments in *Madâ'in Sâlih* is less varied than in Petra. Most of the monuments are niches with one to five betyls. They are however often more elaborate than in Petra and bear a greater variety of architectural decoration: pediment, pilasters, acroteria, eagles, mouldured podiums, etc. The general impression is that the worshippers were individuals or small groups of people who worshipped their gods in small isolated sanctuaries. No clear trace of monumental architecture, temples or high places, was found, but it might exist.

*Madâ'in Sâlih* contains four monumental necropolises: *Jabal al-Mahjar*, *Qasr al-Bint*, *Jabal al-Ahmar* and *Jabal al-Khraymât*, to which should be added a few outcrops in which have been cut isolated tombs such as *Qasr al-Farîd* and *Qasr al-Sâni*. To these monumental necropolises should be added the necropolis of the ordinary people, made up of 1900 tombs, of which 1575 are cist tombs and 325 *tumuli*. The total number of monumental tombs in *Madâ'in Sâlih* is 111, of which 105 contain a funerary chamber and 94 bear a decorated façade.



Tombs on Qasr al-Bint

Thirty four tombs have an inscription written on the façade in Nabataean characters which gives information about the owner of the tomb, the people who had the right to be buried in it, the penalties due to those who did not respect the rules edicted in the text etc. The inscriptions are property rights, a copy of which was kept in one of the temples of the city. It was decided, in the lecture, to concentrate on characteristics of the tombs which have seldom been given attention to.

First, the difference in size between the largest tomb (IGN 10, 21.50 m high) and the smallest one (IGN 3, 2.70 m) was stressed and it was shown that the way large and small tombs are arranged on the cliffs can be used to determine their relative chronology.

Second, an analysis of the unfinished tombs, of which there are proportionally a greater number than in Petra. The various stages at which the tombs were left unfinished were enumerated, the significance of the unfinished character of the tomb according to whether the outside, the inside, or both, were left unfinished, was given and possible reasons for this lack of achievement were suggested.

Third, the interiors of the tombs were presented in some detail since the plans drawn systematically by the project's architect, J.-P. Braun, allow for the first time the opportunity to study the funerary structures and to analyse the relationship between the inscriptions and the interior of the tombs. The total number of funerary structures cut in the tombs reaches about 600. There are three main types of funerary structures inside the tombs: burial niches (100 units) which contain sometimes more than one burial; caissons (281 units), the size of which vary according to the body which was buried in them and most of which bear around them traces of the closing system, either a recess for inserting slabs or mortar, and cist tombs (212 units), cut in the floor of the chambers.

Madâ'in Sâlih is an extremely interesting site, not only because of its various components (urban settlement, religious centre, necropolises and oasis), but also for the context and environment in which it

was installed, on the edge of both the Nabataean Kingdom and the Roman province of Arabia, to which it no doubt belonged after AD 106. The discovery of Dadanitic inscriptions on the faces of quarries which are probably Nabataean show that there has certainly been an overlap between the two kingdoms. The elements of chronology which are available give the impression that the occupation has been in a way sporadic, or at least uneven. A large number of monuments have remained unfinished, several places have been 'taken into possession' by people in order to build a monument which was in fact never made and the indications given by the inscriptions, the pottery and the coins do not exactly correspond.

More information on the chronology and occupation of the site will be provided by proper excavations of the site, which have been agreed upon by the Saudi Arabian authorities and which will start in 2008.

**24 May 2006**

***Arabia's History in the Nineteenth Century: A list of petty wars and intestine broils***

Dr Paul Dresch

*Paul Dresch is a lecturer in Social Anthropology at the Oxford University and has published mainly on Yemen: Tribes, Government and History in Yemen and A History of Modern Yemen. He is currently working on eighteenth century tribal law documents from Jabal Barat but has also written recently on the modern Gulf. In 2005 he spent a month at the King Faisal Centre in Riyadh researching histories and biographical collections of Najd. His lecture synopsis is given below.*

The phrase 'petty wars and intestine broils,' of course, is from Badger's introduction to Ibn Ruzayq. Superficially it describes most chronicles. Doctrine and law provide a different literature; but since Michael Crawford's pioneering effort on the Saudi civil war, one can count on a hand's worth of fingers those works that achieve more than a sparse intersection of doctrine with politics. Worse still, we write in separate cubicles. Books on Nejd, for instance, treat Yemen and Oman as other planets; analyses of Hadramawt make even Yafi' seem a long way off; and those of us concerned with northern Yemen are conspicuously weak on Oman or Nejd. Almost everyone, meanwhile, is by turns either hesitant or overconfident about Hejaz. We need themes, and fresh things to look at.

The Peninsula's regions faced mainly away from each other, to the outside world, but that is not to say the idea of Arabia was absent. The title of Ibrahim al-Haydari's work might catch the eye: *'Unwan al-majd fi tarikh baghdad wa-l-basra wa-najd*. Immersed in things South Arabian, I had not thought of Basra, Baghdad and Nejd as a region. Following



al-Haydari's leads into Hanbali works such as Ibn Humayd's *al-Suhub al-Wabila* (1871), however, one finds a far-flung merchant and learned diaspora from Nejd and a considerable history turning on al-Zubayr, just south of Basra. Al-Haydari, himself from Basra, meanwhile gives space not only to his paternal ancestors but to relatives from al-<sup>c</sup>Ubayd ('of Himyar,' as he says) or of Tayy, 'the most noble and honourable of the tribes,' and his summary of the Peninsula c 1870 is almost Hamdani's. The book has an obvious context. It mattered for tax-purposes, or threatened to, where Arabia ended and Iraq began. But this invocation of classical values is more than the means for an immediate political claim.

As to Arabia's significance elsewhere, European imaginings have been much examined but less done on Muslim perceptions. Shah Wali Allah, in passing, characterised the pious of India in the eighteenth century as 'Arab people in exile.' He did not, though, himself claim Arabian descent. Nor did he live to see a shift of the imagined centre of Islamic culture to Arabia from Persia. Only later still did the spiritual journey to Hejaz become written of also as a geographical journey, and a younger Islam in much of Africa perhaps shows the same pattern. But Arabia, whatever the terms used, was always privileged. In 1903 the Begum of Bhopal – India's answer to Mrs Siddons – paid off marauders with the thought that since they lived in Arabia they deserved her charity.

Donations to the Holy Cities were at most times large, and the scholars and notables of Mecca could live (in fact, largely did so) as if a non-Muslim world was irrelevant. But depending on outside income and pretending to isolation were not confined to these special cases. In 1861, for instance, the realm of Oman's Bu Sa'idi dynasty, spanning Oman and Zanzibar, was divided under British auspices, depriving sultans at Muscat of income. The Ibadi imamate gave language to dispute their power. But equating the imamate with inland Oman and sultans with the coast, or Hinawi tribes with Ibadism and Ghafiri with imported creeds, as used to be the fashion, can prove misleading. The tribes of the interior, 'the precious centre of Islam,' were greatly involved with Africa.

Hadramawt's connections reached still further, to Malabar and Java, and had done so for centuries. At the end of our period, movement to the Far East of people other than learned families provokes pan-Islamic disputes on equality. Well before that, however, domestic politics in the Wadi turned on cannon, mercenaries and even steam-ships brought in from elsewhere; and abroad it is hard to conceive of people more involved than the Hadramis with a world system. Yet Hadramawt itself was depicted as a sacred, unsullied homeland. Inland, meanwhile, the men of al-Qasim and Nejd travelled widely abroad but did not welcome visitors. From the *Lam' al-shihab* (1817) through to travellers such as Palgrave

and Doughty a picture emerges of privacy and moral autonomy sustained by external income.

The Peninsula (and each of its parts) stood ideally apart from a corrupting world. Non-Islamic empire beyond Arabia might be aligned rhetorically with mere worldly things, and in a sense discounted. In local sources the 'Christians' close at hand receive rather little space (this is true, surprisingly, even of Omani literature), while events further off, such as Turkey's wars with Russia, are widely noted. This imbalance of concerns was reciprocated. Europeans thus found Arabian connections which supposedly explained what would now be called 'insurgencies' from North Africa to South-East Asia. (Le Chatelier's fantasy of Sanusi plotting world-domination is particularly fun: '*ses agents, se glissant parmi le foule des pèlerins, traversant les villes, parcourant les tribus, commencent une nouvelle propagande, aussi active que mystérieuse*'). Actually, in Arabia not a great deal happened. Or, rather, what happened was not in grand terms of imperialism and Islamic reform.

At the end of the century reformers elsewhere were drawn to an image of Arabia as preserving an original (and unitary) Islam. What did sectarian divisions count for? The argument has been made that awareness of Ibadism as a separate doctrinal heritage arises with mass schooling, but al-Kharusi's *masa'il shitta* in the 1840s shows that forms of self-awareness dated to the 1780s. A similar concern with Zaydism's distinctive features occurs when the Ottomans invade Yemen (1872). It is clear, though, from for instance Abu l-Khayr's *Nashr al-Nawr* that at Mecca adherents of one Sunni school studied routinely with teachers from another. Indeed, when the Hanbali imam at Mecca, Khalaf Ibrahim Hadhud, died late in the nineteenth century, the Sharif of the day found himself stuck for a suitable replacement. 'One of you,' he said to the assembled *ulama*, 'must be Hanbali.' The Shafi'i shaykh, Ahmad 'Abd Allah Mustafa, ever the team-player, said 'Alright, I'll be Hanbali,' and picked up from his Nejd neighbours what was needed of doctrinal detail.

A clear case of doctrinal purity seems to be the unitarian or Wahhabi summons. The sheer simplicity of Wahhabi claims makes them difficult to analyse, however, and in practice stress fell on a 'creed' which scholars found to their cost was not open to debate. Dissenters contended that where argument was ever offered Wahhabis were simply Hanbalis (many Hanbalis joined the chorus that Wahhabis were the modern Kharijis), and it is striking how when the Saudi imamate is in recession one can hardly pin down who the movement's adherents would have been beyond the region round Riyadh and al-Dir'iyya. The imamate's ebb and flow is of interest, however, as more than contingent change. By the end of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's life, in the 1790s, the movement controlled hardly more than

inner Nejd. A decade later the famous raids strike all but simultaneously Hejaz, Iraq, Oman and Hadramawt, all of which, significantly, follows conquest of the Bani Khalid and expansion through al-Ahsa'. This pattern is repeated, in fact, each time the imamate re-emerges politically. The eastern region was richer than Nejd not just economically (date production was enormous) but also culturally, and historians, scholars and poets were brought from al-Ahsa' as were foodstuffs and luxuries.

Patronage brings a whole mode of cultural politics out of nowhere. Indeed collecting learned persons was everywhere part of what made a court. The Al Rashid on smaller scale did later much what the Al Sa'ud had done. Sharifs of Mecca and sultans at Muscat are praised as patrons. Qatar's Al Thani provides a less well known but almost equally important case. Beyond the grand sweep of politics and doctrine one finds a range of political figures concerned to draw to themselves cultural ornament that all in Arabia would recognise.

Some of these characters might not be out of place in *Alf Layla wa-Layla*. Qasim Muhammad al-Thani, who died only in 1913 (supposedly at the age of 115), took in the scholars of Al Bassam when they differed for a time with the Al Sa'ud. He acted not only as ruler, but as *qadi* and preacher; he patronised poets as well as building a new port, and raided his neighbours as occasion demanded. Having supposedly married ninety women in the course of a busy life, never mind his unnumbered concubines, he was accompanied in his later years, as if in a fairy-tale, by sixty of his armed and mounted sons. Our own age, by comparison, is dull.

When one turns from the tracts and the chronicles to *tarajim*, that is, to collected biographies, a good deal of detail becomes apparent that reveals local sense and imagination. It is here, if anywhere, we might hope for more understanding, not just analytically. For example, Sulayman 'Abd Allah Al al-Shaykh (killed in 1818 by Ibrahim Pasha, and a fairly dry figure in doctrinal perspective) confessed he knew the people in books better than he did those around him, which immediately makes him graspable as a human being. His friends are supposed to have dragged him out one day to the gardens around al-Dir'iyya, as a break from study, and found he could not tell the difference between a pumpkin and a melon. 'Abd Allah 'Abd al-Rahman al-Bassam's splendid '*Ulama' Najd*, from which that story comes, is a treasury of illuminating oddments. Sulayman 'Ali Muqbil, for instance, learned to read and write in his village, studied further in Burayda, and from there set off for Riyadh and then Damascus to seek his fortune. Years later, in the manner of Nejdīs, he came home. His father, a less than a prosperous farmer, welcomed the returning son, whose camels were laden down with baggage. 'Father,' says Sulayman in the story, 'in these boxes are the riches

both of this world and the next.' Parents may imagine for themselves a combination of pride in one's offspring with a certain ignoble disappointment at receiving a pile of books.

Many *tarajim* have almost the charm (and the value as antidote to grand schemes) of Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, where names are committed to history for the sake, one assumes, of a funny story. But there is surely more to be done with them than trace the names and collect stray anecdotes. *Wird*, for instance, apart from technical Sufi usage, means time set aside for personal devotion: the use it was put to varied, but organising such time is a recurrent theme. Partitioning the day among subjects of study is equally apparent (whole cosmologies seem sometimes at issue), and divisions of scholarship from public duties are made in ways everyone in Arabia at the time would have recognised.

Doctrinal disputes, let alone the ups and downs of politics, are surely less basic. Admittedly, they are fun to read. But at least as noticeable are such little-studied themes as numerology and divination. The *karamat* we find in, say, Ibadi sources are not always obvious miracles in the sense of disrupting a natural order. More usually they are a making sense of that order by reading conjunctures of events, which only the ignorant and the deeply knowledgeable think they can foresee. There is nothing 'exotic' about this. It formed the texture of everyday life as much as, if not more than, did politics or doctrine. Between the fascination of European literature with political or economic trends and that of reformist Islamic literature with the roots of law, we tend to leave out how people may really have understood the world.

Let me leave you with a case, again from al-Bassam's collection. The story was plainly passed down until recently in unwritten form; it should not, according to most general views, have happened where it did; and it dates to the nineteenth century. 'Abd al-'Aziz Ahmad Hasan of al-Qasim was pious and unworldly, and despite his good name in al-Qasim he never held a governmental job. At the 'id his family had neither new clothes nor food. God will provide, he said. On the last night of Ramadan, Muhammad al-Rabdi of Burayda and Muhammad Bassam of 'Unayza, the two richest men in Greater Nejd, were praying in their respective towns when each heard a voice say, 'Abd al-'Aziz has nothing for the 'id.' Each sent a servant with clothes, food, and a gift of money. They arrived at the self-same moment. Everyone knows this story, says a Saudi author, and whatever the scholars of law may say, it is surely a *karama*, a miracle. When we know how and why that story was passed on in Nejd, and know what it may have meant when it was first told, we shall have more to discuss than repetitious wars.

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## 7 December 2006

### *Hawārī: Soqatra's hidden maritime treasure*

Julian Jansen van Rensburg

*Julian Jansen van Rensburg received a grant from the Society in 2005 to support his research into the hawārī (or dugout canoes) of Soqatra. He has been working in Soqatra since 2004, collecting data on its maritime heritage, with particular regard to the vessels on the island. Below is his lecture summary.*

Through funding by The Society of Arabian Studies it has been possible to further my previous research undertaken on the island of Soqatra relating to the *huri*, (pl. *hawārī*) and gather further evidence for the origins and influences that have been incorporated into this vessel.



Together with Southern Arabia, Soqatra or Dioscordia as it was once known formed a region known throughout the ancient world as the Land of Incense and by the middle of the 1st millennium BC Soqatra had become a centre of major importance in its function as a staging post and area of supply in the incense trade. The reason for Soqatra's importance is chiefly due to its strategic position at the entrance to the Red Sea, a fact mentioned from as early as the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* c. 40-70 AD to the medieval period where it is mentioned by Arab and Indian navigators.

Although Soqatra has been known since remote antiquity very little evidence for the first inhabitants is available. It is generally believed that the population of Soqatra was made up of people who first settled on the island for the purpose of collecting frankincense and when the demand for this declined they had to rely exclusively on stock-breeding and fishing (Naumkin, V., 1989. 'Fieldwork in Soqatra'. *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin*. Vol. 16, No. 2: 133-142). The fishermen on Soqatra however are comprised of a rich mixture of people who have come from Africa and Arabia as immigrants, shipwrecked sailors or runaway slaves. These fishermen are amongst the poorest on the island having no rights to land and generally live in rudimentary dwellings (Morris, M. 2003. *Manual of Traditional land use in the Soqotrian Archipelago, for G.E.F. (Global Environmental Facility) Project Yem/96/G32*. Edinburgh: Royal Botanical Garden).

The *hawārī* on Soqatra are a significant investment for the fishermen which allow access to the rich offshore fishing grounds. This provides the fishermen with an increase in the amount of fish to be caught and the potential to catch shark which has a high demand. However the appearance of the *hawārī* on Soqatra has been the subject of some debate, indeed the origins of the *hawārī* have been considered to be from both Africa and India. In an effort both to prove the origins for the *hawārī* on Soqatra and allude to these on mainland Arabia a series of samples were taken from a wide variety of vessels which the fishermen had brought from Africa, India and Arabia. These samples were then taken for analysis to the British Museum where all samples were found to be made of teak, a wood that occurs in India and has been used from ancient times to construct vessels. Scientific proof that these vessels came from India has provided both answers and further questions.

Local modifications on Soqatra have allowed for several overseas cultural influences to be identified. Fishermen having learnt an Arabian sewn technique to bind timbers together adapted this to repair a split in the hull while further techniques of the insertion of planking and caulking were also used. This technique was used to repair splits in the hull but was also locally adapted to further increase the beam

of particular vessels, making them more stable, a necessity off the coasts of Soqatra.

Although the *hawārī* are ubiquitous throughout Arabia, being used as harbour launches, ships tenders and fishing vessels only cursory mention of them is made by researchers into Arabian watercraft. The *hawārī* is an under-studied resource which has the potential to elucidate many aspects of Indian and Arabian cultural contacts and influences, although through development this resource is fast disappearing throughout Arabia.

### LECTURE PROGRAMME 2007

The following three lectures were organised for the early part of 2007, either by the Society or jointly with others. Professor Tony Wilkinson's lecture on *Landscapes of Pilgrimage* (see opposite) will be given following the Society's AGM on Wednesday 23 May – make a note in your diary!

Summaries of the lectures given in 2007 will be published in the 2008 Bulletin. The lecture programme for 2007–08 is currently being finalised and will be published and sent to members in September, as usual, once room bookings have been confirmed.

#### 11 January 2007

##### *These were the Potters: Reflections on Olga Tufnell's visit to South Arabia 1959*

Carl Phillips

Joint lecture with the Palestine Exploration Fund, the Council for British Research in the Levant and the British-Yemeni Society.

Carl Phillips is an Arabian archaeologist currently with UMR 7041, Maison de l'Archéologie et de l'Ethnologie, Nanterre, France.

#### 1 March 2007

##### *Socotra: A natural history of the islands and their people*

Kay van Damme

Jointly with the British-Yemeni Society.

Kay van Damme, the Science Editor of *Socotra: A Natural History of the Islands and their People* gave an illustrated lecture at the London launch of this new book, recently published and already receiving enthusiastic reviews.

#### 7 March 2007

##### *In Search of Paradise Lost: Palaeo-climate change to landscape architecture in south-east Arabia*

Dr Adrian Parker

Adrian Parker has been Head of the Department of Geography (now Department of Anthropology and Geography) at Oxford Brookes University since 2003. His work has recently focused on the

palaeoecology and geoarchaeology of arid and semi-arid regions, especially the Middle East and Arabian Gulf regions.

\*\*\*FORTHCOMING\*\*\*

#### 23 May 2007

##### *Landscapes of Pilgrimage: The archaeological context of the Hajj Routes of Arabia*

Professor Tony Wilkinson

Immediately following the Society's AGM at 5.30pm in the Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1

Tony Wilkinson is at present Professor in the Department of Archaeology at Durham University. His research integrates archaeological and landscape surveys with ancient historical records. He has applied this approach to the ancient pilgrim route, the Darb Zubaidah and its way stations. He will talk about the role of landscape in the provision of water along the route and how the Hajj influences the cultural landscape of a vast region.

#### ■ *Note from the Honorary Secretary*

In addition to the Society's own lecture programme, Society Members are sometimes invited to attend a lectures and talks organised by other societies. Members with email addresses can be sent notice of these lectures as they arise, often at very short notice. It is usually not practical to send notices to those with only postal addresses. Any members who are *not* receiving such notices but who would like to do so are asked to send a current email address to me at: [ionisthompson@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:ionisthompson@ukonline.co.uk)

Ionis Thompson



## ARABIAN NEWS AND RESEARCH

### GENERAL INTEREST

*This section starts with news of general interest to members, or which may be relevant to the Arabian Peninsula as a whole, followed by 'news and research' listed alphabetically by country.*

▪ **SALAAM – A Celebration of Music & Arts from the Islamic world.** The *21st Music Village Festival* was organised by Cultural Co-operation and took place in London during July 2006. The festival drew together one of the largest and most diverse gatherings of Muslim artists ever assembled outside the Islamic world to perform at various venues throughout London over a two-week period. Visiting artists from eleven countries united with outstanding UK-based Muslim performers, storytellers, speakers and workshop leaders.

Music from Arabia received a rare outing during the festival. Yemen may not yet be a member of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) but it is still very much part of Gulf culture, especially where music is concerned, and its ancient musical traditions dating back to the 13th century have filtered upwards and outwards to most other Gulf states.



*Fanoun al Yemen at the Regent's Park concert*  
Photo: Paul Hughes Smith

Taking part in the festival this time were a group of musicians and dancers – *Fanoun al Yemen* – from the capital Sanaa, courtesy of the Yemen Ministry of Culture, and featured both the wonderful singing tradition from that city known as the *ghina' sanaani* (Song of Sanaa) as well as many other songs and dances from other regions of Yemen such as Hadhramaut, Taiz and Lahej. The two previous

groups that have participated in the festival in 2002 and 2004 both came from the Hadhramaut region in the south of Yemen and displayed the many outside influences that that area has absorbed over the centuries lying as it does on one of the major maritime trade routes of the world. Here you will find Hindi or Swahili words rubbing shoulders with African dance rhythms such as *liewa* or *bambila*.



Abdullah Saadat playing the 'ud at the Horniman Museum  
Photo: Paul Hughes Smith

The latest group with its wonderful young singer and 'ud player, Abdullah Saadat, celebrated Sanaa's great contribution to Arab culture by giving their audiences a brief taste of the richness and diversity of the *ghina' sana'ni*. Due to the relative isolation of Yemen and the enclosed society of Sanaa until the latter half of the 20th century, the *homayni* tradition of oral love poetry and its musical expression has survived intact from its 13th century beginnings, born out of the Arab-Andalus *muwashshah* popular throughout the Arab Islamic world at that time. The music is essentially subordinate to the poetry but it nevertheless has its own quite complex structures that have their basis in providing an integral accompaniment for dances mainly at wedding times. Often however this music was performed in secret, given that music and certainly dancing to it did not find favour with the traditional Muslim theologians and jurists of the Imamate.

The present-day traditional musical instrument to accompany the singer is, of course, the 'ud or Arab lute, but the precursor to this was the Yemeni



*qanbus* known most commonly in Sanaa as the *turbi* or simply the *tarab* (a word more often used to describe musical ecstasy). This instrument is smaller and narrower than the *'ud* and has a hollow neck and a stretched skin, as opposed to a wooden sound-board. Understandably such an instrument was far easier to conceal and it is said versions were even made that were hinged to fold up and hide under clothing.



Hasan al-Ajami playing the *qanbus*  
Photo: Paul Hughes Smith

There are very few musicians left who know how to play the *qanbus* and I was privileged to spend an afternoon on my last visit to Sanaa listening to Hasan al-Ajami playing some of his extensive repertoire taught to him by his father. He complained that this tradition was dying out because it can only be preserved through this master/pupil relationship and not through listening to recordings. He is now an integral part of a UNESCO project to preserve the *ghina' sanaani* as a 'Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity'. Dr Jean Lambert, Director of CEFAS (Centre Français d'Archéologie et de Sciences de Sanaa), and Samir Mokrani, have recently started this project to digitise all the early recordings of this music and to start a workshop programme so that the art is not lost.

I met Samir Mokrani through a friend in Paris, Pierre d'Herouville, who has carried out research on the history of the *qanbus*. It has many other forms in the south of Yemen and in East Africa, notably the Comoros Islands where it was known as the *qanbusi*. After mentioning this to the Keeper of Musical Instruments at the Horniman Museum here in London, Margaret Birley, and establishing that the Museum held no example of an instrument from Yemen in its collections, arrangements were made to commission the last maker of the *qanbus*, Fuad al-Quturi, to make a new instrument for the Horniman (see front cover); old instruments are very rarely available and fetch high prices despite nobody knowing how to play them.

After somewhat protracted and complicated arrangements over a period of nine months, the

completed instrument was collected finally at the beginning of 2006, brought to Paris, and thence to London in May to be presented to the Museum. Although Yemen is properly represented at the Horniman, sadly, like eighty per cent of the collection, it is not yet on display. *Fanoun al Yemen* gave a wonderful performance at the Horniman as part of the festival but alas there was not an opportunity for Abdullah Saadat to christen the *qanbus* so it remains unplayed except by its maker.

The 2007 festival – the 2nd Diaspora London Music Village – will take place over one or two weekends in July in Hyde Park and/or Kew Gardens and will be an opportunity, as before, for the London-based artists to have a performance platform. For details about the festival programme and other information please visit: [www.culturalco-operation.org](http://www.culturalco-operation.org)

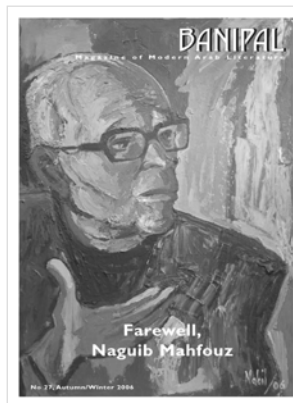
Those who would like to know more about the music of Sanaa and can read French should seek out Jean Lambert's study: *La médecine de l'âme*, 1997 by Société d'ethnologie, Nanterre. A CD, *Le Chant de Sanaa* by Hasan al-Ajami is available on Institut du Monde Arabe 321029, distributed here by Harmonia Mundi.

Paul Hughes Smith

Programme Adviser to Cultural Co-operation

▪ **BANIPAL** is an independent literary magazine, founded in 1998 by Margaret Obank and Iraqi author Samuel Shimon, to publish contemporary authors and poets from all over the Arab world in English translation. It takes its name from Ashurbanipal, the last great king of Assyria and patron of the arts, whose outstanding achievement was to assemble in Nineveh, from all over his empire, the first systematically organised library in the ancient Middle East.

Three issues are produced each year which and present established and new Arab authors and poets in English for the first time through poems, short stories or excerpts from novels, with regular columns of *Literary Influences*, *A Travelling Tale* and *Interview with an Editor*, plus author interviews, book reviews and photo-reports of literary events.



Each issue is well illustrated with author photographs and the full colour covers featuring prominent Arab artists. 2007 will be Banipal's tenth year of publication, with 27 published issues, and No. 28, in preparation for publication in April. Nearly 500 different Arab authors, including many from

Arabia, have been published to date, not to mention books reviewed. As well as general issues, and major features on particular authors, there have been special features on contemporary literature from Algeria, from Morocco, from Jordan, from Palestine, from Iraq and on the novel in Saudi Arabia.

**Banipal Books** was established in 2004 by Banipal's editor Margaret Obank to strengthen and expand the work of Banipal magazine by publishing in book form works by contemporary Arab authors. There are now four titles, the most recent of which *An Iraqi in Paris* by Banipal Assistant Editor Samuel Shimon has been long-listed for the 2007 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.

The annual **Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation** of £2000 is awarded for the translation of a full-length imaginative and creative work of literary merit published in English. It was established in 2005 by *Banipal* magazine and the Banipal Trust for Arab Literature (BTAL) with the aim of raising the profile of contemporary Arabic literature as well as honouring the important work of individual translators in bringing the work of established and emerging Arab writers to the attention of the wider world. The prize is administered by the Society of Authors in the UK. The inaugural prize for 2006 was presented to Humphrey Davies for his translation of Elias Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* (Harvill Secker).

Following a first successful year in 2006, BTAL is pleased to announce the sponsorship of the prize for the next five years by Omar Saif Ghobash in memory of his father. The prize name will therefore change to **The Saif Ghobash-Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation** (further information at: [www.banipaltrust.org.uk](http://www.banipaltrust.org.uk)).

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▪ The **Al-Furqan Library** was founded by Shaikh Ahmad Zaki Yamani in 1991 as a resource centre for Islamic literature in Arabic, English, Persian and Turkish languages. Foundation Eagle House, High Street, London SW19 5EF. Tel: 020 8944 1233; [librarian@al-furqan.com](mailto:librarian@al-furqan.com); [www.al-furqan.com](http://www.al-furqan.com)

▪ **The Council for Arab-British Understanding (CAABU) opens in Oxford** – In a major move to expand the reach of the organisation, the Council for Arab-British Understanding (CAABU) launched its new Oxford Branch on 27 January 2007. This is part

of a pilot scheme to open branches around the UK. The aim will be to hold events and activities to further CAABU's core objectives. Branch Secretary, Trevor Mostyn stated, "As a board member of CAABU, I was delighted to host the launch of CAABU's Oxford branch on January 27th. Arabic was first taught in Oxford in the 17th century and this tradition endures through the Middle East Centre at St Anthony's College". For further information contact CAABU London headquarters on 0207 832 1320, or email: [doylec@caabu.org](mailto:doylec@caabu.org).

▪ The **2006 British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize**, funded by the Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Foundation, has been won by **Dionisius A. Agius** for his latest book *Seafaring in the Arabian Gulf and Oman: The people of the Dhow* (London: Kegan Paul, 2005; reprinted twice); (see Bulletin No. 11, p. 48 for a review). Research and writing of the book was funded by the Leverhulme Trust (1996-1998). The award, of £7,000, is for the best scholarly work on the Middle East published in the UK and is one of the most significant and prestigious awards in this field. The second prize of £300 went to Carter Vaughan Findley for his book *The Turks in World History*, (Oxford: OUP).

The Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Foundation also offers scholarships to encourage postgraduate studies in disciplines related to the Middle East in British universities. Further information can be found on pages 37–38 or from BRISMES, which administer the awards. Contact: Ms Louise Haysey, BRISMES Administrative Office, Tel: 0191 33 45179. Email: [a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk](mailto:a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk), or visit the website at: [www.dur.ac.uk/brismes](http://www.dur.ac.uk/brismes)

▪ **Wildlife Middle East – News.** This new bilingual newsletter focusing on zoo and wildlife issues in the Middle East has recently been launched. The newsletter aims to contribute to the development of a network between zoo and wildlife professionals working in the Middle East with the objective of being the premier source of regional information on zoo and wildlife management, husbandry and care. The newsletter will publish articles with an emphasis on practical, useful and relevant material. Proposed categories include:

- Conservation education & environmental awareness
- Husbandry & nutrition
- Design of zoological facilities
- Capture and translocation techniques
- Wildlife diseases and preventive medicine
- Products, book reviews & research.
- Summaries of recent literature on Arabian animals
- Letters

*Wildlife Middle East – News* will be produced quarterly as a dual language (English-Arabic) quality newsletter. The newsletter will be distributed to

biology departments and libraries of institutes of higher education, agricultural and environmental agencies, conservation groups, wildlife projects, zoos, zoologists, and veterinarians working with wild animals, veterinary hospitals involved in wildlife medicine, municipality veterinarians and pet shops. A PDF format newsletter will be emailed to a wider circulation of interested readers within and beyond the region.

The Editors are interested to hear from individuals, institutions, zoos and conservation projects working with wildlife within the Middle East region or with wildlife species from the Middle East managed outside the region. If you have interesting findings, news or observations please submit or request further information from the editors: Tom Bailey (Falcon and Wildlife Veterinarian, Dubai Falcon Hospital, PO Box 23919, Dubai), Declan O'Donovan (Director of Wildlife Services, Wadi Al Safa Wildlife Centre, PO Box 27875, Dubai), Chris Lloyd (Director, Nad Al Shiba Vet Hospital, PO Box 116345, Dubai) and Theri Bailey (Adjunct Instructor in Environmental Science, Zayed University, Dubai). Email: editors@wmenews.com Web: www.wmenews.com

- A new **Islamic University** is proposed for the city of Lille in northern France, to be named **The Ibn Sina Institute for Human Science**. Both the French and the Qatari governments have pledged to assist with the financing. The Institute's objective is to qualify imams to 'tackle issues related to Muslim minority issues.'

- The **Liverpool Arab Centre** provides education, health, cultural and welfare services for Arabs in and around Liverpool, most of whom are of Yemeni origin. The centre is a registered charity in the UK and a company limited by guarantee. It runs its programme from an office in the deprived area of Toxteth in Liverpool with a skeletal staff of a coordinator, part-time administrative assistant, education manager, and two part-time youth workers. Otherwise, activities are run on a voluntary basis by Yemenis and non-Yemenis with full-time jobs. The Chairman is Taher Ali Qassim, who hails from Sharaab, Ta'izz, Yemen and is a Public Health Specialist in Liverpool.

The centre encourages various arts projects by and for the local Arab community. At the moment there is a stunning exhibit of photographs at the Novas Alima Centre of asylum seekers from the Middle East and northeast Africa which tells their heartrending stories. The pictures were taken by Ilham Hamood, a talented female photographer who comes from the same area of Yemen as Taher Qassim. The Arab Centre contributes to an annual Arabic Arts Festival in coordination with other Liverpool arts bodies including the Liverpool Philharmonic, Bluecoat Arts Centre and the World Museum Liverpool. Among events arranged for

2007 and 2008 (when Liverpool will be the European Capital of Culture) are performances by the celebrated Lebanese composer, 'ud player and singer Marcel Khalif, who was recently designated the UNESCO "artist of peace". Other possibilities include a photographic exhibition on Yemen.

The Centre is delighted to have obtained an agreement to borrow the successful Soqatra exhibition, which was held at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh in 2006. Their hope is to exhibit it in Liverpool in 2007, but their dreams cannot be realised unless they can raise £25,000 to cover the considerable expense of the packing, transportation, insurance and mounting of this rather complicated exhibition. The Centre is currently seeking sponsors for this worthwhile project, so if any members have any useful suggestions, they should contact Mr Taher Ali Qassim, Chairman, Liverpool Arab Club, 163 Lodge Lane, Liverpool L8 0QQ. Tel: 07801-658444 or 0151-734 0550. Email: taher.qassim@liverpoolpct.nhs.uk

Shelagh Weir

- A new **Institute for Middle Eastern Studies** has recently been established in the **University of Nottingham**. The Institute is an interdisciplinary venture, seeking to co-ordinate the teaching and research interests of staff in different Schools and Departments who have Middle Eastern interests, particularly in the School of Humanities, the School of History, and the School of Politics. A new jointly-taught introductory undergraduate module *Understanding the Middle East: Contemporary Challenges and Historical Background* attracted 140 students when it was taught for the first time in 2006; the teaching of Arabic has also been established within the university's Language Centre from September 2006. Further details are available at: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/MiddleEast](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/MiddleEast).

The Institute was officially launched on 20 June 2006 with a one-day conference which included presentations by Professor Carole Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh) on *Saladin*, Professor Fred Halliday (London School of Economics) on the *Significance of the Middle East in Politics and International Relations*, and Professor Robert Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh) on *The Dome of the Rock*. Further information is available from: [Hugh.Goddard@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Hugh.Goddard@nottingham.ac.uk)

Hugh Goddard

Professor of Christian-Muslim Relations  
University of Nottingham

- **Important Collection of Middle Eastern Dress Comes to Leiden** – Thanks to the generosity of the Barbas-Van der Klaauw Foundation in the Netherlands, the Textile Research Centre (TRC), Leiden, has acquired the Josephine Kane Collection of Middle Eastern Dress. This is a wonderful

collection of garments from various Middle Eastern countries including Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen, as well as various items from Afghanistan and India. The collection consists of over 150 items, ranging from nose rings to elaborate wedding dresses.

The Palestinian garments include rare items, notably a 'Royal' Bethlehem dress and a Beit Dajan thob that is made from heavily embroidered cream linen. From Jordan there is an amazing dress from Salt, which is at least six metres long with equally enormous sleeves. The majority of the garments come from Saudi Arabia and include colourful dresses from the Najd and Dawasir tribes and heavily beaded garments from Asir province. There are also some modern dresses worn at royal Saudi weddings.



A Sharfa dress from western Saudi Arabia from the Josephine Kane Collection

The collection is supported by Mrs Kane's notes, made during fifteen years of research in the Middle East, her library and collection of slides. The garments and supporting material will be used for various areas of research being carried out by the TRC and students from Leiden University, notably academic studies of Saudi Arabian dress; Jordanian and Syrian dress and Palestinian dress. In addition, many of the garments will form the basis of a proposed exhibition about Middle Eastern embroidery and its symbolism.

The Textile Research Centre (TRC), c/o National Museum of Ethnology, Steenstraat 1, 2312 BS, Leiden, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 (0)71-5168767; email: [textile@rmv.nl](mailto:textile@rmv.nl); or visit the website at: [www.textrdress.nl](http://www.textrdress.nl)

▪ **The Visual Islamic & Traditional Arts (VITA)** Department of the Prince of Wales Foundation offers higher degrees in the practice of traditional

arts from around the world. For further details contact VITA, The Princes' Foundation, 19–22 Charlotte Road, London EC2 3SG, email: [rsuzuki@princes-foundation.org](mailto:rsuzuki@princes-foundation.org); or visit the website at: [www.princes-foundation.org](http://www.princes-foundation.org)

▪ **Ancient Arabia at the British Museum** – The collection of antiquities from Arabia in the British Museum began with the donation of a large collection of Sabaean bronze votive tablets as early as 1862. These were published within a year, and since then every effort has been made to display important portions of the collection and to make the remainder as accessible as possible for students, scholars and the public through publications or study. A new long-term display of selected South Arabian antiquities is currently being prepared to open by May of this year. This is at the head of the North-East Stairs and replaces the former Hittite Landing display. This refurbishment is part of a larger project which has seen the removal of the old totem pole, the installation of 19th century plaster casts from Persepolis on the staircase and adjacent gallery for Ancient Iran and a thorough re-display of the galleries for Ancient Iran, Prehistoric Europe & the Middle East, and Roman Britain. In the meantime, a small temporary display of objects from these areas of the collections has been open to the public in Room 2. Further plans are underway to re-catalogue and re-publish the ancient South Arabian collection and more details on this will be announced in the next Bulletin.

*St John Simpson*

▪ **The Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art**, at the Victoria and Albert Museum has been renovated thanks to the Abdul Latif Jameel Group. It houses treasures from the V&A's collection of 10,000 Islamic objects from the Middle East, including the famous Ardabil Carpet from 16th century Iran and an exquisite rock-crystal ewer from 11th century Egypt. The displays explain how Islamic art developed from the great days of the Islamic caliphate in the 8th and 9th centuries. Other objects include ivories from Spain, metalwork from Egypt, Iznik ceramics from Ottoman Turkey and oil paintings from 19th century Iran. The collections highlight the fruitful interchange between the Islamic world and its neighbours in Europe and Asia. Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL. Tel: 020 7942 2000. Web: [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

▪ **The Festival of Muslim Cultures** began in January 2006 and continues into autumn 2007. The Festival has been working with arts and educational institutions across the UK to promote the mainstreaming of Muslim cultures within UK everyday life. The programme was launched in January 2006 with a visit by the Festival's Patron,



**HRH The Prince of Wales**, to the *Palace and Mosque* exhibition at the Millennium Galleries in Sheffield. Since then there have been more than 100 events with many more planned for 2007. At the end of the Festival, it is hoped to establish a Foundation that will support long-term commitment to promoting Muslim cultures through arts collaborations and build on the extensive network of local, national and international partners that the Festival has created. The Festival is delighted to have supported a venture which took nine British students on a creative journey to the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman in February 2007, reporting daily via satellite to thousands of schools across the UK. For further information about the events planned for 2007, visit the Festival website at: [www.muslimcultures.org](http://www.muslimcultures.org)

▪ **British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) receives British Academy funding**

Last year BRISMES was invited by the British Academy to apply for funding to enhance its current activities under the Academy's Learned Societies Programme. An application was made in July 2006, and the Society informed in December that it had been successful. In the first instance, BRISMES will receive a £50,000 grant for the financial year 2007–2008, with the possibility of renewal on an annual basis for the following 4 years at a rate of £30,000 per year. The new funding, which comes on stream on 1 April, will enable BRISMES to make progress with a number of projects which have been on hold for some time. These include: increasing the administrative support at the University of Durham under the direction of Louise Haysey; developing the BRISMES website to improve the distribution of information to members; the establishment of three networks of Middle East Studies scholars based in the UK under the themes of recent conferences, – 'Faith, Politics and Society', 'Resistance, Representation and Identity', and 'Domination, Expression and Liberation' – all in relation to the Middle East region; and holding a major conference projected for March 2008 in which the themes above will be explored. The conference has a provisional title of *What has the Middle East done for us?* and is planned to be held in London.

Further information about the aims and activities of BRISMES can be found elsewhere in this Bulletin on pages 37 and 40, and on the BRISMES website at: [www.brismes.ac.uk](http://www.brismes.ac.uk). For further information about the British Academy visit [www.britac.ac.uk](http://www.britac.ac.uk)

**PLEASE SEND INFORMATION FOR  
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**NEWS AND RESEARCH BY COUNTRY**

**BAHRAIN**

▪ ***The Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula through the Ages*** – For the first time, under the auspices of Deputy Premier and Minister of Islamic Affairs, Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa, Bahrain hosted the seventh Scientific gathering of the Gulf Co-operation Council History and Archaeology Association, from 18–21 April 2006. Around 200 historians and archaeologists from the Gulf gathered representing some 25 research projects in various issues. The gathering was accompanied by an exhibition with the participation of experts interested in the region's history. The gathering also honoured three outstanding historians who made praiseworthy contributions to the Bahraini and Gulf literary, cultural and historical literature: Deputy Premier and Minister of Islamic Affairs, Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa, the late Mbarak Al Khater and the late Mohammed Ali Al Nasiri.

**KUWAIT**

▪ **The Kuwaiti-British team who worked in As-Sabiyah**, 1998–2004, has finished the monograph detailing the results of excavation and survey. This includes a detailed account of the discoveries at the site H3, which shed light on maritime trade and boat-building technology during the Neolithic/Ubaid period. The volume has been accepted for publication in the ASPR series (American School of Prehistoric Research, Harvard University).

▪ **2007 Kuwaiti-Slovak Archaeological Mission excavations on Failaka Island** – A team, headed by Dr Karol Pieta of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, returned to the island of Failaka in February 2007 to undertake a third season's work at **Al-Khidhr** (Early Dilmun Period), and at **Al-Qusur** (6th–8th century AD). A report on their work follows:

The Kuwaiti-Slovak Archaeological Mission (KSAM) was established in 2004 as a joint interdisciplinary research project of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, State of Kuwait (NCCAL) and the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Nitra, Slovak Republic. The project is run under the auspices and with the full material support of the NCCAL, presided over by Secretary General Mr Bader Al-Rifai. The Mission could not have been successful without the personal involvement, professional interest and generous support of Mr Shehab A.H. Shehab (NCCAL Department of Antiquities and Museums Director, KSAM Director) and Mr Ali Al-Youha (NCCAL Secretary General Assistant for Antiquities, Museums and Engineering Affairs Sector).



The Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences has provided the project with archaeologists and specialists which has enabled an interdisciplinary approach. The Slovak contribution has also been in the design of research strategies and the provision of scientific expertise. The KSAM also benefits from the participation of academics and archaeology graduates from Constantine the Philosopher University (Nitra) and from Istanbul University (Turkey) making KSAM an international multidisciplinary workgroup including professionals in archaeology and environmental archaeology (archaeobotany, archaeozoology and phytolith study), the study of perishable materials, mapping, survey, GIS, IT and conservation. For the analysis work on special material groups KSAM co-operates with Kuwaiti (KISR), German, Czech, Belgian, British and Turkish laboratories and specialists.

The two main objectives of KSAM at Failaka are (1) the excavation of Al-Khidr site (Bronze Age, Dilmun, 1st half of the 2nd millennium BC) and (2) the survey of archaeological sites on the island.



Fig. 1: General view of the site at the shore of the Al-Khidr bay

The Al-Khidr site is situated in the north-western part of Failaka. It stretches in a 30 – 40 m wide stripe some 150 m along the west shore of the shallow bay of the same name, a natural harbour very suitable for small vessels of a kind traditionally used in the northern part of the Gulf (fig. 1).

The site has been excavated since 2004. Fifteen test soundings, two test trenches and nine trenches covered a total area of 620 m<sup>2</sup>. Apart from the most abundant Bronze Age remains, two other chronological stages were detected, namely 18th–20th century AD and the period around 1st century BC–1st century AD. As for the Bronze Age, three main occupation horizons can be distinguished at present. The first horizon is indicated by an inflexed inhumation of an adult male that seems to be of Kassite age (fig. 2); the question of whether there is also a Kassite settlement at Al-Khidr remains still open).



Fig 2: Central part of excavated area, inhumation grave

The second and third horizons represent a Dilmun settlement which is the most important part of Al-Khidr archaeological evidence. The stratigraphically younger second horizon has yielded solid stone architecture on rectangle-like ground-plans, with apparent evidence of refurbishment and rebuilding. In contrast, the third horizon's structures are of irregular layout. Alongside with the two types of stone structures, conspicuous shell-rich strata occur. Depending on the location, they may be interpreted as a dump or insulation/levelling layers below the stone buildings. The uncovered evidence allows comment on the spatial organisation of the settlement (habitation and activity/dumping areas).

The Dilmun settlement at Al-Khidr has yielded a wide range of finds. Apart from the red-ridged ware and other pottery, fifty-one Dilmun stamp seals (fig. 3), metal objects (copper), soap-stone vessels fragments, knapped flint debitage and tools, bitumen fragments with basketry and cordage impressions, and some raw materials (eg sulphur) have been recorded. Further, fish bones and otoliths as well as terrestrial mammal bones have been found. In spite of systematic flotation of the sediments, the plant macro-remains are still rare.



Fig 3: One of the Dilmun stamp seals from the site

The second objective of KSAM, the survey of Failaka using modern methods of data recording and processing (GIS environment), also started in 2006. Apart from an updated picture of archaeological sites across the island, several sites were geophysically investigated, mapped in detail (tachymetric plans) and documented by photogrammetry. As Failaka is to become a major holiday resort, the collected data will serve to help protect the archaeological heritage and to present the island's ancient past to the public. Apart from archaeology, the survey has gathered fresh information on the island's environment and biodiversity.

A temporary exhibition opens at the Kuwait National Museum on 9 April 2007 and will summarise the results of the three seasons of fieldwork undertaken by KSAM in 2004, 2006, and 2007. The activities of the Kuwaiti-Slovak Archaeological Mission can be found on the internet at [www.kuwaitarchaeology.org](http://www.kuwaitarchaeology.org), a website which has been set up and maintained by the Kuwaiti-Slovak Archaeological Mission under the copyright of NCCAL.

Lucia Benediková  
Peter Barta

▪ **Dr Mark Beech, Director of ADACH**, visited Kuwait in **March 2006** and **March 2007**, at the invitation of Shehab Shehab, Director of NCCAL, to participate in the second and third seasons of fieldwork on Failaka Island being undertaken by teams from the joint Kuwaiti-Slovak Archaeological Mission (KSAM) (see above).

During his 2006 visit, he carried out collaborative work on the animal bone assemblage from Al-Khidr with Zora Mikloková of the Institute of Archaeology, Slovak Academy of Sciences. Discussions were also held with Dr Mohsen Al-Husaini from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) concerning the progress of the joint marine catfish otolith research project.



7000 year old sea catfish otoliths from H3, Sabiyah, Kuwait.  
(Photo: courtesy of Dr Mark Beech)

During his 2007 visit, he spent one week working with Dr Mohsen Al-Husaini, marking the culmination of a two-and-a-half year project investigating modern and ancient sea catfish otoliths from the 7000 year old excavations at Site H3 at Sabiyah in Kuwait. The results of this research will be published in a series of forthcoming papers.

▪ The **Kuwait National Museum** reflects the history and civilisation of the country as well as the customs, traditions and heritage of its citizens. It also boasts one of the most comprehensive collections of Islamic art in the world – the **Al-Sabah Collection**, as well as the **Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah** (House of Islamic Antiquities), an extensive collection of Islamic art ranging from early Islam to the 18th century. Other collections include pearl-diving relics, ethnographic objects and artefacts from excavations on Failaka Island. Now, with the majority of its collections retrieved following their removal to Iraq between 1990–91, the museum comprises four buildings and a planetarium. The Kuwait National Museum is in Arabian Gulf Street, Safat, 13015, Kuwait City, Tel: +965 245 1195. The **Friends of Dar al-Athar al Islamiyyah** publish a monthly newsletter: *Bareed ad-Dar*. Details from PO Box 386, Slamiya, 22004 Kuwait. Tel/fax: +965 565 3006.

▪ The **Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris** hosted a series of Kuwaiti events through December, including a group of dancers and singers from Kuwaiti television, and an exhibition of paintings by women artists.

## OMAN

▪ **Archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula Through the Ages** – This three-day seminar was organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture as part of celebrations marking Muscat as the Arab Cultural Capital for 2006. The seminar was opened by President of the Majlis Al'shura Shaikh Abdullah bin Ali Al Qatabi on 9 May 2006. Dignitaries attending the inaugural ceremony included ministers, state advisers and senior government officials. Heritage Affairs Under-Secretary Sultan bin Hamdoon Al Harthy, noted in a speech that the comprehensive development undergone by the Arab Peninsula region in recent decades called for renewed efforts to protect its cultural resources. The seminar reflected the Sultanate's concern with safeguarding its cultural, historical and natural resources. Dr Isam bin Ali Al Rowas, Dean of the Arts and Social Sciences College at the Sultan Qaboos University and Chairman of the GCC History and Archaeology Association, underlined the strategic location of the Arab Peninsula which, he noted, earned the region the attention of the world.

▪ The **Aflaj, the irrigation systems of Oman, were declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in July 2006.** Quoting from the World Heritage web site, the property includes five *aflaj* irrigation systems and represents some 3,000 such systems still in use. Archaeological evidence suggests such systems may date back to as early as 2,500 BC. The word *aflaj* means to divide into shares, in this case of a scarce resource, to ensure sustainability. The fair and effective management and sharing of water in villages and towns is still underpinned by mutual dependence and communal values and guided by astronomical observations. Watch-towers built to defend the water systems are part of the listed property; other buildings include mosques, houses, sun dials and water auction buildings.



▪ A five-day **training course on museums and archaeological property** was organised by the Heritage and Culture Ministry last year as part of the activities marking Muscat as the Arab Culture Capital 2006. The course was held in cooperation with the Islamic Organisation for Education and Sciences and the Oman Islamic Education Committee. Participants came from both government and private institutions. The course focused on museum documentation and methods of maintaining and protecting archaeological property. (Source: *Times of Oman*)

▪ The **Historical Society of Oman** organises a programme of lectures, trips and social events throughout the year. Membership is RO 10,000 (RO 5,000 students in full-time study). Further details from the Society at PO Box 3941, Code 112, RUWI, Oman. Website: [www.hao.org.om](http://www.hao.org.om)

▪ The **Anglo-Omani Society** was formed in January 1976, and subsequently registered as a Charity (No. 293509). HM The Sultan of Oman is the Society's Patron, and the President is HE the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman in London. Membership of the Society is open to Omanis and to British subjects who have resided in Oman, or who

have commercial, cultural, or other interests there.

The Society arranges a regular programme of events, mostly talks and lectures given by well known and experienced speakers, specialists in their own fields. Events are normally held at the Middle East Association in London. For further information contact: Richard Owens OBE, Honorary Secretary, Anglo-Omani Society, September Cottage, 29 Chipperfield Road, Bovingdon, Herts HP3 0JN or visit the Society's website at: [www.oman.org.uk](http://www.oman.org.uk)

## QATAR

▪ **Excavations at Murwab** – A small French team headed by Dr Alexandrine Guerin began a three month season at the Early Islamic site of Murwab in January 2007. Further information is available at: [www.gremmo.mom.fr/GUERIN/Guerin.html](http://www.gremmo.mom.fr/GUERIN/Guerin.html)

▪ **Qatar Museums Authority** – Lord Rothschild, former chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund and of the National Gallery, London, has been appointed a trustee of the Qatar Museums Authority (QMA). The newly established Authority, charged with the overseeing and development of the national system of museums, is responsible for the **Museum of Islamic Art**. Construction of the new on the Doha Corniche, designed by IM Pei, has continued and is due for completion by December 2007. It will house a world-class collection of Islamic art. An exhibition of 35 of the choicest pieces, entitled **From Cordoba to Samarkand**, was held in The Louvre in June 2006 and again in Doha during the Asian Games in December.

Major museum redevelopment plans for a new National Library and Natural History Museum designed by Arata Isozaki, Photographic Museum designed by Santiago Calatrava, and a completely re-designed and updated National Museum have been put on hold for the time being.

## SAUDI ARABIA

▪ A delegation from the **Ministry of Antiquities and Museums, led by Dr Saad bin Abdulaziz Al-Rashid**, visited Britain in the autumn of 2006. At a meeting at London's Middle East Association, Dr Al-Rashid described some of the 40,000 plus archaeological sites in the Kingdom, as well as highlighting both the wealth of rock art and its vulnerability.

▪ In May the **National Museum** hosted an **exhibition of Islamic art from the Louvre**, opened by King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz and French President Jacques Chirac. Other museums in the Kingdom include the Mecca Museum for Archaeology and Ethnology, housed in al-Zaher

Palace. It includes galleries on Arabian prehistory, geology and geography, on pre-Islamic Arabia as well as on the cultural heritage of Mecca.

- The **National Museum newsletter** of April 2006 (website: [www.saudimuseum.com](http://www.saudimuseum.com)) focused on the importance of **underwater antiquities in Saudi coastal waters**, the result of the hazardous coastal reefs of the Red Sea that line the shore and which over the centuries have caused the many wrecks along the Saudi coast, their contents a remarkable record of trade in the region over many centuries. This record is now threatened with diving treasure hunters with links to the international art market. A hoard of silver coins from Saudi waters was recently retrieved in the USA, originally from a wreck near the ancient port of al-Shuaibah.

- The **Saudi Arabian Natural History Society**, founded in 1971 and based in Jeddah, has as its main objectives the conservation of land, sea and wildlife resources in the Kingdom. It has monthly meetings with lectures and an annual photographic competition. Saudi Arabian Natural History Society, c/o The Bursar, The British International School of Jeddah, PO Box 6453, Jeddah 21442, Saudi Arabia. Tel: (966-2) 6990019 Fax: (966-2) 6991943

- There have been some interesting developments and discoveries in **cave exploration** over recent years. Throwing sticks of possible Neolithic date have been found in one cave. For more information, visit: [www.saudicaves.com](http://www.saudicaves.com)

- The **Saudi-British Society** is a social, cultural, non-political and non-commercial organisation set up in 1987 to promote friendship and understanding between the UK and Saudi Arabia. The ambassador, HRH Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf, is President and Sir Alan Munro is Chairman. For details about membership, lecture programme and other events please contact Ionis Thompson, Honorary Secretary, Email: [ionisthompson@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:ionisthompson@ukonline.co.uk). Website: [www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk](http://www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk)

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

### *Mark Beech reports from ABU DHABI:*

- The **Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH)** – The Emirate of Abu Dhabi has a new body responsible for culture and heritage, including archaeology and palaeontology. This new body absorbs the former Department of Antiquities and Tourism in Abu Dhabi's Eastern Region, based in Al Ain and founded at the beginning of the 1970s, and the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey (ADIAS), which was founded in 1992. It also incorporates the former Cultural Heritage Unit from

the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, the National Library and the Cultural Foundation, which are based in the centre of the city of Abu Dhabi. The headquarters of the new Authority are located in the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi.

The Chairman of the new Authority is Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoun Al Nahyan, who is also Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, the Deputy Chairman is Zaki Nusseibeh and the Director-General is Mohammed Khalaf al-Mazroui. The Authority has a Strategic Planning Department headed by Dr Sami El-Masri. The Authority was established under the terms of an Emiri law issued on the 14th October 2005 by UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan in his capacity as Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and is an autonomous agency of the Government of Abu Dhabi.

**Dr Mark Beech**, formerly Senior Resident Archaeologist for ADIAS, joined ADACH on 1 June 2006 as Head of Division – Cultural Landscapes. He is now based in the ADACH headquarters building in Abu Dhabi. His new contact details are: Dr Mark Beech, Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), PO Box 2380, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Tel: +971-2-6213745. Fax: +971-2-6212186. Mobile: +971-50-7527407. Email: [mark.beech@cultural.org.ae](mailto:mark.beech@cultural.org.ae). Web: [www.cultural.org.ae](http://www.cultural.org.ae)

- A new department known as the **Department of Historic Environment** has been formed within ADACH with responsibility for archaeology and palaeontology. This includes Mohammed Amer Al-Neyadi as its Head, Dr Walid Yasin Al-Tikriti as Head of Division – Archaeology, Dr Mark Beech as Head of Division – Cultural Landscapes, Jaber Al Murri, Mohammed Mattar Al Dhaheri, Ahmed Abdullah Elhaj and Dia'eddin Tawalbeh (field archaeologists), and Aqil Ahmad Aqil and Fawaz Khalfa (historic buildings specialists).

To cope with the new pressures from the rapid rate of development underway in Abu Dhabi emirate, ADACH has introduced new regulations for the investigation of all cultural heritage, archaeological and palaeontological sites. These include **Preliminary Cultural Reviews (PCRs)** and **Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments (CHIAs)**, as part of the process of implementation of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), a statutory requirement of the Federal Environment Law no. 24 of 1999 for the Protection and Development of the Environment.

[www.cultural.org.ae/historicenvironment/forms.html](http://www.cultural.org.ae/historicenvironment/forms.html)

- A new programme of **mapping archaeological sites in Abu Dhabi emirate** has been initiated by the Department of Historic Environment. This is using high resolution GPS equipment and satellite images, together with ESRI ArcGis software. To date the islands of Dalma and Sir Bani Yas have been visited to accurately record the footprint of



archaeological and historical sites on the islands. In addition, a programme has been initiated surveying the rich number of archaeological sites located in the Eastern Region of Abu Dhabi emirate, principally in and around the city of Al Ain.

▪ The **Fourth Annual Symposium on Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Emirates** was held at Le Mercure Hotel on Jebel Hafit in Al Ain from the 29–30 March 2006, and was opened by Dr Hassan M. al-Naboodah, Director of the Zayed Center for Heritage and History. The following papers were presented at the Symposium:

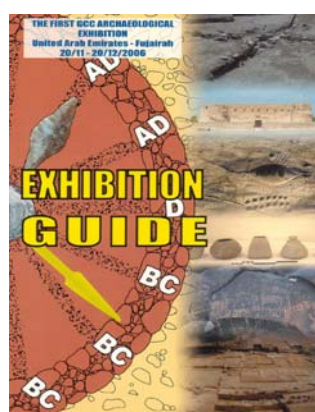
- Dr Mark Beech (ADACH), Dr John Stewart, (University College, London) and Dr Heiko Kallweit (ADIAS). *Umm al-Ishtan and Bida al-Mutawa: new Late Miocene fossil sites in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi Emirate*;
- Adrian G. Parker (Oxford Brookes University), Gareth W. Preston, Helen Walkington and Martin J. Hodson. *Abrupt Holocene Climate Change from Southeast Arabia and the Nature of Cultural Transitions in the Gulf Archaeological Record*;
- Johannes Schmitt and Adelina Uerpmann (Tübingen). *Ortho-Photography and Archaeological Information Systems as tools for the excavator: The example of Al-Buhais 85*;
- Hans-Peter Uerpmann (University of Tübingen), Margarethe Uerpmann (Tübingen), Sabah A. Jasim (Sharjah Directorate of Archaeology), Marc Händel (Tübingen) and Johannes Schmitt (Tübingen). *Prehistoric News from Sharjah Emirate*;
- Dr Heiko Kallweit (ADIAS), Richard Cuttler (Birmingham University), Dr Mark Beech (ADACH) and Dr Walid Yasin al-Tikriti (ADACH). *Investigating the Desert Neolithic: a report on the 3rd season of archaeological survey and excavations at Umm az-Zamul, Abu Dhabi Emirate*;
- Dr Sophie Méry, (CNRS, Paris), Dr Walid Yasin al-Tikriti (ADACH) and Dr Julio Bendezu-Sarmiento (CNRS, Paris). *Synthesis of the eighth season of excavations at Hili N, Al Ain*;
- Dr Heiko Kallweit (ADIAS), Richard Cuttler (Birmingham University) and Dr Mark Beech (ADACH). *Archaeological survey and excavations on Sadiyat island, Abu Dhabi Emirate: 2005 and 2006 seasons*;
- Christian Velde, Imke Moellering and Ahmed Hilal (National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah). *The Archaeological Landscape of Dhayah, Recent Observations and Surveys*;
- Andrew Peterson (formerly Emirates University, Al Ain, now Department of Archaeology, University of Lampeter, Wales). *Some thoughts on the Islamic Archaeology of the Al-Ain/Buraimi Oasis based on aerial photographs*;
- Michele C. Ziolkowski and Abdullah S. al-Sharqi (Fujairah). *Tales from the old guards: Bithnah Fort, Fujairah, UAE*.

▪ A Symposium on the **Status and Conservation of Dugongs of the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean**, organised by the Environment Agency in Abu Dhabi, and sponsored by Total, was held at the Beach Rotana Hotel in Abu Dhabi from 29–31 May 2006. Dr Mark Beech participated in the Symposium presenting a paper entitled: *An archaeological perspective on the exploitation of dugongs in the Arabian Gulf*. Although the dugong is today a protected species they have been exploited by humans as long as 7500 years ago in the Arabian Gulf. The presentation discussed the archaeological evidence for their exploitation. It highlighted the sites and locations where dugong remains have been discovered and provided a historical synthesis of the relationship between human populations and dugongs in the region.

The dugong is currently under severe threat from coastal developments in the UAE.

▪ A number of **papers on the archaeology of the United Arab Emirates** were given at the **2006 Seminar for Arabian Studies**, held at the British Museum from 27–29 July (see p X for full list). The papers will be published in the *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 37, scheduled for publication in time for the next Seminar in July 2007.

▪ **First GCC Archaeology Exhibition** – The first GCC Archaeology Exhibition was held in the Fujairah Exhibition Centre on the east coast of the United Arab Emirates from 20 November to 20 December 2006. The exhibition featured 1,000



cultural and historical treasures from the region and attracted more than 40,000 visitors from across the UAE and abroad. The artefacts covered the period from the Palaeolithic until the Late Islamic period. Abu Dhabi emirate participated in the exhibition by sending a number of objects

from the Al Ain Museum collections. Ahmad Khalifa Al Shamsi, Director of the Heritage and Archaeology Department in Fujairah, said the exhibition succeeded in having a popular appeal going beyond the circle of scientists and archaeologists. “We have had a number of archaeology specialists who visit us from various Arab and European countries and they expressed delight at seeing the shared historical and cultural heritage of the Gulf under one roof,” he said. (Source: *GulfNews*).



▪ **Renewed investigations of Late Miocene fossils in Abu Dhabi's Western Region** –

Professor Andrew Hill (J. Clayton Stephenson Professor of Anthropology and Curator of Anthropology in the Peabody Museum, Yale University) and his PhD Student, Faysal Bibi (Department of Geology and Geophysics, Yale University) visited Abu Dhabi from 4–13 December 2006 at the invitation of ADACH. Together with Dr Mark Beech (Head of Division – Cultural Landscapes) and Dr Walid Yasin Al-Tikriti (Head of Division – Archaeology), they re-visited all the well known Late Miocene fossil localities in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi Emirate. Many of these were originally worked on by Professor Hill and the late Peter Whybrow from the Natural History Museum, London, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and then subsequently by Faysal Bibi in the early 2000s. Visits were also made to the more recently discovered fossil sites uncovered by ADIAS at Ruwais and Umm al-Ishtan, as well as to the remarkable Late Miocene trackway sites discovered at Mleisa, Niqa and Bida al-Mutawa. A report with recommendations was submitted by Professor Hill and Faysal Bibi to ADACH. Discussions are currently underway on undertaking a joint five year project between Yale University and ADACH, with the first field campaign planned for December 2007 to January 2008.

▪ **Abu Dhabi International Pearl Festival** –

ADACH organised an International Pearl Festival in December 2006 stressing the major role of Abu Dhabi as an international capital of the natural pearl. The history of pearl diving began in the waters around Dalma Island which were amongst the richest places for pearl diving in the Gulf region. Abu Dhabi was then an important market for sailors and pearl merchants.

This event comes also as part of the strategy of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage to preserve the heritage of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and enhance its role as a cultural centre in the region and raise the international awareness of its cultural and heritage importance.

The Festival included an exhibition *Pearls: A Natural History*, a collaboration between the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) and the American Natural History Museum. Alongside *Pearls: A Natural History* was an exhibition dedicated to the pearls of the Gulf region. The “Gulf Pearl Exhibition” included photographs and videos about the ancient tradition of pearling in the Gulf. Traditional pearling tools were on display, including brass sieves for grading pearls, a pearl accounting book used by merchants to indicate prices and information, pearl merchant chests, as well as copper pearl scales. A dizzying array of pearls of all shapes, colours, sizes, origins and ages was on display.

▪ **More work at Umm az-Zamul** – A team from ADACH and Birmingham University continued their work on the Neolithic sites discovered in the south-eastern deserts of Abu Dhabi emirate. A third season of survey, topographic mapping and flint collection by Richard Cuttler (Birmingham Archaeology), Dr Beech (ADACH) and Dr Al-Tikriti (ADACH) was carried out at Kharimat Khor Al Manahil in the Umm az-Zamul region from 11–24 January 2007. More than a thousand lithics were collected and mapped using a Total Station. Further surveys of adjacent plains revealed several more rich Neolithic sites. This work is providing valuable new information on the Rub al-Khali Neolithic. The discovery of these flint sites in the desert is changing our perception of the Rub al-Khali over the past 10,000 years. While new sites have been found this year, almost 5,000 fragments of flint and stone artefacts have now been collected from just two sites. The typology of the flint artefacts suggests that they date between 7,500 and 6,000 years’ ago, when many desert areas experienced a higher rainfall, described within the Arabian Peninsula as the ‘Climatic Optimum’.



Neolithic Flints from Umm az-Zamul, Abu Dhabi emirate, UAE

The results of the work will be published this coming summer in the *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, in a paper by R. Cuttler, M. Beech, H. Kallweit, A. Zander and W. Yasin Al-Tikriti entitled “Nomadic Communities of the Holocene Climatic Optimum: Excavation and Research at Kharimat Khor al-Manahil and Khor Al Manahil in the Rub al-Khali, Abu Dhabi, UAE”.

▪ **Cultural Heritage lectures at Zayed University** –

In February 2007, Dr Mark Beech (ADACH) presented three lectures at Zayed University in Abu Dhabi on the palaeontology, prehistory and historical development of the UAE. This lecture programme forms part of the fulfilment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Zayed University and ADACH in July 2006. The memorandum lays the groundwork for the development of joint programmes to train Emiratis in heritage management, museum management,

exhibition and display, conservation and preservation. The MoU covers increasing student and faculty involvement in ADACH's cultural activities, the placement of students in internship positions at the Authority and co-operation and collaboration for curricula development in subjects related to UAE culture. (Source: [www.cultural.org/ae/e](http://www.cultural.org/ae/e))

- **Transfer of ADIAS finds and data** – As part of the process of restructuring of the organisation of archaeology and palaeontology in Abu Dhabi emirate, all finds and data generated by ADIAS between 1992–2006 were transferred in February 2007 to the National Archive facility in Abu Dhabi, now part of ADACH. Enquiries about this material should be addressed to the Department of Historic Environment, Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, PO Box 2380, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

**Other archaeological fieldwork and research** carried out in Abu Dhabi emirate during 2006–7 included:

- The final season of excavations at **Tomb N at Hili Archaeological Park** in the spring of 2006 led by Dr Sophie Méry, Director of the French Archaeological Mission, followed by a study season on material from the tomb in December 2006. Dr Kath MacSweeney (Department of Archaeology, University of Edinburgh) continued her **study of the human skeletal remains** from Tomb N, and Olivier Brunet, a PhD student of Professor Serges Cleuziou from Paris, continued his **study of beads** from Tomb N and other tombs in the Al Ain area.

- Enrico Fodde, a UNESCO consultant from Italy and expert on **mudbrick vernacular architecture**, visited Abu Dhabi late in 2006 to provide advice and recommendations on the conservation of mudbrick architecture in Al Ain.

- Dr Ghanim Wahida (Cambridge, UK) visited the Department of Historic Environment at ADACH in February 2007. He presented a lecture in the Al Ain Palace National Museum in Al Ain on Palaeolithic archaeology. Dr Wahida, Dr Al-Tikriti and Dr Beech made several visits to a **newly-discovered Middle Palaeolithic site at Jebel Barakah** in the western region of Abu Dhabi emirate. The results of their research will be presented in a paper to be included in a special session on the **Palaeolithic in Arabia** at the 2007 Seminar for Arabian Studies to be held at the British Museum in London from 19–21 July.

- Dr Abdulrasoul, a UNESCO consultant based in the Iranian Cultural Heritage organisation, visited Abu Dhabi and Al Ain in March 2007 to provide expertise on the **restoration of the Bayt bin Hadi house in Hili oasis**.

#### **Other activities:**

- **Emirates Natural History Group** – The Abu Dhabi branch of the Emirates Natural History Group holds bi-monthly lectures on the first and third Tuesday of every month at 7.30 pm in the Ibn Majid Hall on the 1st floor of the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi. The lectures concern natural history, archaeology, and other related topics. Trips are also organised for members. Further information from the chairman, Dr Drew Gardner, Tel: +971-2-4079799. Fax: +971-2-4434847. Mobile: +971-50-6675830. Email: [drew.gardner@zu.ac.ae](mailto:drew.gardner@zu.ac.ae) Web: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/AUHENHG/>

- The **Al Ain branch of the Emirates Natural History Group** holds bi-monthly lectures on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month in the Intercontinental Hotel in Al Ain. The lectures concern natural history, archaeology, and other related topics. Weekly trips are also organised for members. For more details contact the chairman, Brien Holmes, Tel: +971-2-7810489. Mobile: +971-50-5330579. Email: [bocknobby@yahoo.com](mailto:bocknobby@yahoo.com). Visit their excellent website for more information at: [www.enhg.org](http://www.enhg.org) and join their Yahoo Group at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ENHG/>

- The **Dubai branch of the Emirates Natural History Group** holds monthly lectures concerning natural history, archaeology and other related topics. Lectures are held at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management in Dubai. Trips are also organised for members. For more details contact the chairman, Gary Feulner, Tel (home): +971-4-3065570. Tel (work): +971-4-3303600. Fax: +971-4-3303550. Email: [GRFeulner@shuaacapital.com](mailto:GRFeulner@shuaacapital.com)

*Dr Mark Beech*

Head of Division – Cultural Landscapes, ADACH

#### ***Christian Velde reports from RAS AL-KHAIMAH:***

2006 has been a busy year with a lot of research and work carried out by the Department of Antiquities and Museums, Ras al-Khaimah. Thanks to the co-operation of the various government departments in Ras al-Khaimah, the protection of archaeological sites could be ensured and it is a continuing process to keep ahead of the fast development of the country. The following topics cover the most important work we were able to do in the last year, some of which will continue into future years.

- **Restoration of the National Museum** – The Department of Antiquities and Museums started with the renovation of the National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah, including the update and enlargement of all exhibition rooms, as well as the restoration of the fort's traditional architecture.

▪ The National Museum is located in the historical fort in old Ras al-Khaimah town, close to the sea. Founded in the 18th century, it has been rebuilt and added to extensively over the last 200 years to meet the needs of the day. Originally erected as a defence structure, it has also served as the residence of the ruling Quwasim family since the 20th century, before being converted into a museum in 1987.



Recovering the past: Old walls in the National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah

The massive rectangular tower is the oldest part of the fort. Its foundations and lower parts originate from around 1800, while the rest of the tower was rebuilt after the British attacks of 1819. In those days it only served as a defensive structure and, unlike today, stood outside the perimeter of the old town of Ras al-Khaimah. All further additions took place after the peace treaty was signed in 1820, when the single defence tower was enlarged into a fort. The picture we get today is that of a charming conglomerate of two-story buildings surrounding an inner courtyard with a lush garden. Situated all around the courtyard garden are traditional wooden doors with beautiful carved designs, which now lead to the various museum display rooms. These contain a rich variety of archaeological finds, historical information and aspects of the cultural heritage of this emirate.

The big rectangular tower is still the most impressive feature, while a much smaller tower occupies the opposite corner of the fort. Another prominent building is the wind tower, the traditional “air conditioner” of the past. Its open sides are designed to catch the breeze from any direction and funnel it down into the room below to keep it cool and ventilated, especially during hot summer

months. The wind tower could be blocked with matting, or specially cut pieces of wood, during the winter, when the weather was much cooler with occasional rainfall.

The overall museum renovation project started in this wind tower room, where it has revealed new interesting information after the recent, modern alterations were completely removed. In addition to the wind tower itself and an already known row of windows in the northern wall, further traditional ventilation mechanisms were discovered. In correspondence with the windows towards the shady north, several ventilation niches had originally been installed in the sunny southern wall, as well as in the east and two more framing the northern windows. This rediscovered original layout of the wind tower room represents a fine traditional summer *majlis*, using the sophisticated traditional ventilation system, which was typical for the emirate's coastal area. It was furthermore discovered that a bathroom had once been added in front of the eastern wall, with traces of its division wall and sloping floor towards drainage still visible under the modern layers of plaster. The most surprising find however, consisted of decorative designs on the southern and western wall, most probably originating from the 1950s. They depict very colourful stylised floral motives, situated above a broad blue band, with pairs of mango fruits floating on top of them. These designs together with the other newly discovered features will be restored authentically, using as much traditional materials as possible. It is planned to transform the wind tower room into an exhibition room, where traditional ventilation systems will be explained exclusively and visitors will be able to feel and experience it themselves.

Subsequently the facades of two more buildings on the southern side of the courtyard were stripped of several layers of paint and plaster to reveal the original structure of the traditional architecture. Walls made from coral and wadi stones, build up in separate horizontal layers, came to light. As was customary in the past, their exterior will again be covered with only a minimum of mortar, leaving the stones partly sticking out from the walls. Similarly, wood and mortar were precious building materials in the past and had therefore to be used in an economic way, especially as houses in this climate had to be maintained very often.

These facades with their modern alterations stripped off already bring back an authentic feel to the fort's inner courtyard. The Department of Antiquities and Museums is optimistic that once the restoration is completed the National Museum will be transformed to its authentic style and represent an important example of coastal architecture of the emirate's past. The fort's enlargements and additions over the centuries also illustrate the development from traditional to modern style of architecture in the second half of the 20th century.



▪ **Dhayah Project** – An extensive survey has been carried out in the oasis of Dhayah to understand its archaeological and historical landscape, as it is under threat of future development plans. Dhayah is one of the most important and impressive sites in Ras al-Khaimah with regard to its geographical setting and cultural landscape. With a backdrop of steep mountains on three sides, rising up to 850 m and bordered by a creek towards the west, the bay of Dhayah has always been a very fertile area. It was settled through the millennia and its flat, crescent-shaped gravel plain is covered with cultivation up towards the coastline. The oasis is characterised by a unique, conical shaped hill, which dominates the palm gardens. It served as a natural defence post and people have used this hill since prehistoric times for settlement and fortification alike. Today it is crowned by a fortress, built during the 19th century on the foundations of much older structures. It is the only hilltop fort still existing in the UAE and offers a fantastic view of the lush palm gardens, the sea and the dramatic mountains.



The hillfort, dominating the oasis of Dhayah

The ongoing Dhayah survey aims to understand the development of the oasis from its first settlements until modern times. The earliest traces so far are tombs from the Hafit Period (3200–2600 BC), situated on the ridges above the oasis. A small Umm an-Nar (2600–2000 BC) settlement was found in the western part, as well as some traces of Wadi Suq (2000–1600 BC) settlements. Today 12 tombs of the Wadi Suq Period are known in Dhayah, which were first discovered by Beatrice de Cardi. Several have been excavated by the German Mission from Göttingen University and represent the most impressive prehistoric remains in the oasis of Dhayah. The area between the palm gardens and the foot of the hill is covered with a huge shell midden, rising up to a height of 2 m. Its upper layers can be dated into the Late Bronze Age (1600–1300 BC), forming the most massive shell concentration in the whole of Ras al-Khaimah. Dhayah's significant hill was certainly used in the Iron Age (1300–300 BC) for a settlement or fortification, with some walls

being still visible at the western flank of it, where the pottery scatter is predominantly from this period. Only few remains of the Post Iron Age Periods (300 BC–600 AD) can be found in and around the oasis, while the island of Hulaylah, which protects the creek towards the sea, was settled from the Early Islamic Periods onwards. It clearly shows the shift to a trading and sea-economy based society during this period.

Another major change could be observed during the Julfar Period (13th–16th century AD), when the oasis was extended beyond a range ever used before or after. We assume that the prosperous trading town of Julfar had such a large demand for food, that the oasis' gardeners ventured even into areas with less fertile soil and deeper levels of water access. Moreover the island of Hulaylah was settled quite densely now and massive fortifications were built around the base of Dhayah hill.

The survey's biggest surprise was the discovery of two large villages, dating to the 17th–18th century, built away from the oasis along the mountain slopes in very well defensible areas. One village is situated on a mountain terrace with nearly vertical cliffs, while the other sits on a rock spur, 300 m above sea level. Both seem to indicate, that the Post Julfar Period must have been very unstable, leading to the development of these hide out villages.

▪ **Tourism Department Brochures** – The Department of Antiquities and Museums produced eight brochures about various sites of archaeological and historical importance for the Tourism Department in Ras al-Khaimah, highlighting Dhayah Fort, the National Museum, watchtowers, a medieval palace, prehistoric tombs, as well as traditional architecture. They offer general information accompanied by photographs, plans and sketch drawings, as well as a map for the location of the various sites. Through the co-operation of both Departments all eight places will be developed into sightseeing areas in the future, giving visitors the possibility to explore on their own and learn more about Ras al-Khaimah's past and traditions.

▪ **Ongoing Project with Zayed University** – In 2006 the ongoing co-operation between the Department of Antiquities and Museums and Zayed University Dubai resulted in further documentation of heritage monuments in Jazirat al-Hamra. It included the measuring, describing and photographing of traditional houses in this last authentic and traditional town still standing in the UAE. This year's special focus was the area of the old *suq* and its different shops. Beside the architectural documentation the students were able to interview the original owners and shopkeepers, and recorded the former function of the shops and their history. A large residential unit, once used by

the family of a rich pearl merchant, was documented in detail as well. It will be used as the basis for a study of transforming it into a small heritage hotel. Projects like these gain more and more importance for local universities, as the re-discovery of their own past is beginning to be an interesting and important subject for local students. It will furthermore help to develop future plans for the re-utilisation of traditional buildings, which were neglected during the last generation.

Another project with Zayed University Dubai is the study of Baramah, an important mountain village with terraced fields, situated not far from Ras al-Khaimah. It originates from the 17th–18th century and seems to have been used over a long period of time. Terraced fields are a common feature in the limestone mountains of Ras al-Khaimah, using the mountain slopes to catch enough water for agriculture. The project started with the production of an accurate plan, which will be used to produce a 3D reconstruction of the village and its terraces. The reconstructed village will later be set into its 3D landscape in order to measure the surface area from which water could be collected. This helps to estimate the amount of water, which could be collected after good rain and understand the distribution of it to the various fields by using a complex system of channels and sluices.

▪ **Visit of Architectural Heritage Society Dubai** – The British section of the Architectural Heritage Society Dubai paid a visit to Ras al-Khaimah in order to look at traditional stone houses, built from coral stone. This traditional building material originates from the sea and islands in the Gulf. Although being fairly light-weight, it has excellent insulation qualities, keeping buildings cool in summer and warm in winter.

The fieldtrip, led by its chairman Peter Jackson, was also used to discuss possibilities for the future preservation and use of traditional coral stone houses. The society was informed about the Department's ongoing documentation of traditional houses in Ras al-Khaimah, which has already resulted in a protection plan for Ras al-Khaimah old town. Led by Ras al-Khaimah's resident archaeologists they toured several of the important examples of town houses, as well as summerhouses in the palm gardens of Shimal. The Architectural Heritage Society Dubai kindly offered its help for any future documentation and restoration of historical buildings in Ras al-Khaimah.

▪ **Dunes** – Visiting scientists to Ras al-Khaimah included a team of British geomorphologists, consisting of Dr Adrian Parker from Brookes University, Oxford, Professor David Thomas and Professor Andrew Goudie (University of Oxford), and Oliver Atkinson, PhD student, University of Oxford. Their overall aim is to define the age of the

sand dunes, studying various sand samples, which were taken to Britain.

▪ **Brookes University Fieldtrip** – The Department of Antiquities and Museums supported a fieldtrip, led by Dr Adrian Parker from Brookes University, Oxford. Thirteen students received training in practical fieldwork under desert conditions and were introduced to the geomorphology and history of Ras al-Khaimah while working on various, independent projects.

▪ **Visitors** – As usual Beatrice de Cardi supported the Department during her annual stay in January and February and continued the ongoing work on the inventory of archaeological finds.

During the same period the Department was visited by Professor Valeria Piacentini, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, who has shown a great interest in the medieval trading town of Julfar. It was closely connected to the Kingdom of Hormuz, which is one of her major fields of interest.

Crystal Fritz, PhD student from Bryn Mawr University, Philadelphia, USA and a student of Professor Peter Magee, stayed with the Department of Antiquities and Museums to study the Iron Age pottery from the tombs in Wadi al-Qawr, in southern Ras al-Khaimah.

Christian Velde  
Resident Archaeologist  
Department of Antiquities and Museums

### *Marc Hündel reports from SHARJAH:*

▪ **Field work resumed at Tell Abraq, UAE** – In January 2007 field work was resumed at Tell Abraq, UAE, after a nine-year break, by the joint *Bryn Mawr College – University of Tübingen Archaeological Project in the Emirate of Sharjah*<sup>1</sup> directed by Peter Magee and co-directed by Margarethe and Hans-Peter Uerpmann.

The top of Tell Abraq marks the border between the Emirates of Sharjah and Umm al-Quwain, whereas previous field work was conducted in Sharjah Emirate exclusively. The unique importance of this site for Southeast Arabia is best expressed by its 2000 year long sequence of habitation ranging from the Bronze Age Umm an-Nahr period (2200 BC) to Iron Age III (300 BC)<sup>2</sup>.

The two-week field season aimed at cleaning and re-documenting the *South Profile* of the 1989 step trench west of the Umm an-Nahr tower wall, and at excavating Iron Age deposits in a 4 x 4 m trench adjacent to the eastern end of this section running south (*Trench 1*). The documentation of the *South Profile* provided helpful and necessary stratigraphic information for conducting excavation work this year and in the future.



The *South Profile* of the 1989 step trench had been severely affected by erosion in the last decade, amounting to an estimated 10 cubic metres of section collapse debris. This material had to be removed in order to get to the base of the old excavation, together with the debris resulting from the actual section cleaning. Since the excavations carried out between 1989–1998 had reached virgin sediment only at the easternmost couple of metres west of the Umm an-Nahr tower wall (*Square I* of the former excavations)<sup>3</sup>, it was attempted to do so in a 30 cm wide strip (shovel width) along the remaining length of the section to the west to the one-metre step at approximately 70.5 m (*Square OII* had not been excavated as deep as *Squares OI, O* and *I* in the course of the former excavations)<sup>4</sup>. Even though this was not accomplished everywhere, the stratigraphic sequence of layers and features visible in the profile could still be extended.



Preparation of the *South Profile* for documentation by planometric photography

A total station with direct laser measurement enabled a documentation of the section by using planometric photography. Reference points were set and measured prior to taking digital photographs. The photos were rectified and assembled to compose an excavation grid-referenced<sup>5</sup> image of the complete section, which was then used as a basis to permit multiple descriptions and interpretations.

Both the *South Profile* and *Trench I* provided charcoal samples which are currently being processed. The excavation in *Trench I* reached Iron Age deposits immediately after a surface cleaning removed the disturbed sediments. The find material includes ceramics, faunal remains (mammal and fish bones), hammer stones, shell beads, ostrich egg shell, and a few bronze objects, among them a fragment of a fishhook. A special find is the fragment of a ceramic animal figurine. Whereas the hind torso is present and clearly shows a humped back, the head and legs are missing. It is presumably

depicting a camel, even though it could also stand for another humped animal, eg a zebu.

Furthermore, the first explorative non-invasive field work using a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) was carried out to evaluate the most suitable areas for more extensive excavation in the future. Field work is scheduled to be continued in the future concentrating on chronological issues of the Iron Age and the Bronze Age/Iron Age transition, and assessing how the past ways of life of the inhabitants of Tell Abraq differed from those of surrounding sites, particularly Hamriya and Muweilah.

Marc Händel

Field Director, Bryn Mawr College–University of Tübingen Archaeological Project in the Emirate of Sharjah. marc.haendel@gmx.de

<sup>1</sup> Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology and Department of Geology of Bryn Mawr College, Institute of Pre- and Protohistory and Medieval Archaeology of Tübingen University, Department of Archaeobiology, in cooperation with the Directory of Antiquities, Department of Culture and Information of Sharjah Emirate.

<sup>2</sup> Dan T. Potts: *A Prehistoric Mound in the Emirate of Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE. Excavations at Tell Abraq in 1989*. Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1990

<sup>3</sup> Potts 1990, 20

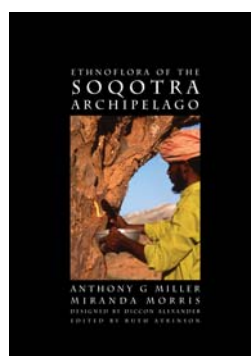
<sup>4</sup> 50 cm wide balks had originally remained between the original squares. See Potts 1990, 19

<sup>5</sup> The grid of the old excavation was adopted for the recent field work.

## YEMEN

▪ **Soqatra in Edinburgh 2006** – Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden (RBGE) has maintained an interest in the Soqatra Archipelago dating from 1880, when Isaac Bayley Balfour led the first scientific survey of the main island and returned to Edinburgh with the substantial collection described and illustrated in his monumental *Botany of Soqatra* (1888). In recent years, staff from the RBGE have undertaken a series of botanical expeditions to the archipelago in collaborations with Yemeni experts and the results of these and other related surveys were published in 2004 in *Ethnoflora of the Soqatra Archipelago* (A.G. Miller and M. Morris).

Edinburgh was therefore an obvious choice of venue for the major exhibition on the natural history and culture of the islands which, under the title *Land of the Dragon's Blood Tree*, which ran from 1 July to 29 October 2006.



The exhibition was formally opened by Professor Stephen Blackmore, Regius Keeper of the RBGE, on 30 June in the presence of a Yemeni delegation led by Dr Abdul Karim al-Iryani, Presidential Advisor; Yemen's Ambassador in London; the British Ambassador in Sanaa; representatives of the Soqatra Conservation Fund (SCF); members of the 'Friends of Soqatra' (FoS) and the British-Yemeni Society, in addition to many other visitors. HRH The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, accompanied by the Regius Keeper and the Yemeni Ambassador, Mr Mohamed Taha Mustafa, visited the exhibition a few days later.

Displays on geographical, ecological and human aspects of the islands included dramatic panoramas of tree-studded landscapes and the saw-tooth Haggeher range, a reconstructed village house, finished with the bare necessities of domestic and family life, and a cave for adventurous young visitors to explore. An array of artefacts, handicrafts and other local products, still and video images (with sound recordings) of community life all combined to convey vivid impressions of a remote and fascinating world now threatened by the increasing impact of modernity.

■ Edinburgh was also the venue for the **Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the 'Friends of Soqatra'** (FoS), on 8 and 9 September. The FoS was formed in 2001 to bring together people with a scientific or more general interest in the islands, with the aim of raising awareness of the archipelago's unique biodiversity, and of the need to promote the sustainable use of its natural resources to ensure the survival of the plants and habitats upon which the islanders rely.

Those who attended the AGM had the opportunity to tour the exhibition which by then had attracted more than 30,000 visitors. Details of the papers read during the AGM will be published in the next issue (due out in April) of *Tayf*, the Soqatra Newsletter jointly published in English and Arabic by FoS and SCF.

During the meeting, Kay van Damme (of the University of Ghent, where the next AGM will be held) was able to show fellow members an advance copy of the book, ***Socotra: A Natural History of the Islands and their People***, produced together with Catherine Cheung and Lyndon DeVantier for the SCF. The book provides an encyclopaedic review of the archipelago's flora, fauna and people, with detailed information on its geology, history, ecology and culture. It is lavishly illustrated and each chapter includes Arabic abstracts. A 'must' for any visitor! The book is available from the NHBS Environment Bookstore in the UK (Tel: 01803-865913; [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com)).

John Shipman

■ The **Friends of Soqatra (FoS)** are two years into their three-year **Darwin Initiative** project which seeks to use some of the scientific information gathered in the past twenty years or so to incorporate into the school curriculum on Soqatra through the subjects of Arabic language, science, maths and social science. Roderic Dutton of the Friends, and a UK colleague, will visit Sanaa in April for discussions with curriculum staff in the Ministry of Education. It is hoped to finalise draft materials ready for inclusion in textbooks for the academic year starting in October 2007. The general aim is to maintain and increase awareness of the special nature of Soqatra's biodiversity and conservation requirements amongst children on Soqatra so that, in the fullness of time, they will be able to play a more informed role in debates about their island's future. The UK fund is held by DEFRA. For further information about this and other Friends' activities, publications and news visit their website at: [www.FriendsofSoqatra.org](http://www.FriendsofSoqatra.org)



The Diksum Plateau, Soqatra

■ **SANDS OF TIME: Photographs of Bayhan in 1948-50 exhibited by the British Council in the National Museum, Sanaa** – The newly-enlarged National Museum in Sanaa was ceremonially opened on the morning of 27 May 2006. A plaque in Arabic and Sabaic was unveiled by the Vice-President, HE Abdul Rabbo Al-Mansur, before a throng of dignitaries including Khaled Ruwaishan, Minister of Culture. The refurbishment consists of some reorganisation of the display cases within the Imamate palace with labels in Arabic and English (British Council contribution), the full paving of the courtyard and the construction of two wings (one still to be completed) for extra gallery space. The Museum Opening was a necessary precursor to the opening of the British Council's **Sands of Time** photograph exhibition in the new gallery the same afternoon.

A second throng assembled at 4 pm for the launch of an exhibition of photographs taken by Nigel Groom when a young Political Officer in Bayhan in 1948-50. To his photographs, which were first put on display (with support from Dirham Abdo Saeed and Longulf Trading), by the British-Yemeni Society at its AGM in June 2005, Elizabeth White,

Director of the British Council in Yemen, had added several more contemporary pictures of the Al Habili family in the possession of Sharif Haidar Saleh Al-Habili, and had entitled the exhibition *Sands of Time*.

It is planned to move the exhibition to a house in Bayhan for permanent display. This accords with Nigel Groom's wish that the younger generation should have the opportunity to see something of the way of life which their antecedents led, but which has since disappeared, which he had also described in *Sheba Revealed* (2002).

Julian Lush

▪ **The National Museum** (closed Thurs, Fri) is still bereft of the objects sent overseas for exhibitions in Europe and the USA; they are still in boxes in the Museum courtyard. **The Aden Museum** has also not yet received back the objects it loaned to the tour. As a result the **Army Museum** in Tahrir Square in Sanaa comes into its own; it contains a fine collection of pre-Islamic objects gathered by military men on garrison duty all over the country, and is open every day. **Small local museums** are well worth looking for, though they tend to be open only in the mornings and not on Fridays. They are to be found in **Jiblah** (well worth while), **Ibb**, in the fort of **Zabid**, in **Saiyun** (excellent). The rooms of costumes at the **Imam Ahmad Palace** in Taizz are sadly closed, presumably for conservation reasons.

▪ An interesting development has been **exhibitions of historic photographs of Yemen**. Interest was perhaps triggered by the *Sands of Time* exhibition of photographs by Nigel Groom. The British-Yemeni Society was also instrumental in arranging the despatch to Yemen of a collection of Freya Stark's photographs taken during her two visits to the south of the country in 1934 and 1937. The stairway of the National Museum is also decorated with photographs, taken by Hermann Burchardt during two extensive travels in Yemen in 1900 and 1910; they throw an interesting light on the state of the country at the time of the Ottoman occupation.

▪ The **British-Yemeni Society** promotes friendship and understanding between the peoples of the two countries and aims to advance public knowledge in Britain about Yemen, its history, geography, economy and culture. The Society holds regular meetings and lectures and has been involved in sponsoring a number of cultural visits and activities. Membership is open to all who have an interest in Yemen. Members also receive the Society's annual *Journal*. For further information contact: Rebecca Johnson, Honorary Secretary, 2 Lisgar Terrace, London W14 8SJ. Tel: 020 7603 8895. Web: [www.al-bab.com/bys](http://www.al-bab.com/bys)

▪ **Tourism** has begun to play a major part in the Soqotran economy, well organised by the islanders, despite the apparent demise of the Soqotra Eco-tourism Society. Many of those involved are graduates of the **Soqotra Training Centre**. The Centre now seven years old, started up by Len and Wendy Pearce in Hadibu to teach English and computer studies to young Soqotrans, with over 500 graduates to date; in 2005 the British-Yemeni Society organised an appeal for funds which raised over £12,500 (including a generous contribution from the Muhammad bin Isa Foundation). The Centre is also involved in producing citrus trees for distribution around the island to correct a Vitamin C deficiency in the islanders' diet, and in the production of a simple clean water production unit of a size suitable for a single household. Anyone interested in contributing to the support of the Centre should contact the Honorary Secretary, British-Yemeni Society (contact details above).

▪ The following two articles on **historical aspects of the language of Jabal Razih** in north west Yemen were published in 2006:

– Watson, Janet C., Bonnie Glover Stalls, Khalid al-Razihi and Shelagh Weir (2006) The language of Jabal Razih: Arabic or something else? *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 36: 35-41.

– Watson, Janet C., Bonnie Glover Stalls, Khalid al-Razihi and Shelagh Weir (2006) Two texts from Jabal Razih, north-west Yemen, in: *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Dr Glover Stalls is hoping to publish two further articles on Razihi shortly. She has also been invited to present a paper on the language at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of America (MESA) in November as part of a proposed panel entitled: *Revisiting al-Hamdani: new perspectives on the indigenous language communities of the South Arabian periphery*. Work on Razihi has so far been supported by a British Academy Small Research Grant, and Dr Glover Stalls has recently been awarded a major grant for the continuation of this linguistic work.

▪ The **Friends of Hadhramaut** is a charitable trust which aims to promote philanthropic, educational and medical links between the people of Hadhramaut and overseas, bringing the needs of the people to the attention of those who may be in the best position to help. The work of the Friends is purely humanitarian and strictly non-political. For information about the Friends and how to support their work, visit their website:

[www.frogbuilder.com/wp/index.phtml?d=182](http://www.frogbuilder.com/wp/index.phtml?d=182)

## GRANTS AND PRIZES

▪ The **Barakat Trust** awards a number of scholarships and grants to students of Islamic art and archaeology including conservation and post-doctoral fellowships. The **Salahuddin Y. H. Abduljawad Award** is also administered by the Barakat Trust and offers grants up to £10,000 to a Muslim scholar doing a postgraduate degree at a British university. Contact the Barakat Trust, The Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford, OX1 2LE. [barakat.trust@orinst.ox.ac.uk](mailto:barakat.trust@orinst.ox.ac.uk); [www.barakat.org](http://www.barakat.org).

▪ The **British Academy** offers a number of academic, research and travel fellowships and other grants. For full details visit the British Academy website at: [www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/](http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/)

▪ The **British Academy Larger Research Grant** (LRG) scheme is for pilot projects and field studies. The grants are open to all UK post-doctoral researchers in the humanities and social sciences. The deadline for applications is 15 October. For further information contact the Research Grants office. Tel: 020 7969 5217. Fax: 020 7969 5414 Email: [grants@britac.ac.uk](mailto:grants@britac.ac.uk) or visit the website at: [www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide](http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide)

▪ The **British Institute of Persian Studies** (BIPS) welcomes applications for research programmes to assist scholars at postgraduate and postdoctoral level wishing to pursue research in all fields of Persian Studies. The application deadline is 15 May. Grants are awarded once a year in the early summer. BIPS also awards student travel grants which are intended to part-fund the cost of travel to Iran. Grants will be paid after the students have obtained a visa. Enquiries should be made to: The Secretary BIPS, The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Tel: 020 7969 5203. [bips@britac.ac.uk](mailto:bips@britac.ac.uk); [www.bips.ac.uk](http://www.bips.ac.uk)

▪ The **British School of Archaeology in Iraq** (BSAI) considers applications for individual research, travel and conference grants twice a year. Applications and references must be received by 15th April or 15th October. Grants are available to support research on Iraq and neighbouring countries, and the Gulf. Awards will normally fall within a limit of £1,000, though more substantial awards may be made in exceptional cases. While the focus of the School is on archaeology, applications are especially welcome in the subject areas of intellectual history; political change; and Iraq in its Middle Eastern context, on any period from prehistory to the present day. Details of the requirements and an application form are available from the BSAI Secretary, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Tel. + 44 (0) 20 7969 5274, email: [bsai@britac.ac.uk](mailto:bsai@britac.ac.uk), or on the BSAI website: [www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/](http://www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/)

▪ The **British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES)** has received a welcome financial boost for the next five years with new funding from the **British Academy** under its Learned Societies Programme (see page 23). As the new monies come on stream, BRISMES will be developing its activities in a number of areas. Scholarships and awards currently offered are:

▪ An **MA Scholarship** is offered annually for taught Master's study at a UK institution. The Masters's Programme can be in any discipline but should include a majority component specifically relating to the Middle East. Preference will be given to candidates resident in the European Union, and to institutions which are members of BRISMES (academic institutional membership can be obtained for £100). The application deadline is 31 March. For further information contact: Professor Robert Gleave, Professor of Arabic Studies, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, Stocker Road, Exeter EX4 4ND. Tel: 01392 264040. Email: [r.gleave@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:r.gleave@exeter.ac.uk)

▪ **Graduate Article Competition in Middle Eastern Studies** and the **Undergraduate Essay Prize** are two competitions opened in 2006 on the suggestion of the newly-formed BRISMES Graduate section. Full details of these two new prizes can be found on the BRISMES website. Enquiries should be directed to Professor Robert Gleave at the University of Exeter (contact details above).

▪ **Research Student Awards** of up to £1,000 as a single award or divided (max. three) are made annually to research students working on a Middle Eastern studies topic. Applicants must be registered research students (of any nationality) in a UK institution; have completed at least the first year of doctoral research; be a paid-up member of BRISMES (student membership suffices) by the time you apply. Applications of 600–1,000 words should be sent to the Research Committee via email to: [a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk](mailto:a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk) by the application deadline of 31 March.

**BRISMES also administers a number of other scholarships and prizes each year:**

▪ The **Abdullah Al-Umbra Al-Sabah Foundation BRISMES Scholarships** of £2000 are awarded annually to encourage post-graduate studies in Middle Eastern disciplines in British universities. Applicants must be registered with a British university and members of BRISMES. Applications by 31 March.

▪ The **British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize in Middle Eastern Studies** is funded by an endowment from the **Abdullah Al-Mubarak Charitable Foundation**. In each of the years since the prize commenced, it has attracted around 30 nominations from some 15 publishers and the overall standard of entries has been extremely high. The prize is awarded for the best scholarly work on the Middle East each year. The deadline for entries each year is in February. Details of the 2006 Prize, awarded to Dionisius A. Agius, can be found on page 20.

▪ The **Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize**, established jointly in 1986 by the Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund and BRISMES, is awarded annually to the writer of the best PhD dissertation on a Middle Eastern topic in the Social Sciences or Humanities.

For full information about all BRISMES and BRISMES-administered awards can be found on their website at: [www.dur.ac.uk/brismes](http://www.dur.ac.uk/brismes) or direct from Louise Haysey, BRISMES Administrative Office, Tel: 0191 33 45179. Fax: 0191 33 45661. Email: [a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk](mailto:a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk)

▪ The **Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL)** offers Research Awards annually to support research projects in the Levant. Travel grants are also available to help students with smaller research projects and travel in the Levant region. Visiting Research Fellowships are also offered to enable doctoral and established scholars to spend a period of between three and nine months in the Levant, which is to include a minimum of one month residence at the British Institute in Amman or the Kenyon Institute in Jerusalem, in order to undertake doctoral and postdoctoral research. Further details of the grant schemes available in 2007/2008 are available from the UK Secretary, CBRL, British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH or visit the website at: [www.cbri.org.uk](http://www.cbri.org.uk)

▪ The **Endangered Archives Programme (EAP)** is funded by the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund and administered by the British Library. The focus of the programme is on the preservation and copying of important but vulnerable archives throughout the world. Grants are made to individual researchers to locate relevant collections, arrange their transfer to a suitable local archival home, and to deliver copies to the British Library and a local institution for the benefit of researchers worldwide. Applications are considered in an annual competition by an international panel of historians and archivists. For further information about these awards visit [www.bl.uk/endangeredarchives](http://www.bl.uk/endangeredarchives) send your enquiry by email to: [endangeredarchives@bl.uk](mailto:endangeredarchives@bl.uk)

▪ The **Guido Scholarship Fund** was established for 'suitable (bead related) research abroad'. Contact the Bead Study Trust, c/o Dr St J. Simpson, Dept Ancient Near East, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG. Email: [ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](mailto:ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk) Web: [www.beadstudytrust.org.uk/awards.htm](http://www.beadstudytrust.org.uk/awards.htm)

▪ The **Palestine Exploration Fund** awards small grants to students and others pursuing research into topics relevant to its general aims. Further details from the Executive Secretary, Palestine Exploration Fund, 2 Hinde Mews, Marylebone Lane, W1M 5RR. Email: [pef@pef.org.uk](mailto:pef@pef.org.uk) / [www.pef.org.uk](http://www.pef.org.uk)

▪ The **Rawabi Holding Awards**, for outstanding contributions to Saudi-British relations, were inaugurated in 2006. The Saudi-British Society selects candidates from nominations made by its members. Two prize-winners are chosen each year who receive prizes of £5000 each at a ceremony held in January at which the donor, Mr. Abdulaziz al-Turki, presents the awards. The first awards were made in January 2007. Further information on the Society's website: [www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk](http://www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk)

▪ The **School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)**, University of London, invites applications for Research Student Fellowships. Nine awards for PhD research in any area relating to Asia and Africa are available to provide funding for up to three years. Closing date for applications: 31 March each year. Application forms and further details from: The Academic Registrar, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG. Email: [registrar@soas.ac.uk](mailto:registrar@soas.ac.uk)

▪ The **Gerald Avery Wainwright Fund for Near Eastern Archaeology** is based at the Khalili Research Centre at the University of Oxford. The Fund aims to encourage the study of non-classical archaeology and the general history of the countries of the Middle East. The recipients of the Fund are wide ranging; the Fund holds an annual Schools Essay Prize, awards Research Grants to mature scholars and also sponsors a post-doctoral Fellowship. For further information contact: David Griffiths, The Gerald Avery Wainwright Near Eastern Archaeological Fund, Khalili Research Centre, University of Oxford, 3 St. John Street, Oxford OX1 2LG. Tel: 01865 278222, email: [david.griffiths@orinst.ox.ac.uk](mailto:david.griffiths@orinst.ox.ac.uk) or visit the website at: [www.krc.ox.ac.uk/gawainwright.htm](http://www.krc.ox.ac.uk/gawainwright.htm)



## SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

▪ The **Archaeozoology of Southwest Asia and Adjacent Areas (ASWA[AA]) Working Group** was formed in 1990. Its purpose is to promote communication between individuals working on faunal remains from sites in western Asia and adjacent areas (eg northeast Africa, eastern Europe, central Asia, and south Asia). It carries out its mandate by sponsoring biennial international conferences, with the last in Lyon in 2006. The ASWA group communicates via the ZOOARCH list (see <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/zooarch.html> to register) whose moderators have kindly agreed to distribute information on Near Eastern archaeozoology. For further information on ASWA events, past and future, see the ASWA home page <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/icaaz/workaswa.htm>

▪ The **Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East (ASTENE)** encourages and promotes education and learning with particular reference to the history of travel and travellers in Egypt and the Near East. It brings together anyone interested in the subject, whether a professional academic or not, across a wide spectrum of nations and subject areas. To promote its aims, ASTENE holds conferences, seminars, exhibitions and lectures, organises visits, publishes papers, newsletters, books and a quarterly Bulletin. Membership is open to all, regardless of nationality, and the Association is keen to foster an international co-operative network. Further information available from the Administrative Office, 26 Millington Rd, Cambridge CB3 9HP. Email: [astene@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:astene@dsl.pipex.com) or visit the website at: [www.astene.org.uk](http://www.astene.org.uk)

▪ The **Association of Arab Archaeologists** is sponsored by the Arab League and is based in Cairo. It is backed by the Saudi Society for Archaeological Studies and the Society of History and Archaeology in the states of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC). Contact *Adumatu* at: [adumatu@suhuf.net.sa](mailto:adumatu@suhuf.net.sa)

▪ **British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology (BANEA)** membership is open to all those interested in the archaeology, languages and history of the Ancient Near East. The Association publishes an annual Newsletter, organises Schools Days, and holds an annual conference which is open to all members and takes place in a different university or institution each year. Membership costs £15 per annum (£7.50 for students/concessions). BANEA Membership entitles you to membership of one of the Regional Groups which organise their own programmes of lectures and events. For subscription information please contact Jan Picton, Institute of Archaeology, UCL, 31-34 Gordon Square, WC1H 0PY. Email: [j.picton@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.picton@ucl.ac.uk) For

further information about BANEA contact: Dr Louise Steel, Honorary Secretary, BANEA, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Wales, Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales, SA48 7ED. [www.art.man.ac.uk/arthist/banea.htm](http://www.art.man.ac.uk/arthist/banea.htm)

▪ **BANEA South East – The London Centre for the Ancient Near East** was founded in 1995 as an independent association of university and museum academics, independent scholars and others with interests in the ancient Near East. It now acts as the south-eastern arm of the British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology (BANEA). The London Centre organises a regular series of seminars at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). These and other ancient Near Eastern events in London are publicised in the **London Diary for the Ancient Near East** which is produced three times a year and distributed free to members. For inclusion of lectures or events in the **London Diary**, contact Jan Picton: [janpicton@ijnet.demon.co.uk](mailto:janpicton@ijnet.demon.co.uk).

▪ The **British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS)** was founded in 1961 to promote scholarship and research in all aspects of Iranian Studies. A purpose-built institute was opened in 1976 and lies adjacent to the British Embassy compound. Since its foundation, BIPS has sponsored important archaeological work on sites such as Pasargadae, Nush-i Jan, Shahr-i Qumis, Haftavan, Baba Jan and Siraf. With archaeological work in Iran presently restricted, BIPS' activities are mainly based in the UK although it sponsors visits by academics and students to Iran. Academic projects currently sponsored by BIPS include: The Darabgird Survey, Sasanian coins, Pre-Mongol architecture, Iranian steelworking techniques, *Afzal al-tavarikh* of Fazli Isfahani, a Survey of stone lion tombs, and The Williamson Collections at the Ashmolean Museum. BIPS awards grants each year for projects in different fields for visits to Iran or work in the UK (see page 37 for further details of grants and awards available). BIPS organises periodic seminars and workshops in the UK and holds occasional lectures which are open to all. BIPS greatly welcomes new members and membership is open to all those involved or interested in this field. Members receive copies of the journal *IRAN* and are kept informed about lectures, seminars and other events. For further information contact the BIPS London Office, c/o The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Tel: 020 7969 5203; email: [bips@britac.ac.uk](mailto:bips@britac.ac.uk); web: [www.bips.ac.uk/](http://www.bips.ac.uk/)

▪ The **British School of Archaeology in Iraq (BSAI)** was established in 1932 to promote, support and undertake research in Iraq and neighbouring countries. The School's academic coverage includes archaeology, history, anthropology, geography, language and other related domains from the earliest

times until the present. It is currently devoting its resources to assisting in the rebuilding of Iraq's heritage and has launched an Appeal to raise funds. The BSAI gives grants to support research on the archaeology, history and languages of Iraq and neighbouring countries, including Syria and the Gulf. It publishes an academic journal, *Iraq*, as well as a biannual newsletter. The School also organises a number of lectures, study days and other events, which usually take place at its London offices. Further information available from Joan Porter MacIver, Secretary BSAI, c/o The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Email: bsai@britac.ac.uk or TheBSAI@aol.com website: [www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/](http://www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/)

▪ The **British Society for Middle Eastern Studies** (BRISMES) was established in 1973 to encourage and promote the study of the Middle East in the United Kingdom. It brings together teachers, researchers, students, diplomats, journalists and others who deal professionally with the Middle East. Membership is open to all the above, regardless of nationality. Its international links make the Society the foremost channel through which scholars outside Britain can create co-operative links with UK-based researchers.

The well-established *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* is published twice a year and is free of charge to members, who also receive the BRISMES Newsletter, which is full of information about what is happening in the field (conferences, the latest publications, research, scholarships, jobs, etc). The Society organises an annual public lecture and an annual conference, which attracts the latest research on all aspects of Middle Eastern studies in Britain and beyond. BRISMES offers or administers a number of scholarships, awards and prizes (see Grants and Prizes section on pages 37-8. For further information contact the BRISMES Administrative Office, Institute for Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies, University of Durham, Elvet Hill Road, Durham DH1 3TU. Tel: 0191 33 45179; Fax: 0191 33 45661; email: [a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk](mailto:a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk), or visit the BRISMES website at: [www.dur.ac.uk/brismes/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/brismes/)

▪ The **Council for British Research in the Levant** (CBRL) is the British Academy sponsored institute promoting research in a wide range of humanities and social science projects in the countries of the Levant. Current major research initiatives include climate change over the last 20,000 years, the development of East-West identities, and forced migration which fit within their overall strategic research initiative of Exploring Identities in the Levant. They work together with other Academy sponsored institutes on some of these topics, from the British School in Rome, to the British Institute of Persian Studies and the British Institute in Eastern Africa, providing a wide

geographical range to the research. Their traditional involvement in archaeology and history continues with projects from prehistory to the Ottoman period and at present a focus on the publication of a number of old excavations. This is now complemented by an increasing involvement in contemporary studies. The CBRL hosts two lectures a year in the UK and a variety of seminars, exhibitions and lectures in the various countries of the Levant. The CBRL publishes an annual academic journal, *Levant*, as well as a less formal newsletter. For further information, including a full range of activities, membership, awards and scholarships, contact: CBRL Secretary, British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH or visit the website at: [www.cbrl.org.uk](http://www.cbrl.org.uk)

▪ The **Middle East Falcon Research Group** (MEFRG) co-ordinates research on falcons and falconry and provides a forum for the exchange of information and research. A newsletter, FALCO, is published twice a year and contains contributions on veterinary, biological and conservation topics of common interest, new developments and recent veterinary advances in the field of falcon biology. Further details from MEFRG, PO Box 19, Carmarthen SA33 5YL. Email: [falco@falcons.co.uk](mailto:falco@falcons.co.uk) or [office@falcons.co.uk](mailto:office@falcons.co.uk); Web: [www.falcons.co.uk](http://www.falcons.co.uk); [www.savethesaker.com](http://www.savethesaker.com)

▪ The **Royal Asiatic Society** provides a forum for those who are interested in the history, languages, cultures and religions of Asia to meet and exchange ideas. It offers lectures and seminars and it provides facilities for research and publishing. The Library contains a collection of books and journals on a wide variety of subjects concerning Asia. Fellows of the Society are able to borrow books; students and researchers are welcome to consult material by prior appointment. The Society publishes its *Journal* four times a year and organises a monthly lecture series covering a wide range of topics. Symposia and study days are arranged from time to time in areas that reflect the interests of the Society and its fellows. Two new awards have been established by the RAS: the *Professor Mary Boyce Prize* for an article relating to the study of religion in Asia and the *Sir George Staunton Prize* for a paper by a young scholar; further details available from the Society. The Society welcomes fellowship applications from anyone with a serious interest in Asian studies. For more information contact: The Royal Asiatic Society, 14 Stephenson Way, London W1 2HD. Tel: +44 (0)20 7388 4539 or visit the website at: <http://royalasiaticsociety.org>

## INFORMATION ONLINE

- The **Society for Arabian Studies** website has been revised and updated. Take a look at: [www.societyforarabianstudies.org](http://www.societyforarabianstudies.org)
- The **Al Ain National Museum** site can be accessed at: [www.aam.gov.ae/](http://www.aam.gov.ae/)
- The **American Institute for Yemeni Studies** homepage is at <http://www.aiys.org>.
- The **Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia** web site is at: <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/arabian.birds/>  
A number of other sites covering conservation, natural history and birds in Arabia can be found at: [www.uaeinteract.com](http://www.uaeinteract.com) and [www.arabianwildlife.com](http://www.arabianwildlife.com)
- The **British Council's Middle East** pages can be found at [www.britishcouncil.org/me.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/me.htm)
- The *Chroniques Yemenites* 13 (2006) is now available online with all articles accessible at: <http://cy.revues.org/sommaire274.html>
- The website of the **Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University**, with full details of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, research, conferences, events and the new IAIS Newsletter can be found at: [www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais/](http://www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais/)
- Information about **JSTOR**, the not-for-profit online digital archive, and details of the titles it holds can be found at: <http://www.jstor.org/>
- The **London Middle East Institute (LMEI)** website hosts a calendar of Middle East events in the UK plus weekly lectures on Middle East themes during the winter months. [www.LMEI.soas.ac.uk](http://www.LMEI.soas.ac.uk)
- The **MBI Al Jaber Foundation** promotes better understanding between the peoples of the Middle East and the wider world through education and an awareness of and respect of each other's cultures. For more information visit the website at: [www.mbifoundation.com](http://www.mbifoundation.com)
- The **National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah** website is <http://www.rakmuseum.gov.ae>
- Visit the **Oman & Arabia Natural History** page at <http://www.oman.org/nath00.htm>
- **www.palarch.nl** is a web-based archaeology and scientific journal. Check the website for details.
- The annual bibliographical reference lists published by **Paleorient** are online at: [http://web.mae.u-paris10.fr/paleo\\_index.htm](http://web.mae.u-paris10.fr/paleo_index.htm)

## CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND EVENTS 2006-07

**3–8 April 2006**

### **Fifth International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (SICAANE)**

Universidad Autónoma, Madrid

The Fifth ICAANE focused on the themes of history and method of archaeological research in the Near East, archaeology and environment of ancient cities and villages, arts and crafts in the Ancient Near East, and an approach to present-day archaeology. Papers included:

#### **Arabia**

- Michael Jasmin: *Arabian Trade, Copper Road and Camel Domestication in the Southern Levant at the end of the Second Millennium BC*. [mjasmin@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:mjasmin@fas.harvard.edu)

#### **Oman**

- Alessandra Avanzini: *The Italian Mission to Oman (2005–2006)*. The current Italian Mission to Oman is headed by Professor Avanzini and has been working at two sites, firstly the South Arabian port of Khor Rori since 1996 and most recently at Salut near Bahla in northern Oman since 2004. The second site is fortified and dates to the Iron Age. [Avanzini@sta.unipi.it](mailto:Avanzini@sta.unipi.it)
- Jessica Giraud-Gernez: *Oasis Landscape Reconstruction in Oman in the Third Millennium: The contribution of remote sensing and GIS*. Analysis of 240 third millennium tombs investigated in Ja'alan over four seasons as part of the Joint Hadd Project. [Jessicagiraud@aol.com](mailto:Jessicagiraud@aol.com)

#### **UAE**

- Julio Bendezu-Sarmiento: *Les Pratiques Funéraires de la Fin de l'Age du Bronze Ancien aux Emirats Arabes Unis: Données récentes*. [Julio.bendezu-sarmiento@mom.fr](mailto:Julio.bendezu-sarmiento@mom.fr)
- Sabah A. Jasim: *The Excavation of a Post-Hellenistic Tomb at Dibba, UAE*. Report on a two-month season of salvage excavations conducted in May–April 2004 by a local team from the Directorate of Antiquities in Sharjah. A large subterranean tomb containing collective burials was revealed; the associated grave-goods included complete glazed wares, fine-ware pottery, metal objects, weapons, Roman glass, ivory fragments, three Roman gemstones and beads of assorted materials. The tomb is therefore attributed to the 1st century AD. [sjasim@archaeology.gov.ae](mailto:sjasim@archaeology.gov.ae)
- Olivia Munoz and Serge Cleuziou: *La Tombe I de Ra's al-Jinz RJ-I: Une approche de la complexité des pratiques funéraires dans le péninsule d'Oman à l'Age du Bronze ancien*. Anthropological analysis indicates the interment of at least 74 individuals in this Umm an-Nar period tomb, 47 of whom were

adults. Both genders and all age groups are represented, including some foetal remains. No evidence for violent death was found but some evidence for nutritive deficiency was noted. oliviamunoz@free.fr

#### Yemen

• Aviva Klein-Franke: *The Pioneering Ethnography and Archaeology Work of Carl Rathjens in Yemen*. avivakleinfranke@yahoo.com

• Aviva Klein-Franke: *Rock Graffiti Discovered at an Unknown Archaeological Site near Sanaa*. The site is situated near the village of Hiziaz, south-east of Sanaa, and includes 20 inscriptions, and 30 examples of rock art and graffiti, all apparently concerned with hunting and interpreted by the speaker as evidence that the site was involved in animal sacrifice. avivakleinfranke@yahoo.com

With the collaboration of all participants, the Organising Committee plans to have the Proceedings of 5ICAANE available by 6ICAANE in 2008 at the latest. For further information visit [www.uam.es/otroscentros/asiriologiayegipto/5icaane](http://www.uam.es/otroscentros/asiriologiayegipto/5icaane)

#### 27–29 July 2006

##### The 2006 Seminar for Arabian Studies

British Museum, London

The 40th Seminar for Arabian Studies was held from 27–29 July 2006 at the British Museum, London, during the Museum's *Middle East Now* season. The Seminar programme was as follows:

#### Thursday 27 July

**Session I: Palaeolithic and Early Prehistoric Arabia** (Chair: Mike Petraglia). • Geoff Bailey: *Early Prehistory in the Farasan Islands and the Southern Red Sea*. • Jeffrey I. Rose: *Among Arabian Sands: Evidence for hunter-gatherer range expansions into Oman during the Pleistocene*. • Philipp Dreschler: *Spreading the Neolithic over the Arabian Peninsula*. • Richard Cuttler, Heiko Kallweit, Mark Beech, Anja Zander, Will Pitt and Walid Yasin Al-Tikriti: *Neolithic Tombs, Burnt Mounds and Flints in the Desert: Recent work in the Umm az-Zamul Region of Abu Dhabi Emirate, UAE*. • Vincent Charpentier: *Les Niveaux Vie Millenaire de Suwayh SWY-1, Sultanat of Oman*. • Eric Vallet: *Kârimis: The Yemeni evidence*.

**Session II: 3rd–1st Millennium BC South-east Arabia** (Chair: Lloyd Weeks) • Juergen Schreiber: *Transformation Processes in Oasis Settlements in Oman 2005 – Final Stage: Archaeological survey at the oasis of Nizwa*. • Moawiyah Ibrahim and Badar Al-Alawi: *Investigations at Wadi Bani Kharous, Sultanate of Oman*. • Tom Vosmer: *Riding the Crest: Lessons from the loss of the Magan Boat*.

**Session III: Death and Burial Practice** (Chair: St John Simpson) • Kathleen McSweeney and Sophie

Méry: *A Tale of Two Tombs: Anthropological and artefactual evaluation of the collective Umm an-Nar Graves, Hili N and Tomb A Hili North, Al Ain, Emirate of Abu Dhabi, UAE*. • Christine Kepinski: *Tribal Links between the Gulf and the Middle Euphrates during the Beginning of the Second Millennium BC*. • Stephen Buckley, Joann Fletcher, Don Brothwell, Khaled Al-Thour and Mohammed Basalama: *The Materials Employed in Ancient Yemeni Burial Practices*. • Aviva Klein-Franke: *The Jewish Cemetery at Sohar, Oman Revisited*.

The first day concluded with an illustrated lecture by **Dr Derek Kennet** entitled: *Corridor of Commerce: Archaeology and the lives of the peoples of the Gulf over seven thousand years*, in which he explored how the pivotal position of the Gulf from Antiquity to the 19th century is reflected in the rich archaeological heritage of this region. The lecture formed part of the British Museum's *Middle East Now* season of events.

#### Friday 28 July 2006

**Session IV: Early Historic Arabia** (Chair: Jurgen Schreiber) • An De Waele: *The Beads of Ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE)*. • Parsival Delrue, David De Muynck, Pieter Rogiers and An De Waele: *Preliminary Results of Compositional Analyses on SE-Arabian Coins from Ed-Dur (Umm Al-Qaiwain, UAE)*. • Ross Thomas, Tina Niemi and S. Thomas Parker: *Structural Damage from Earthquakes in the 2nd–9th Century at the Archaeological Site of Aila in Aqaba, Jordan*. • Arnulf Hausleiter: *Sculptures at Tayma during the First Millennium BC*.

**Session V: Architecture and Epigraphy in Ancient South Arabia** (Chair: Michael MacDonald) • Iris Gerlach: *The Almaqah Temple of Sirwah: Architecture, religion and presentation of power in Sabaean times*. • Norbert Nebes: *A New Inscription of Yitha'amar Watar bin Yakrubmalik from Sirwah*. • Fiorella Scagliarini: *The Word Slm/Snm 'Statue' in Arabian Languages*.

**Session VI: Ancient South Arabia** (Chair: Nadia Durrani) • Carl Phillips and St J. Simpson: *W. F. Prideaux (1840–1914): Britain's first Sabaeanologist?* • Rémy Crassard and Holger Hitgen: *From Safir to Balhâf – Preventive archaeological survey and rescue excavations along the Yemen LNG pipeline route (Governorates of Marib & Shabwa, Yemen)*. • Tara Steimer-Herbet, Abdull-Rahman As-Saqqaf, Olivier Lavigne, Thomas Sagory, Jean-François Saliege and Hervé Guy: *Rites and Funerary Practices at Rawk during the Fourth Millennium BC (Wadi 'Idim-Yemen)*. • Paul Yule, Kristina Franke and Cornelia Ruppert: *Giving Zafar a New Face*. • Anne Benoist, Michel Mouton, Jérémie Schiettecatte and Olivier Lavigne: *New Evidence of Cultural Changes at Makaynûn during the First Millennium BC*.

**Saturday 29 July 2006**

**Session VII: Environment, Trade and Production in Medieval Arabia** (Chair: Derek Kennet). • Yusuf

Abdullah: *New Inscriptions from Mahram Belqis Plus a New Dated Zabur Inscription*. • Axelle Rougeulle: *Ceramic Production in Medieval Yemen: The Yadhghat Kiln Site*. • Audrey Peli and Florian Téreygeol: *Al-Jabali: A Silver Mine in the Arabian Peninsula*. • Juris Zarins and Lindsay Decarlo: *Recent Archaeological Work at Al-Balid, Oman*. • Lynne Newton: *Al-Qisha: Archaeological investigations at an Islamic Period Yemeni village*. • Margareta Tengberg: *Vegetation History and Wood Exploitation at Kush, Ras Al-Khaimah, UAE: Results of the charcoal analysis*. • Ingrid Hehmeyer: *Water and Waste in Medieval Zabid, Yemen*.

**Session VIII: Domestic and Religious Architecture, Ethnography and Islamic History** (Chair: Venetia Porter). • Ahmad O. Al-Zaylai:

*Towards a New Perspective: Banu Mahdi, a 4th imamate in Yemen*. • Mashary Al-Naim: *Traditional Houses in Saudi Arabia: Similar principals and different forms*. • Harriet Nash: *Star Gazing in Traditional Water Management: A case study in Northern Oman*. • Serge D. Elie: *The Anthropology of 'Modernity' in Soqatra: Exploring the vectors of change in a transitional community*. • Ester Muchawsky-Schnapper: *Rare Photographs from the 1930s and 1940s by Yihyeh Haybi, a Yemenite Jew from Sanaa: Historical reality and ethnographic deductions*.

The *Proceedings* of the 2006 Seminar are scheduled for publication by Archaeopress in time for the 2007 Seminar ([www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)). For further information about the Seminar for Arabian Studies visit the website at: [www.arabianseminar.org.uk/](http://www.arabianseminar.org.uk/)

**10–12 November 2006**

**Archaeology in Conflict Conference**

This three-day conference was organised in by the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. With a sub-title of 'cultural heritage, site management and sustainable development in conflict and post-conflict states in the Middle East' While Arabia has been spared the conflicts of other parts of the Middle East and Afghanistan, nevertheless the conference focused on issues of relevance to any part of the region only recently exploring and preserving a fragile past. Sessions included: *Conflict management and reconstruction – case studies from Lebanon*; *Archaeology and conflict in Iraq – present problems and future prospects*; *Conservation and sustainable use resources – case studies from Afghanistan*; *Conflicting values, government and legitimacy*; *Palestinian heritage – archival memory and identity work*. The conference concluded with a round-table discussion. For additional information contact [www.ucl.ac.uk/caa/themes/index.htm](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/caa/themes/index.htm)

**8th February 2007**

**Popular Culture and Political Identity in the Arab Gulf States**

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Thornhaugh Street, London WC1

This one-day conference was organised by the London Middle East Institute (LMEI). It aimed to explore the impact of modern modes of cultural expression on traditional lifestyles and to forecast how Gulf social and political identities will evolve in future. The conference brought together some of the Gulf's leading social analysts, artists, journalists, business leaders and political commentators to assess the region's fast-evolving cultures, how they are shaping new national identities and, crucially, challenging traditional Arab ways. Speakers and panellists discussed every area of contemporary Gulf life from art, music, drama, sport and fashion to the media, advertising and marketing. The opening address was given by HRH Princess Mishail bint Faisal bin Turki of Saudi Arabia. For further information contact London Middle East Institute (LMEI) via their website at: [www.lmei.soas.ac.uk/](http://www.lmei.soas.ac.uk/)

**29 June – 8 July 2007**

**Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF)** will hold its 10th Festival of film, music, performing arts and related talks entitled Waters and Dreams in Zanzibar. More information on: [www.ziff.or.tz](http://www.ziff.or.tz).

**July 2007**

**The 2nd Diaspora London Music Village** will take place over one or two weekends in July in Hyde Park and/or Kew Gardens and will be an opportunity, as before, for the London-based artists to have a performance platform. For updated information on the festival please visit the Cultural Co-operation website: [www.culturalco-operation.org](http://www.culturalco-operation.org)

**4–7 July 2007**

**The 2007 Gulf Conference**

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS), University of Exeter.

An interdisciplinary conference on the Gulf region (Arabia, Iran, Iraq), including its historical and contemporary connections with the Indian Ocean and Asia. Panels will be on a wide range of topics. For full programme information contact the Conference Convenor: Dr James Onley at [j.onley@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:j.onley@exeter.ac.uk), or visit the conference website at: [www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais/all-events/comferences/gulf-conf.htm](http://www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais/all-events/comferences/gulf-conf.htm)

**14–15 July 2007**

**The Festival of Falconry** will be held in July at Englefield, near Reading, Berkshire. It will bring falconers from five continents and many diverse cultures to the UK. National falconers' camps will portray the falconry, costume, music, food and



customs of each culture represented. Members of the Society and the general public are invited to attend. For further information visit the website at: [www.falconryfestival.com](http://www.falconryfestival.com)

### 19–21 July 2007

#### **Seminar For Arabian Studies 2007**

British Museum, London WC1

The **Seminar for Arabian Studies** is the principal international academic forum for presentation and discussion of the latest academic research in the humanities on the Arabian Peninsula (including archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, ethnography, language, history, art, architecture, etc) from the earliest times to the present day or, in the case of political and social history, to about the end of the Ottoman Empire (1922). The Seminar has been meeting since 1968 and the 2007 will be the 41st meeting.

The Seminar meets annually for three days - Thursday to Saturday - in mid July, normally in London at the British Museum but sometimes in another British university town. Up to 180 people attend the Seminar from all over the Middle East, Europe, and North America as well as India, Pakistan, Australia and Japan and up to 45 papers are now presented each year. Papers read at the Seminar are published within one calendar year in the *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*.

The 2007 Seminar will be held at the British Museum from 19–21 July 2007. It will include sessions on the following topics:

- Eastern Arabian Archaeology
- Yemeni Archaeology
- The Arabian Neolithic
- North Western Arabia
- Ancient Seafaring
- Islamic Architecture and Settlement
- Recent History and Linguistics

as well as a special invited session on The Palaeolithic of Arabia organised by Dr Jeffrey Rose and Dr Mike Petraglia. This year's Seminar will also include a special lecture on Arabian landscapes by Professor Tony Wilkinson.

For further information contact: Dr Ardle MacMahon (Secretary), Seminar for Arabian Studies, c/o Asia Department, The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. Email: [seminar.arab@durham.ac.uk](mailto:seminar.arab@durham.ac.uk) or visit the Seminar website at: [www.arabianseminar.org.uk](http://www.arabianseminar.org.uk)

### 24–28 September 2007

#### **The 30th German Congress of Oriental Studies Oriental Studies in the 21st Century: Which Past – Which Future?**

Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

The German Congress of Oriental Studies (Deutscher Orientalistentag) is organised every three

years. Around 1000 participants are expected. There will be some 20 sections (representing the various disciplines in Oriental studies). Participants will be given the opportunity to present their research results to a broad academic public. Given the profound changes in the conditions of teaching and research at European universities, participants will be encouraged to reflect on the origins and underlying premises of Oriental studies and to discuss its future options.

The European Association for Middle East Studies (EURAMES), the German Middle East Studies Association for Contemporary Research and Documentation (DAVO) and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) will also be holding their own Annual Congress, held under the umbrella of the Orientalistentag. Those wishing to submit panels must register as regular participants before the panel will be released on the web pages. Questions concerning registration or the submitting of panels within in the wider structure of sections and forums should be addressed to the Orientalistentag or to the respective chairs of the sections and forums.

The principal language of the Orientalistentag is German. Papers in English and French are welcome, but it will be advantageous if these papers are attached to a panel where all the papers are given in English or French. Deadline for submission of panels: 31 March 2007. Deadline for submission of papers and other contributions: 1 June 2007. For further information email the congress office at: [info@dot2007.de](mailto:info@dot2007.de) or visit the BRISMES website: [www.dur.ac.uk/brismes](http://www.dur.ac.uk/brismes).

### December 2007

#### **Yemeni Film Festival**

School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1

The London Middle East Institute (LMEI) is organising this festival which will be held over a number of days in December. The programme is being put together, but films already scheduled include:

**Khadija Al-Salami:** *A Stranger in Her Own City and Women and Democracy in Yemen*; **Bader Ben Hirsi:** *The English Sheikh and the Yemeni Gentleman* and *A New Day in Old Sanaa*; **Pascal Privet:** *La Pluie est le Beau Temps* and *La Bara*; **Pascal Privet and Jacques Hulinet:** *The Story of Sanaa*; **C. Borelli:** *Qudad – reinventing a tradition* and *The Architecture of Mud*; **Alain Saint-Hilaire:** *Yemen 30 Ans Plus Tard*.

For further information contact: Vincenzo Paci at the LMEI office on 0207 898 4490 or via email at: [vp6@soas.ac.uk](mailto:vp6@soas.ac.uk). Web: [www.lmei.soas.ac.uk](http://www.lmei.soas.ac.uk)

## MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITIONS

**1 July–29 October 2006**

**Soqatra: Land of the Dragon's Blood Tree**

Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh

This exhibition showed in pictures and videos the people, plants and animals of Soqatra and the threats to their future posed by development. A full review by John Shipman can be read in the Yemen news section on pages 34–35.

**18 May–3 September 2006**

**Word into Art:**

**Artists of the Modern Middle East**

British Museum, London

Over the last twenty-five years, The British Museum has built up a collection of contemporary art from the Middle East, in line with its original edict of 1753, "to enable citizens to think about the world they live in." *Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East* faced this challenge head on. Based largely on the collections of the British Museum, complemented by a number of loans, the exhibition served as the backbone to the *Middle East Now* season of events hosted by the Museum. It demonstrated the imaginative ways in which artists across the Middle East and North Africa are using the power of the written word in their art today.

An accompanying book, *Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East* by Venetia Porter, is available from the Museum shops and online at [www.britishmuseum.co.uk](http://www.britishmuseum.co.uk) (£16.99 hardback, £11.99 paperback). In partnership with Birzeit University, Palestine, the exhibition can be viewed online via: [www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/middleeastnow/word-into-art/index.html](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/middleeastnow/word-into-art/index.html) or <http://virtualgallery.birzeit.edu/tour/exhibition?id=128633>

**14 July–5 November 2006**

**Beyond the Palace Walls: Islamic Art from the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg**

Royal Museum, Chambers Street, Edinburgh

The exhibition displayed treasures from the Hermitage, including several never before seen outside Russia. It was sponsored by the Saudi Ambassador to the UK. Many of the items had reached Russia as trade gifts or as military trophies (the Emir of Bukhara presented a tent to the Tsar Alexander III). The exhibition included beautiful examples of metalwork, pottery, lacquer, textiles, embroidery, glass and jewels from most Islamic periods. The highlight was, perhaps, the beautiful Ottoman tent erected in the centre of the exhibition. A fascinating aspect of the exhibition was the highlighting of cultural influences and interactions between east and west.

**9 January–24 March 2007**

**A Future for the Past:**

**Petrie's Palestinian Collection**

Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London WC1

This exhibition provided a unique chance to see Petrie's collection of pottery, jewellery, flint tools and other artefacts from his excavation years in Palestine. It was very much a "hands-on" exhibition giving a good impression of day-to-day life on one of Petrie's sites and introducing non-archaeologists to the excitement of working on an archaeological excavation.

The accompanying catalogue, *A Future for the Past: Petrie's Palestinian Collection* can be bought from the SOAS Bookshop, price £25). ISBN 13: 978-0-905853-42-0.

**20 January–15 April 2007**

**Indigo: A Blue to Dye For**

Whitworth Gallery, Oxford Road, Manchester

Touring to Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery (19 May–1 September 2007) and Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (29 September–6 January 2008)

This exhibition is a survey of the world's oldest and most distinctive dyestuff which explores the dye's use across time and space. The universality of indigo as a dyestuff is explored through an outstanding range of textiles and clothing from countries across the globe, including Yemen, Egypt, Oman and Syria. Exhibits include the oldest surviving indigo recipe in the form of a tablet from Ancient Babylon. Jenny Balfour-Paul's *Indigo* has been reprinted by Archetype Publications ([www.archetype.co.uk](http://www.archetype.co.uk)) to coincide with the exhibition. This major touring exhibition, initiated by the Whitworth Gallery, will move to Plymouth in May, and can be seen later in the year at Brighton.

**11 July–22 September 2007**

**Edge of Arabia:**

**Contemporary art in Saudi Arabia and Yemen**

The Brunei Gallery (SOAS), Thornhaugh Street, London WC1

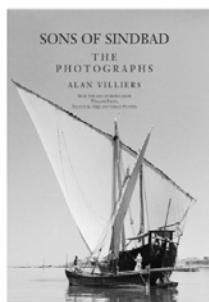
This exhibition will be curated by Stephen Stapleton (UK) and Ahmed Mater Al Ziad Aseeri (KSA) and will explore the individual expression of values and beliefs in a climate of change. It will feature works by ten leading artists from Saudi Arabia, including Ahmed Mater al-ziad Aseeri, Abdulaziz Ashour, Khalid Yosseff, Ayman Yosry Daydban, Fuad al-Futaih, Abdullah Alameen and Amnah al-Nasiri.

Admission free. Opening hours: Tuesday–Saturday 10:30–17:00 (**Closed Sundays & Mondays**). For further information on exhibition details, contact: The Brunei Gallery (SOAS): Tel: 020 7898 4046 (Recorded Information), Tel: 020 7898 4915 (Reception). Email: [gallery@soas.ac.uk](mailto:gallery@soas.ac.uk) Web: [www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/edgeofarabia/home.html](http://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/edgeofarabia/home.html)

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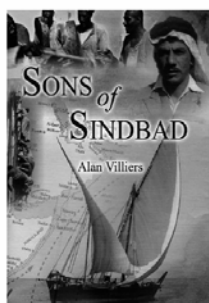
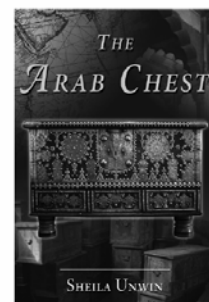


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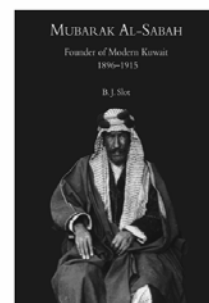


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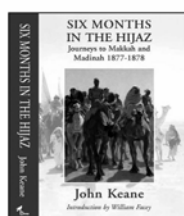
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## SIX MONTHS IN THE HIJAZ

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Wayward son of a respected clergyman, by twenty-two Jack Keane had seen much of the world. It only remained for him to visit the forbidden cities of Makkah and Madinah, and his chance came when he stepped ashore in the Red Sea port of Jiddah. Disguised as a pilgrim he joins a caravan to Islam's holiest cities. Stoned in Makkah, knifed on the way to Madinah, Keane witnesses death and suffering in the desert as he and his fellow-pilgrims are menaced by predatory desert tribes. His account and the mysterious affair of the "Lady Venus", who, Keane alleged, was an Englishwoman stranded in Makkah at the time, created a sensation in England, earning him some notoriety and helping to publicise his first two books, *Six Months in Meccah* and *My Journey to Medinah*. Among European accounts of the Muslim pilgrimage, Keane's

stands out for its freshness and immediacy. What he lacks in scholarly and scientific background, he makes up for in vivid observation, expressed in a highly entertaining and occasionally irreverent style.

"*Six Months in the Hijaz* is now in print again after 130 years. It's a welcome return, as this charming period piece should be on the shelves of anyone interested in the history of travel writing." Nick Smith, *Geographical*, April 2007

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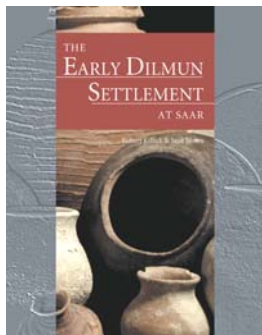
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## BOOK REVIEWS

### *The Early Dilmun Settlement at Saar*

Robert Killick and Jane Moon (eds)



Ludlow, UK: Archaeology International Ltd, 2005. 368 pp. Hardback, jacketed. 244 colour photographs, 186 graphics. Appendices, bibliography. £75.00. ISBN: 0-953-95611-3

Bahrain used to possess one of the most spectacular cultural landscapes in the world. Huge mound cemeteries existed

only a few decades ago, but are now rapidly disappearing, overwhelmed by national economic and social priorities. The mound fields attracted the attention of a number of scholars at the beginning of the past century, and it was even suggested that Bahrain served as a necropolis for the inhabitants of north-eastern Arabia and was not itself inhabited. This hypothesis was finally disproved by the work of the Danish Gulf Expeditions in the 1950s and '60s. The Danes found, buried beneath the mediaeval Bahrain Fort (Qala'at al-Bahrain), what is now believed to be the ancient capital and excavated part of it. Furthermore, they discovered a relatively large temple complex near the modern village of Barbar. It was established that the mound fields, the Barbar temple, and the foundation of the city beneath Qala'at al-Bahrain, all dated to the same period – around 2000 BC. The discoveries thus documented a complex society, which was identified as the Dilmun known from Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets. However, due to the more or less continuous occupation of Qala'at al-Bahrain until recent times, the Dilmun layers were much disturbed and it has been very difficult to obtain a detailed insight into the daily lives of the Dilmunites. The aim of the London–Bahrain Archaeological Expedition was thus to find and excavate a site with accessible and undisturbed layers, where they could gain an idea of the spatial organisation of a Dilmun settlement. The site of Ancient Saar fulfilled these criteria and excavations were carried out from 1990 to 1999. In 1997 the first volume was published, entitled *The Dilmun Temple at Saar*, and in 2001 *Early Dilmun Seals from Saar* was published. *The Early Dilmun Settlement at Saar* is the third and final publication of the work of the London–Bahrain Archaeological Expedition.

Chapter 1 (Robert Killick and Jane Moon) briefly introduces previous research into the Early Dilmun period in Bahrain and the topography of the Saar area. In Chapter 2 (Robert Killick) the stratigraphy and intra-site sequence is presented.

Chapter 3 (Robert Killick) contains very detailed descriptions of each of the 68 buildings investigated and their development. Chapter 4 (Robert Killick and Jane Moon) sets out a typology of the buildings and their installations, and in Chapter 5 (Jane Moon) the small finds are presented. In Chapter 6 (Robert Carter) a sample of pottery is classified, analysed and discussed. In Chapter 7 (Jane Moon) individually recorded ceramics, usually well-preserved or decorated examples, are presented. Chapter 8 (Margarethe Uerpmann and Hans-Peter Uerpmann) contains a presentation and discussion of the animal bones. Chapter 9 (Lloyd Weeks and Ken Collerson) presents the archaeometallurgical studies, and in Chapter 10 (Wendy Matthews and Charles French) the microstratigraphical evidence is published. Chapter 11 (Peter Bush, Graham Evans and Emily Glover) presents the results of the geological investigations. Finally, in Chapter 12, Robert Killick and Jane Moon briefly summarise the results.

In Appendix 2, the Saar archive is introduced. The excavation was digitally recorded and the database and GIS-files are made available to researchers. This is initially through contacting the authors, but plans to make the data accessible over the internet are well advanced. The database is in MS-Access format and is built using normalised data, which makes it easy to see and access the information in the different tables, of which the two most important are the contexts and finds tables. The contexts are verbally described and classified, and geographical references are made to buildings, rooms, and areas within the buildings. The finds are recorded with the context number and a simple classification by material and type, supplemented with a text description. Only unique pieces of pottery are included in the database, while the sherd material was sampled and only selected contexts recorded in detail and analysed.

The findings appear to be very coherent. The 68 houses were laid out following a rather standardised ground plan and have similar installations. Only a few rooms may have had a special function in the settlement. Very few absolute dates are provided, but the pottery analysis in Chapter 6 indicates, by comparison with Qala'at al-Bahrain, Failaka and the cemetery at Karranah, that a date range between c. 2050 and 1750 BC is likely for the site.

The presentation in the book is logical and follows that of most archaeological reports. It is well composed and nicely illustrated with the illustrations near the relevant text, making it both visually attractive and very user-friendly. The presentation in Chapter 3 of the architecture is long, as each building is described in great detail. The small finds presented in Chapter 5 are also treated to a highly detailed presentation, whereas the following chapters are based on samples, rather than on complete site inventories. For the specialised analyses (Chapters



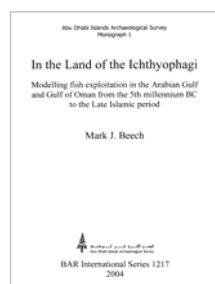
8–10) this is no surprise, but for the otherwise excellent systematic pottery analysis in Chapter 6, one could wish that the interesting chronological and spatial observations made from the pottery sample had been applied to a full pottery analysis and integrated into an intra-site discussion.

Systematic analyses combining different categories of information, eg the architectural phasing and pottery chronology, are very few, and so are more detailed spatial and chronological analyses. Furthermore, no attempt has been made to place the Saar settlement in a broader local and regional context. In compensation, the authors' efforts to publish promptly and to share their results with others by making their archives available must be acknowledged and commended. The results are significant and form an excellent supplement to previous research, while the clear presentation of the data will be a useful source of information for future syntheses. Furthermore, ideas and methods have been introduced into Gulf archaeology which make the Saar report both interesting and thought-provoking. Despite the limitations mentioned above, this final volume from the London–Bahrain Archaeological Expedition provides a unique insight into the material culture of a village society in the Early Dilmun period.

Søren Fredslund Andersen  
University of Aarhus

***In the Land of the Ichthyophagi***  
***Modelling fish exploitation in the Arabian Gulf***  
***and Gulf of Oman from the 5th millennium BC***  
***to the Late Islamic period***

Mark J. Beech



Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004.  
BAR International Series 1217,  
xxi + 293 pages. Large-format  
softback. 126 figures and 232  
tables. Abstract, bibliography, 8  
appendices. £41.00.  
ISBN: 1- 84171-577-8

This volume sets out with  
exemplary clarity and detail  
the results of the author's PhD

on fish remains from archaeological sites in the Arabian Gulf. The bulk of the study, and a substantial part of the present volume (Chapter 5), is taken up with the presentation of detailed analyses and statistics on the fish bone material from 23 recently excavated or previously unstudied assemblages, ranging in age from the Ubaid period in the 5th millennium BC to the Late Islamic period, with reference to previously published studies including material from further afield in the Gulf of Oman and Iran. This is a long and technical chapter packed with tables of statistics, which will appeal only to the most dedicated archaeozoologist or to other specialists working on fish data in the Gulf. It

is sandwiched between two groups of chapters of introductory and concluding material respectively, which offer more varied and palatable fare. The introductory chapters set out the principal objectives of the study (Chapter 1), the environmental and archaeological background (Chapter 2), a detailed and informative survey of modern fisheries data (Chapter 3), and a broad overview of current knowledge of fishing based on published information about fish bone collections and artefacts used in fishing such as net sinkers and fish hooks (Chapter 4). The later group of chapters considers the results of the technical analyses in the light of a range of themes: environment and ecology (Chapter 6), regional and environmental variation, seasonality and transhumance (Chapter 7), storage and trade (Chapter 8), and a short conclusion (Chapter 9).

Most of the material is from sites in the United Arab Emirates, reflecting the author's main area of experience and field activity, and especially the important and recently investigated Ubaid site of Dalma on Dalma Island, where he has played a key role as a member of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey. Dalma alone accounts for nearly a third of the total bone material analysed in this study. Eleven of the remaining assemblages are from two closely related clusters of sites, also on offshore islands in the southern Gulf: Merawah with sites mostly of Islamic date but also some Ubaid material; and Sir Bani Yas with sites of late pre-Islamic date (6th to 7th centuries AD). The Ubaid sites examined here are of particular interest in representing the earliest-known expression of coastal settlement in the Gulf and include Al-Sabiyah in Kuwait and the intriguing site of Dosariyah in Saudi Arabia, though the views of Oates *et al* (1977) and Masry (1977) resulting from the evidence of this site are not mentioned here. Other mostly smaller assemblages come from a scattering of sites with Bronze Age, Iron Age or later material.

What can we learn from this body of material? Clearly a large part of such a study must be taken up with technical issues and methods of analysis and this is far from a trivial issue. The author has devoted considerable time and energy to building up a modern reference collection of 215 modern fish specimens representing 112 species, a substantial achievement in its own right, and a major investment that will benefit future studies. Over 60,000 bone specimens were examined, and many were measured to aid in identification and reconstructions of fish sizes in a highly labour-intensive piece of research. Much attention is devoted to the problems and potential biasing effects of varying sample size, differential preservation and less than complete recovery methods – many collections were recovered by sieving through 4 mm mesh, which is likely to miss small but informative bones and to under-represent small-sized species, and 1 mm mesh size is now the standard in modern investigations.

Variability in species composition is determined mainly by local environmental conditions and shows a close similarity with regional variations in modern fisheries, with little evidence of any trends over time. Shallow-water and reef fish are present early and late in the sequence and so too are pelagic species such as tuna and mackerel. The latter are usually assumed to indicate deep-sea fishing although both are accessible in shallow inshore water at certain times of year. Analysis of seasonality casts doubt on the conventional view that fishing was a winter activity carried out by transhumant visitors from the interior. Tuna and mackerel are typically caught at this time of year but many other species prominent in these sites are best caught in the spring or summer months. In one of the most interesting analytical developments of the research, analysis of otoliths (ear-bones) from the Ubaid site of Umm al-Qaiwain demonstrates fishing over the period from spring to autumn. It has sometimes been assumed that regular annual growth increments in skeletal elements such as otoliths are not present in tropical fish. However, the author has undertaken a small control study on modern specimens from the Gulf that demonstrates otherwise and has successfully applied the technique to archaeological material. Such analyses are technically demanding but can provide a wide range of information not only on seasonality but also on fish growth rates and age structure, and these in their turn can inform on environmental trends and the varying impact of human fishing activity on the exploited fish populations. This is an important result and it is to be hoped that future work will build on it. A final brief discussion raises the question of fish storage and trade in fish products as deduced from the differential occurrence of different parts of the fish skeleton, but the available samples are too small and too hedged about with qualifications to provide more than a hint of such activity.

This research poses a number of wider questions about the economic status and role of ancient fishing communities in the Gulf, including the difficult question touched on but not resolved in this study of the relationship between fishing and land-based activities of pastoralism and agriculture. Interpretation of Arabian prehistory has often been informed by two underlying assumptions, that social and economic change was peripheral or subsidiary to major centres of development to the north, and that its peoples were until quite a late period predominantly nomadic. These notions seem increasingly at odds with evidence from many other parts of the world that productive coastlines are often precocious centres of social development in prehistory, supporting higher concentrations of settlement than their neighbouring hinterlands, facilitating sedentarism and cultural contact, and often acting as a pacemaker for change. The Gulf is

a fertile marine environment with highly productive fisheries by any standards, and it seems unlikely that these resources did not contribute in some way and from an early period to developments over a much wider territory. The fact that the earliest coastal people in the Gulf 7000 years ago were accomplished fishermen raises the even more tantalising question of the deeper history of such activity. Since sea level was substantially lower than the present earlier than 7000 years ago, any earlier coastal sites must now lie buried underwater, and underwater work in other parts of the world gives grounds for optimism that this submerged world is now technically within reach of archaeological investigation and capable of producing a rich harvest of new material (eg Flemming 2004). Wherever coastal sites are to be found, the surviving fish bones will provide a key source of evidence. This study points the way and provides an important foundation for the future. It is to be hoped that it will encourage new thinking, new field investigations with improved recovery techniques in excavation, larger bone collections and new research that further explores the fruitful area of mutual interest between fisheries biology and archaeology.

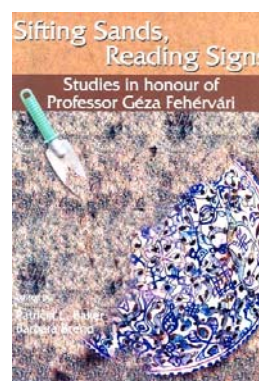
Geoff Bailey  
University of York

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#### *Sifting Sands, Reading Signs*

*Studies in honour of Professor Géza Fehérvári*  
Patricia Baker and Barbara Brend (eds)



London: Furnace Publishing, 2006. 260 pp. Large-format softback. 16 colour plates; b/w illustrations. £24.99. ISBN: 0-9550266-0-1

This collection of twenty-six articles is a thoughtful and loving tribute to an inspirational teacher, archaeologist, scholar of Islamic art and kindest of colleagues. Fehérvári's continuing career, as outlined by Patricia Baker in the opening tribute, has been a fascinating one,

pursued in the shadow of political upheaval. Born in Eger, Hungary, he studied Arabic Oriental Art at Eötvös Loránt University in Budapest, was appointed assistant curator at the Francis Hopp Museum of Far Eastern Art, and then fled during the Hungarian Uprising to Vienna in 1956. There he enrolled at the Kunsthistorisches Institut to study, moving in 1957 to London where he began his studies with the great Professor David Storm Rice at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). The latter's sudden death in 1962 gave Fehérvári the opportunity to take on the teaching of Islamic art, a role he fulfilled until 1987. In 1991 his career took a dramatic new turn when the Hungarian government invited him to become its ambassador to Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE. This was a highly imaginative appointment around the time of the first Gulf war: rarely has any diplomatic service been able to boast of anyone in its ranks so knowledgeable and sensitive to Arab and Islamic culture. On his retirement in 1995, the warm friendship he had developed with Jehan and Tareq Rajab led him to accept the position of Curator of the Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait, a fine and interesting collection of Islamic art and Middle Eastern ethnography which had been cunningly saved from looting by the Iraqi occupiers in 1991.

The articles here, written by his students, friends and colleagues, reflect not only the wide breadth of their interests but also of his own. There are some excellent contributions: Jawad Golmohammadi on a cenotaph at Kashan in Iran; Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom on the large-format Baysunghur Qur'an; and many others. They speak of happier days when the region was in less turmoil and when travel was simpler. David Bivar, writing on his visit to Afghanistan in 1969, tells of stopping to study a caravanserai *en route* between Kabul and Kandahar. Eleanor Sims, introducing her article on a manuscript of Ottoman poetry with Safavid connections – the topic deliberately chosen to be “as international in culture, tradition and language as is Géza-Bey himself” – talks of their travels together there. Alastair Northedge writes on the Qubbat al-Sulaybiya at Samarra in Iraq, where he carried out extensive fieldwork. There are two interesting articles devoted to objects in the Hungarian National Museum. The first, by Doris Behrens-Abouseif, is on a signed Mamluk oil lamp with inscriptions, one of them an aphorism certainly appropriate to Géza: “You would be patient in all hardships, no one with patience in his aspirations is regretful.” The second is an important article by Ibolya Gerelyes on 17–18th-century Ottoman rings, some of which can be linked to a workshop in Buda.

Fehérvári's own research began with his PhD study of *mihhrabs*, and Helen Philon has written a fascinating piece on a series of *mihhrabs* in Gulbarga in the Deccan. Pottery too was, it seems, one of his great loves, and there are a number of contributions

here. Ernst Grube has always shared this passion for pottery and his article, which starts with a touching tribute to Géza, is an interesting study of a Timurid-period ceramic bowl.

Fehérvári's sojourn in the Gulf is represented by two articles. The first, by Barbara Michalak-Pikulska, concerns the work of the modern Kuwaiti artist and writer Thuraya al-Baqsami, who describes to the author how, in Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation, she sought refuge in symbolism: white doves, magical signs and Arabic calligraphy are among the motifs in her abstract paintings. The second is Jehan Rajab's “Memoir” of the Marsh Arabs of Iraq and their embroideries. Visiting there in the 1960s, she describes the lifestyle and role of the women and the place of weaving, as well as the *izars*, the beautiful embroidered coverlets with their enchanting designs incorporating colourful motifs of people and animals interspersed with flowers. She records a tradition that the women put to good use the thousands of British army blankets left behind in the aftermath of the First World War.

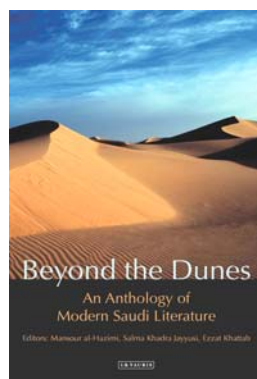
This is a good collection of articles, their subjects spanning much of the Islamic world. It is marred however by the production. The weakness of the binding has meant that my copy is now completely falling apart. Nor, clearly, could the publishers cope with the editors' need for transliteration. The reader is therefore constantly disturbed by words with diacriticals regularly appearing in bold in a different font. This is unacceptable in the current state of publishing software. And what a service to scholars it would have been to have included a full list of Fehérvári's publications, some of which are quite hard to find. However, if the reader can keep his book together, all this can be overlooked, as there are articles here that advance our state of knowledge while paying fitting tribute to a great man.

Venetia Porter  
British Museum

### *Beyond the Dunes*

#### *An anthology of modern Saudi literature*

Mansour al-Hazimi, Ezzat Khattab  
& Salma Khadra Jayyusi (eds)



London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006. xvi + 528 pp. Hardback, jacketed. £45.00. ISBN: 1-85043-972-9

Salma Khadra Jayyusi has over the last twenty years done more than anyone else to organise the translation of contemporary Arabic literature into English. She has edited half a dozen huge

anthologies of prose fiction, poetry and drama, as well as volumes dedicated to the literature of whole regions – Palestine and Arabia. Under her general editorship, several dozens of individual novels and collections of short stories have been translated and published. This volume is the latest to be produced by PROTA, her Project for the Translation of Arabic.

It is based on a ten-volume compendium of modern (that is, post-1902) Saudi Arabian literature that was published in Arabic. There is an introduction and the volume is divided into different genres of writing: poetry, short stories, excerpts from novels, plays and autobiographical literature. The volume concludes with potted biographies of the writers and translators, and (much longer) biographies of the members of the academic committee that selected the contributions.

Altogether the volume gives an excellent survey of the range and quality of the writing that is being produced. The most celebrated writer who has held Saudi nationality – ‘Abd al-Rahman Munif – is not represented, but others who have already been translated do appear: Hamza Muhammad Bogary and Turki al-Hamad. The selection gives us a taste of other Saudi writers who should be translated.

Poetry is always hard to translate and something is inevitably lost in the process. Much of the verse (in English) comes across as very personal, full of a sense of loneliness and alienation. It might be preferable for the translated poetry always to be presented alongside the original. Those who have some knowledge of the source language would then be guided into the rhythm and pace of the original, with the English version as the key. Only occasionally do we get an idea of the passion within the words, for instance in Ahmad Qandeel’s eloquent plea for freedom:

*Give me the right to do things openly  
He who lives in chains is not alive to the world  
Birds have their wings, rocks have their solidity  
Water goes stagnant when it’s blocked by dams  
We were born for the ebb and flow of life.*

Prose fiction frequently works better in translation. Saudi writers, especially women, have difficulty, within the Kingdom’s conservative social context, in exploring issues of sexual politics. But Hussa Muhammad al-Tuwaijiri does succeed in her story, “My Hair Grew Long Again”, describing the collapse of a loveless marriage. And, by contrast, the powerlessness of women is exposed in “Days with no Hope” by Qumasha al-‘Ulayyan, in which a husband and the family organise a divorce without the wife’s wishes.

The development of the theatre in Saudi Arabia will come as a surprise, but the sample of five plays in this volume shows that there is already experimentation and creativity.

The most fascinating section is the last, containing eight pieces of autobiographical writing. Socially and culturally the literary memoir has to overcome some prejudice. As the introduction puts it (and it is not clear who the author is):

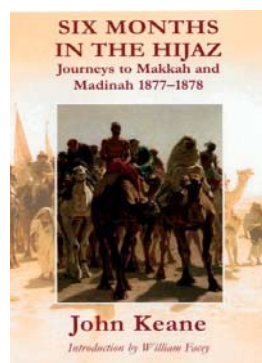
From a religious perspective, we know too well that speaking of the “self” has long been connected with notions of superiority and abandoning group unity. The group is thought of as one nation and one body which follow one path in life, a path which guarantees a happy fate.

One of the memoirs is by Prince Khalid b. Sultan b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Al Saud. It is a statement of the self-image of the ruling family, a cloying essay in family piety. Far more realistic and convincing are memories of childhood in rural Arabia, of migrant childhoods in Libya and Syria, or of life as students in Egypt. We penetrate the carapace of public images and enjoy family life where women and slaves have a loving and beloved role in the upbringing of children. Present-day Saudis are reminded of the real poverty of most people in the Kingdom before the Second World War. And the first generation of Saudi students seem to have been innocents abroad – in Cairo, carefully chaperoned, their movements and morals carefully guarded.

This is a valuable work. There are, however, slips in the editing. Why should auxiliary verbs always be abbreviated – “he’d” for “he would”, “isn’t” for “is not”, and so on? There are other infelicities. There is not always consistency in the biographies of the writers represented. Transliteration is sometimes eccentric. But these are minor quibbles, which could be cleared up if there is to be a second, paperback edition.

Peter Clark

***Six Months in the Hijaz*  
*Journeys to Makkah and Madinah, 1877–1878*  
John F. T. Keane**



First published in 1881 as *Six Months in Meccah and My Journey to Medinah*, London: Tinsley Brothers.

Reprinted together by Barzan Publishing, Beirut, 2006, with an introduction by William Facey. 42 + 224 + 220 + xxvi pp. Hardback, jacketed. Map. Bibliography, glossary, index. £19.95. ISBN: 0-9549701-1-X

Of the few accounts of visits to Makkah and Madinah by Europeans in the 19th century, the best-known in English are those of Burckhardt in 1814 and Sir Richard Burton in 1853. One which had almost sunk from sight is the present work, actually



two books as originally published in 1881. These were only ever reprinted once after those two first editions, in 1887, when they were combined under the title *Six Months in the Hejaz*. This highly readable travelogue has inexplicably been out of print ever since.

The author, John Keane, was a very different character from Burton and Burckhardt. At the time of his visit to the Hijaz he was a young man of 22, but had already acquired more experience of the world than most people manage in a lifetime. A rolling stone, son of the Rector of Whitby, he had gone to sea at 12. He had been whaling in the Arctic, and had sailed to China and India. Between voyages he had worked on a sugar plantation in Demerara, spent time with relatives in India where he learnt Hindustani, and joined the Ottoman army for a time. He seems to have visited Makkah and Madinah opportunistically, purely for the challenge that going there in disguise presented. He tells us that he was determined to see if there really was any part of the world it would be impossible for him to go.

Having no funds of his own, he attached himself to the entourage of a wealthy Indian pilgrim in Jiddah. In this lowly capacity he gives us a splendid “worm’s-eye view” of life in the holy places. His dealings are with other pilgrims, shopkeepers and his patron’s retinue. But he also gives a careful description of the towns and the Haram al-Sharif, and paints a memorable picture of the Hajj ceremonies. He is particularly good in his description of the small exchanges between common people, so that we have a real sense of the hardships, dangers and joys of the pilgrimage.

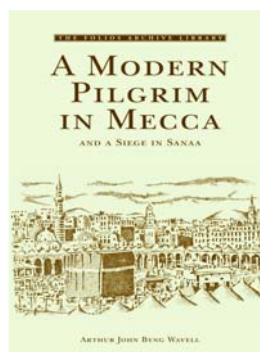
His style is lively, robust, at times irreverent, and frequently entertaining. His descriptions of significant moments – a sandstorm on the way to Madinah, the great flood which inundated Makkah and the Haram – have a fresh vividness which marks him as a born story-teller. At this remove of time we cannot see if he has embroidered any of the incidents in his book in the interests of making a better story – the encounter with the Lady Venus (*aka* Miss Macintosh, according to Keane) may be a case in point – but it hardly matters.

Keane’s riveting account has been supplemented with a substantial introduction by William Facey, who tells the story of Keane’s life for the first time and deals in detail, and perhaps conclusively, with the mysterious “Affair of the Lady Venus”, so deposing “Miss Macintosh” from her curious niche in the annals of Arabian travel. There are also a map, bibliography, glossary, and index. It is a handsome production, the pages of the 1881 editions being reproduced in facsimile, and a rare case these days of a reprint improving on the original.

Andrew Thompson

***A Modern Pilgrim in Mecca and a Siege in Sanaa***

Arthur J. B. Wavell



First published in 1912 by Constable & Co., London.

Reprinted by Garnet Publishing Ltd, Reading, 2005. viii + 349 pp. Hardback, jacketed. Appendix, index. £25.00. ISBN: 1-85964-182-2

Arthur Wavell (1882–1916), a cousin of the Field Marshal, conceived

the idea of visiting the Holy Cities of Makkah and Madinah after leaving the British army in 1906 and buying a sisal plantation near Mombasa. His interest in Islam, in learning Arabic and exploring Arabia arose from his contact with Arab and Muslim society in East Africa. He decided to visit the Hijaz in the guise of a Zanzibari Arab claiming to have studied medicine in England, and to take two companions with him: Masaudi, a Swahili Muslim from Mombasa; and Abdul Wahid, a Shi‘a Arab allegedly from Aleppo but (although Wavell does not say so) actually from Baghdad and resident in London. They set out in 1908.

Wavell’s journey to Damascus and Madinah, via the Hijaz Railway which had just been opened that year and thence by camel and boat to Jiddah and Makkah, is detailed in the first part of this book. The second part describes his attempt in 1910–11 to explore the hinterland of Turkish Arabia, his detention in Sanaa during the siege of the capital by partisans of the Imam, and his expulsion from Yemen by the Ottoman Turkish authorities.

Wavell was not the first Englishman to undertake the pilgrimage in disguise. Richard Burton (1853) and John Keane (1877–78) had preceded him, while Herman Bicknell (1862) had done it openly as an English convert, and Wavell did not originally intend to publish an account of his journey in the belief that it had broken no new ground. But his experiences in Yemen seem to have acted as a catalyst. His narrative is lively and informative.

In 1918 a cheap edition of his book, shorn of its chapters on Yemen, appeared with an introduction by Leonard Darwin, who had been President of the Royal Geographical Society when Wavell called on him in 1910 to discuss his plans to explore north or east of Sanaa. Darwin commented that, despite the diffident manner of his lean and tanned young visitor, he felt that he had been in contact with “an exceptional personality”.

Garnet Publishing are to be congratulated on reviving the memory of this engaging and intrepid adventurer and on making his book, long out of print, available to a new and wider readership. But it is a pity that the reprint omits the seven illustrations, including a photograph of Wavell in Arab dress

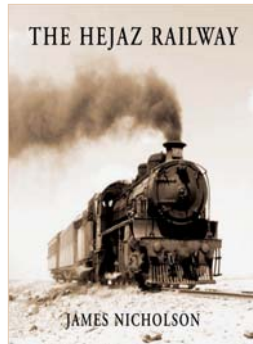


taken in Damascus in 1908, and the detailed map of Arabia which appeared in the 1912 edition. Moreover, an all too brief introductory note on the author is only to be found on the dust cover. The book would have benefited from a proper introduction and notes to place Wavell's journeys in context for a modern readership.

John Shipman

### **The Hejaz Railway**

James Nicholson



London: Stacey International, 2005. xiv + 176 pages. Large-format hardback, jacketed. Colour and b/w photographs throughout. Maps and drawings. Notes, bibliography, appendices, index. Price: £25. ISBN-10: 1-900988-8-1X. ISBN-13: 978-1-900988-8-10

The idea of a railway linking Damascus to Madinah was first put forward as early as 1864 by the American engineer Dr Charles Zimpel. It was revived from time to time, but nothing resulted until Sultan Abdulhamid issued an imperial decree on 2 May 1900 calling upon the Muslim world to support and provide financial backing for the scheme. He had good reasons for sponsoring it. His credentials as protector of the Holy Places would be enhanced by a project that would make the *hajj* accessible to many more pilgrims, and spare them the 40-day trek which cost many lives every year. The fact that the railway was to be entirely financed by Muslims appealed to believers throughout the world. The financing of the project was conceived as a *waqf*, administered by the Ottoman Sultan; contributing to it was a pious and charitable deed, and tacitly acknowledged the Sultan's status as Caliph. The Hijaz Railway became, as Ochsenswald has said, the visible embodiment of the Pan-Islamic movement. The campaign for donations and financing of the railway was characterised by an almost complete absence of corruption, although it was not without a degree of coercion.

From a political and military point of view, the project opened up the always turbulent province of Arabia to rapid Ottoman intervention, and at the same time it was hoped that it would stimulate the economy of the Peninsula, becoming in time as important an economic conduit as the Suez Canal. That this did not in fact occur was not the fault of the planners.

The construction of the Hijaz Railway between 1900 and 1908, at a time when the Ottoman Empire was in serious decline, was a major achievement. The odds against the project were formidable. The route follows, aside from a few minor deviations, the old pilgrimage route, the Darb al-Sham, and the

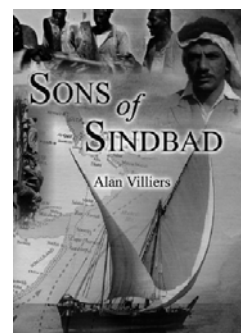
construction crews who built embankments, bridges, overpasses and culverts and laid the track were challenged by the same obstacles faced by generations of pilgrims: harsh, waterless terrain, appalling heat in the summer months, bitter cold in winter, hostile tribesmen and disease. Italian and Turkish crews worked on the initial part of the line; southwards beyond al-'Ula, only Muslims. The total distance covered was 1302 km. The cost, including rolling stock, worked out at about T.L. 4.25 million, or T.L. 3000 per kilometre.

This is a splendid book on a riveting subject. Most readers know of the Hijaz Railway only in the context of T. E. Lawrence – a topic upon which this book throws new light – but this was only one, albeit lethal, episode in the short but dramatic life of one of the most romantic of railway lines. The photographs, many of them by the author, are of great beauty, and the older photographs, from sources as diverse as the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française in Jerusalem and the Imperial War Museum in London, are striking and unusual. The maps are clear and readable. Two fine Ottoman maps of the route of the railway are reproduced, both from the National Archives in Kew (formerly the PRO); both are new to this reviewer. Train buffs will be delighted not only with the photographs of heroic engines, but with the minutely detailed descriptions of engineering difficulties, rolling stock, station architecture and even types of rails. A ticket from Damascus to Madinah cost T.L. 3.10.

Paul Lunde

### **Sons of Sindbad**

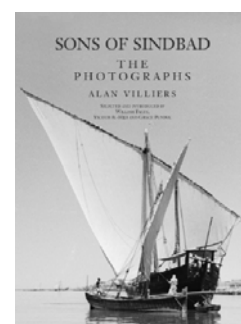
Alan Villiers



First published London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1940. Reprinted with an introduction by William Facey, Yacoub al-Hijji and Grace Pundyk, London: Arabian Publishing Ltd, 2006. xl + 404 pp. Hardback, jacketed. 50 b/w photographs. Map. Notes, bibliography, appendices, index. £25.00. ISBN-10: 0-9544792-3-8. ISBN-13: 978-0-9544792-3-7

### **Sons of Sindbad: The photographs**

Alan Villiers



Selected and introduced by William Facey, Yacoub al-Hijji and Grace Pundyk.

London: National Maritime Museum in association with Arabian Publishing Ltd, 2006. 224 pp. Large-format hardback, jacketed. 164 b/w photographs. 12 maps. Notes, bibliography, index. £30.00. ISBN: 0-948065-73-7

*Sons of Sindbad* is the classic account of the Arabian dhow, the traditional wooden sailing craft once so familiar in the Indian Ocean, as well as of the life of the Arab sea captains, dhow owners, mariners and pearlers of Kuwait. It is also a great classic of Arabian travel literature. First published in 1940, the present publication of *Sons of Sindbad* is a reprint of the UK edition of that year. *Sons of Sindbad: The Photographs*, is a handsome new companion volume to it. Both describe the two dhow voyages that Alan Villiers undertook in 1938–39: the first a short one in the Red Sea from Aden to Jizan; the second in *Bayan*, a Kuwaiti *boum* whose name he translates curiously (and inaccurately) as *The Triumph of Righteousness*. *Bayan* had sailed from the Shatt al-‘Arab to Berbera with a cargo of dates when Villiers joined her at Aden. He sailed on her for the rest of her round-voyage to Hadhramaut and on to Zanzibar and Tanganyika, thence back to Kuwait via Oman and Bahrain with a cargo of mangrove poles.

Both books contain an introduction by William Facey, Yacoub Al-Hijji and Grace Pundyk providing a biography of Alan Villiers (1903–1982), including an account of his career at sea and devotion to sail, and a discussion of his Australian background. The value of the companion book lies in the photographs of the two voyages. These are hitherto unpublished and have been drawn from the vast Villiers archive held by the National Maritime Museum. The excerpts from *Sons of Sindbad* which accompany them add greatly to the enjoyment of the book. Although the photographs can be viewed independently, the editors’ scheme of including extracts will be much appreciated by the reader wishing to relate the words to the images, just as they will find Villiers’ reports and comments on his experiences of life on board *Bayan* much enhanced when read together with them. They vividly capture the 1930s, a time when sailing dhows in the Western Indian Ocean were as common as ocean liners are today. Villiers’ text is a unique work in that it explores a maritime culture that was until then largely unknown. He was not only an accomplished sailor but also an excellent journalist and photographer. His photographs have as much depth as his writing contains detail.

*Sons of Sindbad* describes the crew, passengers and cargo, merchants and smugglers, and the people of the various ports, from Aden, Mukalla, Haifun, Lamu, Zanzibar and the Rufiji delta to Matrah, Bahrain and Kuwait. Villiers had a sharp eye and was interested in both the society and the economy of the maritime peoples. Readers will be touched by his modesty and readiness to work with the sailors, whose nautical skills elicited his respect. He came particularly to admire the Kuwaiti *nakhoda* (captain) of *Bayan*, Ali bin Nasr al-Nejdi. Villiers, despite his extensive knowledge, was always ready to learn from, credit and defer to his fellow master mariner. The many lively conversations he records with the

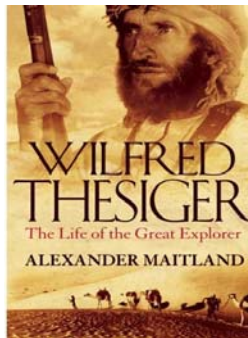
sailors, merchants and members of Kuwait’s ruling family, whom he met in the course of his stays in the various ports of call, are central to our enjoyment of his narrative and add to our pleasure in viewing the photographs. His title *Sons of Sindbad* – a deliberate echo of “Sindbad the Sailor and his Seven Voyages” in the *Arabian Nights* – is exceedingly apt because many of the adventurers, sea captains, merchants and smugglers he encountered really do seem to have been very much in the mould of that composite picaresque hero of mediaeval Gulf seafaring lore.

One does not need to read *Sons of Sindbad* from cover to cover in order to appreciate what it has to offer. Wherever the book falls open there is something of interest, whether Villiers is discussing a voyage from the Shatt al-‘Arab to Berbera or talking about everyday life on board, the complexities of rigging, the customs of pearl merchants, or the pyramid of debt which was the basis of the traditional Kuwaiti economy. Like Wilfred Thesiger, Villiers was witnessing the end of an era. Thesiger lived the life of the desert bedouin as Villiers experienced life at sea with the Arabian sailors. The editors are right to comment that whereas Thesiger recoiled from the idea that the bedouin should embrace so-called progress, Villiers was realistic about the need to adapt to modern technology. He accepted the Arabian sailors as they were and recognised that for them change was inevitable. Unlike Gertrude Bell, T. E. Lawrence, St John Philby, Bertram Thomas, Freya Stark and H. R. P. Dixon, who were all identified with British political power in the Middle East, Villiers was an independent traveller, at once a Westerner who could mix with the colonial élite and a common sailor who could identify with the underdog. But all these travellers had one thing in common: a deep respect for the Arabians and their life-style.

Villiers’ papers are archived at the National Library of Australia in Canberra and the University of Melbourne, while his photographs and film are held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. *Sons of Sindbad* and *The Photographs* provide a graphic record of the Arabian maritime world and its people, of their customs and conversations, and of their social and economic conditions, just as the decline of trade by sail set in. It is a remarkable achievement. Finally, one must commend the publishers for producing two very handsome volumes. The photographs especially are superbly presented.

Dionisius A. Agius  
University of Leeds

**Wilfred Thesiger: The life of the great explorer**  
Alexander Maitland



London: HarperCollins, 2006.  
528 pp. Hardback, jacketed.  
£25.00.  
ISBN: 0002556081.

Anyone who ever met Sir Wilfred Thesiger, KBE, DSO (1910–2003) could not fail to be impressed by the tall, quiet, reserved and scholarly gentleman who is counted among the last of

the great explorers of the Middle East and north-east Africa. We once invited him to Durham in his latter years and I have abiding personal memories of him, frail but dignified, sitting and chatting long into the evening surrounded by a circle of fascinated students.

Alexander Maitland has produced an excellent survey of Thesiger's life and times based on his many discussions with him about his life and travels. The book dwells not just on Thesiger's journeys but also on his paradoxical character: "He was a veritable maze of contradictions; and, if the truth be told, was in some ways his own worst enemy." His virtues, "immense and selfless bravery, compassion, determination, integrity and creative energy", "enabled him to achieve his outstanding feats of exploration and travel, and to record them with a matchless brilliance in his photography and in his writing" (p. 3).

Maitland, already the author of *Speke and the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* and another biography, *Robert and Gabriela Cunninghame Graham*, is uniquely qualified to produce this *Life*. He worked with Freya Stark on *Rivers of Time* and recorded conversations with her in *A Tower in a Wall*. He first met Thesiger in 1964 and collaborated with him on *My Kenya Days*, *The Danakil Diary*, *Among the Mountains* and *A Vanished World*. He has already edited the anthology *Wilfred Thesiger: My Life and Travels* and compiled and written *Wilfred Thesiger: A Life in Pictures*.

Thesiger published his autobiography, *The Life of My Choice*, in 1987. The present biography documents his early life in Abyssinia and draws upon Thesiger's own vibrant descriptions of his early years in the Legation in Addis Ababa: "The clothes, the buildings, the pitch and intonation of voices speaking Amharic; the smell of rancid butter, of red peppers and burning cow dung that permeated the town." Maitland explores Thesiger's close relationship with his mother, who always supported and encouraged his ventures. Maitland also draws upon other travel accounts, for example James Bruce of Kinnaid's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790), and Colonel Rey's *The Real Abyssinia* (1927).

In 1918 Thesiger's family travelled to Aden and on to Bombay. He was subsequently educated at Eton and Oxford where he won a blue for boxing. He attended Emperor Haile Selassie's coronation in 1930, and by 1933 was exploring the Sultanate of Aussa and hunting with Danakil tribesmen. In 1935 he joined the Sudan Political Service, during which time he travelled on vacation by camel across the Sahara to the Tibesti Mountains. During the Second World War he served with the Sudan Defence Service and in Abyssinia, Syria and the Western Desert. Between 1945 and 1950 he travelled with Bedu across the Empty Quarter of Arabia and in Oman, journeys that he later described in his first book, the classic *Arabian Sands* (1959). In 1966 Richard Taylor made a film for the BBC, *The Empty Quarter*, with the strong visual presence of Thesiger. Further films followed, including *The Forbidden Desert of the Danakil* and *Heart of the Nomad*, all of which "helped to transform him from a respected explorer and traveller, honoured by learned societies, into a celebrity of international status" (p. 415).

Between 1951 and 1958 he lived in the marshes of southern Iraq, among the exquisite, cathedral-like *mudhifs* or guest houses, and amply recorded a now almost vanished way of life in *The Marsh Arabs* (1964): "They lead an extraordinary life in the heart of these great swamps of bamboos and bulrushes ... firelight on a half-turned face, the crying of geese, duck fighting in to feed, a boy's voice singing somewhere in the dark, canoes moving in procession down a waterway, the setting sun seen crimson through the smoke of burning reedbeds" (quoted on pp. 312–13). Several friends considered it a masterpiece, and a better book even than *Arabian Sands*. Thesiger took other travellers to visit the Iraqi marshes, including Gavin Maxwell, Gavin Young and Frank Steele, British vice-consul in Basra. Gavin Young remained a life-long friend and returned to the Marshes after the revolution in Baghdad in 1958, publishing his own experiences in *Return to the Marshes* (1977) and *Iraq: Land of Two Rivers* (1980).

Maitland thoroughly documents Thesiger's many amazing journeys, as well as his legion of friends from ambassadors to tribesmen, in all the regions he visited. Thesiger travelled in Iran, Pakistan, the Hindu Kush and Karakoram mountains, in Nuristan, Afghanistan and north India as well as in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, and in Yemen. In al-Qarra, Thesiger met Prince Hasan bin Hasan (a cousin of Imam Badr) who, to his surprise, gave him permission to travel anywhere in the north of Yemen. Thesiger visited East Africa in 1961, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in 1962 and journeyed with Samburu and Turkana tribesmen across northern Kenya. He returned to make his home among its pastoral peoples in 1968. Maitland quotes Thesiger from *My Kenya Days*: "When I first came to Kenya, I intended to spend perhaps two years in

the country travelling with camels in the Northern Frontier District, but since then I have come to regard Maralal as my home. It is here, among those whose lives I share today, that I hope to end my days" (*My Kenya Days*, p. 210, April 1993, quoted on p. 453). Two years later his companions, Lawi and Laputa, were dead and he was alone and living in England. As he replied to a Kenyan child: "When I'm in London, you seem much further away than the moon." Maitland's Epilogue is particularly poignant, documenting Thesiger's final years from 1992 to 2003 in Britain. Following the death of Laputa and Lawi he reflected on his mother's words: "I hope in your old age you'll never feel as lonely as I do" (p. 456).

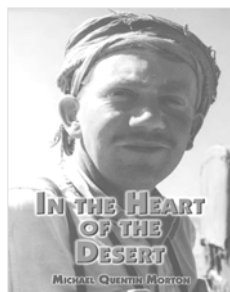
Maitland's biography is extremely comprehensive, with appropriate maps, a thorough bibliography and a useful family tree. It is well illustrated with photographs from private collections. Of course Thesiger's own large photographic collection, which he continued to develop until November 1992, and which is now owned by the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, is outstanding in its depth, subject matter and quality. It is to be recommended as a useful source on the region in its own right, containing as it does more than 38,000 images. The biography was authorised by Thesiger in July 1992, eleven years before his death on 24 August 2003. Maitland was given unrestricted access to his archive of diaries, letters, manuscripts and notebooks, and many of his friends and acquaintances provided generous assistance with its preparation. Readable, fascinatingly separating myth from fact and thoroughly researched, it is a volume that is "authentic and irresistibly revealing".

Janet Starkey  
University of Durham

### ***In the Heart of the Desert***

#### ***The story of an exploration geologist and the search for oil in the Middle East***

Michael Quentin Morton



Aylesford, UK: Green Mountain Press, 2006.

282 pp. Hardback, jacketed.  
23 colour, 83 b/w photographs and illustrations. £20.

ISBN-10: 0-9552212-0-X.  
ISBN-13: 978-0-9552212-0-0.

Second edition, 2007: minor amendments; seven additional photographs.

Geology is a scientific discipline which involves fieldwork in arduous and unforeseeable conditions, in particular in opening a new region. Such indeed was the case following the Second World War in southern Arabia, where a primary geological survey was needed as a preliminary to the search for

petroleum. The oil industry demands of geologists that the survey results be meticulous, dependable and immediate, since upon them rest decisions as to costly further exploration, and this in turn builds up the scientific contribution.

The geological story of the Arabian Peninsula – how it arose from the Tethys Sea, acquiring vast layers of deposited silts entrapping organic detritus which, over great spans of time, turned into petroleum (literally, "stone-oil"), and how the great tectonic plate split from Africa and became squeezed against Asia – all this was the stuff of fascination to a young Yorkshireman so taken by it as to make it his career.

Mike Morton was amongst the pioneers of south Arabian earth science. Graduating in geology at Leeds University in 1945, aged 21, he joined and spent a career of 26 years with the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), the consortium of British, French and American interests formed after WW II to conduct oil activities not only in Iraq/Syria but in all Arabian territories outside the sphere of Aramco in Saudi Arabia. Thus the Eastern Aden Protectorate, Muscat and Oman and the Trucial States, as they were all then called, fell to IPC. Exploration concessions had been obtained in the 1930s but survey work, suspended during WWII, was resumed as soon as it was over.

Morton began his IPC career as a field geologist in Palestine and Transjordan, where he learned to observe his surroundings and record his impressions in lengthy accounts to his fiancée, Heather Howells. In 1947, when IPC resumed surveys in southern Arabia, he did pioneering geological work with René Wetzell and Tony Altounian in Hadhramaut, Mahra and Dhofar – regions where tribal political organisation predominated.

This was in the same years as Wilfred Thesiger was making his Rub'al-Khali crossings, and the geologists' lengthy survey journeys too were made by camel for lack of roads in the wadi country, or by Landrover in the flatter desert. Conflicts with tribes in the Eastern Protectorate would disrupt the progress of oil exploration until quelled by 'Ingram's Peace'. Morton's three months in Dhofar led him to the conclusion that the region was devoid of oil prospects (the concession was relinquished by IPC in 1950 and later taken up, in vain, by Wendell Phillips).

In 1949, Mike and Heather were married, and their son Quentin has produced a remarkable biography of his father. Drawing on a wide range of material, including the letters exchanged with Heather during periods of separation, Mike's own reports and publications and IPC archive records, the author has assembled a very personal account of his father's time in Arabia. The narrative can verge on the pedestrian in the early, south Arabian stages for which the sources are largely personal and hence lack even an overview of the geology, but it comes



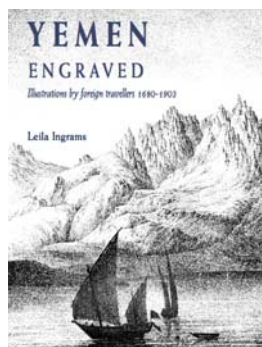
alive in the Oman and subsequent stages, for which documentary records are more complete.

Morton played a notable part in the opening up of Oman's interior for IPC exploration, beginning with surveys in the north Oman mountains and leading a field party based on Thamud – a party handed over to Ziad Beydoun. By now in charge of IPC's field operations in Oman, Morton took part in the epic naval landings on the southern shore at Duqm and the subsequent intermittent advance towards the Dhahira, frustrated by the most tortuous political dealings, and culminating in supreme disappointment when the well drilled at Fahud in 1956–7 was found to be dry. Morton's career continued in Qatar where IPC was producing oil from the Dukhan field, in Abu Dhabi and the Trucial States, and in the Oman mountains. Although he worked alongside many other notable geologists, such as Don Sheridan, his geological expertise in south-eastern Arabia was unsurpassed. As early as 1959 he delivered "The geology of Oman" to the 5th World Petroleum Congress. As Head of Geology for the Qatar and Abu Dhabi companies, Morton continued his IPC career well into the oil-production period. Subsequently he led a Royal Geographical Society expedition to Musandam and worked as adviser to several other oil companies until his final retirement in 1984.

For those who know Oman, the Emirates and other south Arabian states only in their present astonishing modernity, an insight into how it was before oil and economic growth will be readily found in this biography of a specialist personally involved in the pioneering stages of bringing it all about. However, though the author has done an excellent job in assembling this most readable picture of those times from many diverse sources, one is still not left with as clear a picture as one would wish of Mike Morton's undoubted overall contribution to Arabian geology itself.

Julian Lush

***Yemen Engraved***  
***Illustrations by foreign travellers, 1680–1903***  
Leila Ingrams



Foreword and Preface by  
Professor Saleh Ali Ba  
Surrah and Professor Richard  
Pankhurst.

London: Stacey International,  
2006. 188 pp. Large-format  
hardback, jacketed. Map.  
B/w illustrations throughout,  
glossary of titles,  
bibliography. £27.50.  
ISBN: 1-900988-70-4

A revealing aspect of Leila Ingrams' *Yemen Engraved* is to compare it with the earlier *Ethiopia*

*Engraved* which she published with Richard Pankhurst in 1988. Christian Ethiopia attracted far more sketching travellers, drawn by its religious heritage as well as, initially, by legends of Prester John. What's more, they could and did sketch.

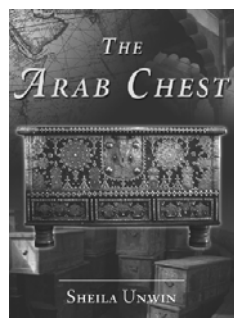
In Yemen, by contrast, there were fewer foreign travellers to the interior and non-Muslims sketching or note-taking were often reduced to subterfuge: you crouched down shrouded in your *abaya* as if to relieve yourself, and quick – out with pencil and paper for a rapid sketch or note before the suspicions of your Muslim companions were aroused.

The Ethiopian comparison also applies to several of the early engravings: there is one of the Sabaeen temple at Yeha for instance, but none of the Sabaeen buildings or inscriptions at Marib or Baraqish; it was easier to visit Yeha or Aksum than to venture to the eastern desert rim of Yemen where there were far more outstanding remains of ancient cities. The selection is therefore more restricted though it contains some marvellous images of Yemeni landscape and architecture.

There are some unusual engravings of Mahra by B. A. R. Nicholson from an unpublished manuscript in the Royal Geographical Society; Soqatra is also well represented. A chapter on flora and fauna is superbly illustrated though elsewhere the reproductions are sometimes unkind to the originals. An excellent map adorns the end-papers front and back and includes all the places mentioned in the text – a real treat – but there is no index.

Sarah Searight

***The Arab Chest***  
Sheila Unwin



Foreword by Sir Terence Clark.

London: Arabian Publishing  
Ltd, 2006. x + 134 pp.  
Hardback, jacketed. Colour and  
b/w photographs through-out. 3  
maps, 35 drawings. Appendices,  
glossary, bibliography, index.  
£25.00. ISBN-10: 0 9544792 6  
2. ISBN-13: 978 0 9544792 6 8.

*The Arab Chest* falls into a stimulating category of book that looks at the whole cultural and commercial world of the western Indian Ocean, taking in the Indian subcontinent, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the East African coast. Other examples of the genre are Jenny Balfour Paul's *Indigo*, Clara Semple's *A Silver Legend: The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler*, Dionisius Agius' *Seafaring in the Arabian Gulf and Oman* (reviewed in *Bulletin* 11, p. 48), and the recent reprint of Alan Villiers' *Sons of Sindbad* (see review above). This latest contribution had me dodging between desk and landing where my own Arab chest sits. I now know much more about it.



The chests are symbols of a way of life, a reflection of that world crisscrossed by local vessels trading local commodities, some of them stuffed into said chests. Mrs Unwin's quest for them takes her with dogged temerity from old Tanganyika to Mombasa and pre- and post-revolution Zanzibar. By now thoroughly bitten by the bug, she went on over the following years to visit Sanaa, Sur, Muscat and Dubai, spent time in Makran, and travelled up and down the west coast of India. And then followed years of research in Britain. The only missing element, curiously, is that of the Hadhramis, so much part of that world, the eclectic decoration of their domestic architecture reflecting the same cosmopolitanism as Mrs Unwin's chests.

The focus of her story is on older chests, most of them originating in western India, but she classifies all chests on the basis of decoration rather than provenance, which is almost impossible to certify because of the spread and mixing of styles and motifs all over the Indian Ocean world. Most are built of Indian teak or rosewood and are elaborately decorated with brass fittings and studs. Thus we have "Shirazis" (certainly not from Shiraz) with their rather restrained decoration; the more ornate Surat chests (of which, I realise, I have an example, having read the book), some with a distinctive perforated breadfruit design; Malabar chests distinguished by carving (a handsome one used to stand in the London headquarters of Inchcape, longstanding trader in Indian Ocean seas); Shisham, which she takes to refer to the wood, a type of rosewood known as *dalbergia sissoo*, its front sometimes studded with a design of a rosewater sprinkler; and Makran, small teak chests probably made in India but found in Makran and still very much in use. Oil-funded developments in the 1970s and '80s brought large numbers of Westerners to the Arabian world, their search for local colour for their houses soon exhausting the supply of older chests. So a small section of the book is devoted to current manufacture, especially in the Gulf and Oman.

All these types are described in detail, finely illustrated with colour photographs and drawings; in fact I would commend the book for its excellent design. A glossary typifies the geographical as well as linguistic range: it is a blend of Swahili, Arabic, Farsi and Hindi words – once again the polyglot world of the Indian Ocean. The book is an extraordinary achievement, an example of great determination. "The exhilaration of pursuing the unknown into the unknown is to me irresistible," she writes. "A man's reach must exceed his grasp," – Tennyson's Ulysses would recognise a kindred spirit – "Or what's a heaven for?" Now I must get my tamarind pulp and polish my chest with Mrs Unwin's handy recipe in the Appendix.

Sarah Searight

#### REVIEWS IN THE 2008 BULLETIN

The Reviews Editor welcomes suggestions from readers of books to be considered for review in the next edition of the *Bulletin*. Please contact William Facey at: [william.facey@arabia.uk.com](mailto:william.facey@arabia.uk.com)

#### PUBLICATIONS

##### Books and articles (A–Z by author)

Reviewed titles in previous section are not repeated below.

Balfour-Paul, Jenny (2006) *Indigo*. Hardback. 272 pp; £35.00. ISBN: 1904982158. First Printed in 1998 by British Museum Press. London: Archetype Books. This splendid book has all one could wish for in the study of indigo.

Ba-Surra, Saleh Ali (ed) (2005) *Sanaa: history and cultural heritage*. Vol 2. (Sanaa). This volume arises from the fifth conference on Yemeni civilisation, a contribution by the University of Sanaa to the city's designation in 2004 as cultural capital of the Arab world. It contains the following articles: Walter Dostal, *The Suq of Sanaa*; Aviva Klein Franke, *Yemenite Jewellery and Silverwork*; Ingrid Hehmeyer, *The Concept and use of the Urban Garden in Yemen, as seen in Sanaa and Ghayl Ba Wazir*; Edward J. Keall, *Was there a Round City in Sanaa under Sasanian Rule?*; Ronald Lewcock, *Early and Medieval Sanaa: The evidence on the ground*; Hanne Schonig, *The Druggist and his Wares in the Suq of the Old City of Sanaa*.

Beech, M. and E. Glover (2005) The Environment and Economy of an Ubaid-related Settlement on Dalma Island, United Arab Emirates. *Paléorient* 31/1: 97-107.

— and M. Al-Husaini (2005) Preliminary Report on the Vertebrate Fauna from Site H3, Sabiyah: an Arabian Neolithic/Ubaid Site in Kuwait. In: H. Buitenhuis, A.M. Choyke *et al* (eds), *Archaeozoology of the Near East VI: Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on the Archaeozoology of South western Asia and Adjacent Areas*. ARC Publications 123. Groningen, Netherlands:124-138.

Bibi, F., A.B. Shabel, B.P. Kraatz, and T.A. Stidham (2006) New Fossil Ratite (*Aves: Palaeognathae*) Eggshell Discoveries from the Late Miocene Baynunah Formation of the UAE, Arabian Peninsula. *Palaeontologia Electronica* 9(1):1-13. [http://palaeo-electronica.org/2006\\_1/eggshell/issue1\\_06.htm](http://palaeo-electronica.org/2006_1/eggshell/issue1_06.htm)

- Botting, Douglas (2006) *Island of the Dragon's Blood: Discovering Arabia's forgotten isle*. 288 pp. ISBN: 978-1-904246-21-3. £12.50. Steve Savage Publishers. This is a reprint of a classic account of Socotra, first published in 1956 by the young Douglas Botting who led the first scientific expedition to Socotra since 1899.
- Brouwer, C.G. (2005) White, Silk, Striped Commerbands with Silver Heads: Textiles in the tollhouse of seventeenth-century al-Mukhá, listed by Dutch traders. In: *Khil'a: Journal for Dress and Textiles of the Islamic World*, vol. 1: 15-67.
- (2006a) Al-Mukhá: The Transoceanic Trade of a Yemeni Staple Town as Mapped by Merchants of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1614–1640: Coffee, spices & textiles. Amsterdam: D'Fluyte Rare Press. *Al-Mukhá Triptych: Studies on the Maritime Economic History of a Yemeni Emporium*, Vol. 2. 447 pp. Maps, illustrations, tables. ISBN-10: 90-800267-9-4; ISBN-13: 978-90-800267-9-7. €80.00
- (2006b) Al-Mukhá: Profile of a Yemeni seaport, as sketched by servants of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1614-1640. *Al-Mukhá Triptych: Studies on the Maritime Economic History of a Yemeni Emporium*, Vol. 1. 503 pp. Maps, illustrations, figures, tables. Second edition. Aden University Press. €15.00. (First edition, Amsterdam: D'Fluyte Rare Press, 1997).
- (forthcoming, a) Cottons for coins: Textile transactions in Ottoman- Kásimid Al-Mukhá: Observations by Dutch participants. In: *Khil'a: Journal for Dress and Textiles of the Islamic World*, Vol. 2 (in the press).
- (forthcoming, b) To Decorate their Heads: Clove cargoes in the roads of Al-Mukhá during the declining years of Ottoman rule (11th–17th Century.) registered by Dutch traders. In: *Yemen Update*, No. 48 (in the press).
- (forthcoming, c) Sweet-scented Shipments: Frankincense and other aromatics landed and loaded in Al-Mukhá (1st Quarter of the 17th Century), According to Dutch Letters and Logs. In: *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (in the press).
- vom Bruck, Gabriele (2005) *Islam, Memory, and Morality in Yemen Ruling Families in Transition*. 368 pp. 21 illustrations. ISBN: 1-4039-6664-8 & 1-4039-6665-6. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. A description of the memories, adjustments and attitudes of members of the former ruling élite of Yemen (*sayyids*) following the 1960s Civil War which destroyed their positions and privileges. Gabriele Vom Bruck is a Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, SOAS.
- Carter, R.A. (2005) The History and Prehistory of Pearling in the Persian Gulf. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 48/2: 139-209.
- Caton, Steven C. (2005) *Yemen Chronicle: An anthropology of war and mediation*. New York: Hill and Wang, 341 pp. 3 maps. ISBN-13: 978-0-8090-2725-5. ISBN-10: 0-8090-2725-9. A personal account of the author's dramatic and illuminating experiences while doing research on tribal poetry in Khawlan al-Tiyal south-east of Sanaa in 1979, and on his return in 1991. Caton is Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University. His previous books are "*Peaks of Yemen I Summon*": *Poetry as cultural practice in a North Yemeni Tribe*, University of California Press, 1990; and *Lawrence of Arabia: a Film's Anthropology*, University of California Press, 1999.
- Chaddock, David (2007) *Qatar*. Gorilla Guide (new edition). ISBN: 9781903185063. £12.50. London: Stacey International.
- Cheung, Catherine and Lyndon DeVantier (2006) Science Editor: Kay Van Damme. *Socotra: a Natural History of the Islands and their People*. Socotra 408 pp; 400 colour illustrations and maps. £39.50. ISBN-10: 9622177700. Available from the NHBS Bookstore at [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) This book provides a comprehensive review of the islands' flora, fauna and people. While documenting the geological history, land and marine biodiversity, ecology, human culture and history, the book also highlights hitherto unexplored aspects of the islands' biogeography, ecology and evolution. It also includes nine case studies illustrating local approaches to achieving conservation and sustainable development.
- Commings, David (2006) *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*. London: I.B.Tauris.
- Damluji, Salma Samar (2006) *The Architecture of the United Arab Emirates*. ISBN-13: 978-1-85964-156-9. ISBN-10: 1-85964-156-3. 325 pp. Reading: Garnet Publishing. With an introduction by Dr Damluji and Dr Frauke Heard-Bey and covering both modern and vernacular architecture in the emirates.
- El Mutwalli, Reem Tariq (2007) *Qasr Al Husn* 2nd edition. 131 pp; softback; ISBN: 9948-01-145-7. Includes booklet with 12 maps and plans. Abu Dhabi: Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage – Cultural Foundation. Provides useful documentation about the 'Old Fort' in Abu Dhabi. The Qasr al-Husn is currently the subject of extensive historical, archaeological, and architectural research by ADACH.
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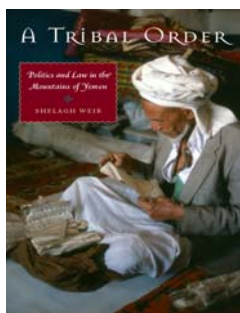
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400 pp. 60 illustrations including maps. ISBN- 13: 978-0-292-71423-6. ISBN- 10: 0-292-71423-8. Austin: University of Texas Press; London: British Museum Press.

This book describes the politico-legal system of Jabal Razih in north-west Yemen in the

context of the local environment and of four centuries of state rule. Weir is the former Curator for Middle Eastern ethnography at the British Museum, and is presently a Research Associate in the Department of Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Her previous books include *Qat in Yemen: Consumption and Social Change*, British Museum Press, 1985; and *Palestinian Costume*, British Museum Press, 1989.

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### **Journals, conference proceedings, magazines and newsletters (A–Z by title)**

*Abgadiyat* Issue No. 1, October 2006. Bibliotheca Alexandrina, POB 138, Alexandria 21526, Egyptor: secretariat@bibalex.org.

*Adumatu* ISSN: 1319-8947. Adumatu, PO Box 10071, Riyadh 11433, Saudi Arabia. Editor: Dr Abdullah Alsharekh, at adumatu@sufuh.net.sa or www.adumatu.com

*Arab Heritage in London* is a guide to London's museums, galleries and institutions holding collections from the Arab world. Some 30 galleries, museums and institutions are listed. Copies of the leaflet are available from the Arab Community Association in Brent, 116 Salmon Street, Kingsbury, London NW9 8NL. Tel: 020 8205 2190.

*Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*. Print ISSN: 0905-7196. Online ISSN: 1600-0471. This bi-annual journal serves as a forum for study in archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, and early history of countries in the Arabian peninsula. Editor: Daniel T. Potts, School of Archaeology The University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia. For further information email: soren.hemmingsen@mks.blackwellpublishing.com

May 2006 – Vol. 17, Issue 1: Gerd Weisgerber: The Mineral Wealth of Ancient Arabia and its use I: Copper mining and smelting at Feinan and Timna – comparison and evaluation of techniques, production, and strategies. An De Waele and Ernie Haerinck: Etched (Carnelian) Beads from Northeast and Southeast Arabia. L. Nehmé, Th. Arnoux, J.-Cl. Bessac, J.-P. Braun, J.-M. Dentzer, A. Kermorvant, I. Sachet and L. Tholbecq J.-B. Rigot: Mission archéologique de Madâ'in Sâlih (Arabie Saoudite): Recherches menées de 2001 à 2003 dans l'ancienne Hijra des Nabatéens (1).

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Trepanations from Oman: A case of diffusion? M.C. Ziolkowski & A.S. Al-Sharqi: Dot-in-Circle: An ethnoarchaeological approach to soft-stone vessel decoration. Ricardo Eichmann, Hanspeter Schaudig and Arnulf Hausleiter: Archaeology and Epigraphy at Tayma (Saudi Arabia). Jérémie Schiettecatte: Une Collection de Statuettes de Prisonniers au Musée National de San'a'. François Bron: Nouvelles Antiquités Qatabanites du British Museum. Parsival Delrue: Ring-Pommel Daggers from Ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE): An archaeometallurgical and typological analysis. Sabah A. Jasim: Trade Centres and Commercial Routes in the Arabian Gulf: Post-Hellenistic discoveries at Dibba, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Flemming Højlund: The Dating of the Coastal Fortress at Qala'at al-Bahrain: Sasanian or Islamic? Geoffrey King: Delmephialmas and Sircorcor: Gasparo Balbi, Dalmâ, Julfâr and a problem of transliteration.

*Arabian Wildlife Magazine* is available online and covers all facets of wildlife and conservation in the Arabian peninsula. The fully-searchable archive of past issues provides a wide range of information on the animal and plant life of the region. Visit AMW at [www.arabianwildlife.com](http://www.arabianwildlife.com).

*Atlat: Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology* ISSN 13198351. Ministry of Education, PO Box 3734, Riyadh 11481. ISSN 02564009

*Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia* (ABBA). The Arabian Ornithological Bibliography is updated annually (see also entry for *Phoenix*, below). Available from Mike Jennings, Tel / Fax : 01487 841733. Email: [arabian.birds@dial.pipex.com](mailto:arabian.birds@dial.pipex.com) Web: <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/arabian.birds/>

*British-Yemeni Society Journal* (ISSN: 1356-0229). This small journal contains articles primarily about activities and research of British scholars and travellers. The major articles are referenced in *Index Yemenicus*. For a subscription, contact the British-Yemeni Society, c/o Rebecca Johnson, Honorary Secretary, 2 Lisgar Terrace, London W14 8SJ. Tel: 020 7603 8895. Web: [www.al-bab.com/bys](http://www.al-bab.com/bys)

*Current World Archaeology* is published 6 times a year for a subscription of £20 (UK) for 6 issues. Subscriptions to: CWA, Barley Mow Centre, 10 Barley Mow Passage, London W4 4PH. Tel: 08456 447707. Email: [cwa@archaeology.co.uk](mailto:cwa@archaeology.co.uk). Website: [www.archaeology.co.uk](http://www.archaeology.co.uk)

*Fauna of Arabia Vol. 2, 2006*. This issue contains 20 papers, 2 general papers, 17 on invertebrates, one on vertebrates (a major study of the behavioural ecology of Ruppell's fox at the Mahazat as Said reserve in west central Saudi Arabia). See the website: [www.libri.ch/agencyh/services/faunaofarabia.htm](http://www.libri.ch/agencyh/services/faunaofarabia.htm).

*Fauna of Saudi Arabia* is an annual publication. For an index of previous contributions contact: Karger Libri AAG. PO Box, CH-4009 Basel, Switzerland.

*International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES) A quarterly journal published by Cambridge University Press under the auspices of the Middle East Association of North America. MESA members receive the journal as a benefit of their membership. Subscriptions are also available through Cambridge University Press, visit: [www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

*Journal of Oman Studies* is published by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, Sultanate of Oman, POB 668, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. ISSN: 0378 8180. JOS is R.O. 5. P&P UK, Europe and outside the Arab world is R.O. 5. Send a BANK DRAFT in Omani Rials to Family Bookshop, PO Box 376, Ruwi code 112, Oman. Email: [fambooks@omantel.net.om](mailto:fambooks@omantel.net.om)

*Journal of the Saudi Arabian Natural History Society*, available from the Society SANHS, c/o Jeddah Prep and Grammar School, PO Box 6316, Jeddah 21412. Fax + 966 2 6392253

*Lammergeier* is the newsletter of the Yemen Ornithological Society. Further information can be obtained from David Stanton, POB 2002, Sanaa, Yemen. Tel: 967-1-248-309 Fax: 967-1-234-438. Email: [david.s@netsqi.com](mailto:david.s@netsqi.com).

*Levant: The Journal of the Council for British Research in the Levant*. ISSN: 0075-8914. The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. [www.cbri.org.uk](http://www.cbri.org.uk)

*Middle East in London* is produced ten times a year by the London Middle East Institute (LMEI). It carries articles of interest to both the Middle East and London, as well as listing Middle East events (lectures and exhibitions) in London and further afield. Free to affiliates of the LMEI (affiliation: £200 for institutions; £30 for individuals and £15 for students p.a.). Details from: The LMEI, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG. Tel: 020 7898 4330. Fax: 020 7898 4329, Email: [lmei@soas.ac.uk](mailto:lmei@soas.ac.uk)

*Paléorient* is a multidisciplinary six-monthly CNRS journal with an international audience, devoted to a number of aspects of the prehistory and protohistory of south-western Asia, including Arabia. CNRS Editions, 15 rue Malebranche, F-75005 Paris. Further information from Genevieve Dollfus ([dollfus@mae.u-paris10.fr](mailto:dollfus@mae.u-paris10.fr)). There is now a good (English and French) website <http://web.mae.u-paris10.fr/>



*Phoenix* is the project newsletter for the ABBA Project (the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia*). It contains information about new Arabian bird sightings and publications. Publication of the Atlas has been postulated as end of 2008. The database continues to expand and new breeding birds are still being found regularly in Arabia, according to ABBA coordinator, Michael Jennings. The latest issue of *Phoenix* (Issue 23, No. 1) confirms the breeding presence of the spotted crane in Kuwait, for example, and the yellow-crowned bishop (an exotic) in Abu Dhabi. Reports of breeding birds in Arabia and correspondence on the ABBA Project, and the *Phoenix*, can be sent to: M. Jennings at: [arabianbirds@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:arabianbirds@dsl.pipex.com)

Subscriptions to *Phoenix* from: Michael Jennings, Coordinator ABBA, Warners Farm House, Warners Drove, Somersham, Cambridgeshire PE28 3WD. Tel / Fax : 01487 841733. Email: [arabian.birds@dial.pipex.com](mailto:arabian.birds@dial.pipex.com) Web: <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/arabian.birds/>

*Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* Vol. 36 *Papers from the thirty-ninth meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies, held in London, July 2005* edited by Rob Carter and St John Simpson. ISBN 190573901X. £45.00. 299 pages; numerous figures, plans, maps, drawings and photographs.

Part One: A Celebration of A.F.L. Beeston (1911-1995): Michael Macdonald: Introductory Remarks. Geert Jan van Gelder: An Experiment with Beeston, Labīd, and BaʿIlār on Translating Classical Arabic Verse. James E. Montgomery: Beeston and the Singing-Girls. Clive Holes: The Arabic Dialects of Arabia. Janet Watson, Bonnie Glover Stalls, Khalid al-Razihi and Shelagh Weir: The Language of Jabal Rāziḥ: Arabic or something else? Christian Robin: L'institution Monarchique en Arabie du Sud Antique: Les contributions fondatrices d'A.F.L. Beeston réexaminées à la lumière des découvertes les plus récentes. Mohammed Maraqtan: Legal documents recently discovered by the AFSM at MaʿHram Bilqīs, near Mārib, Yemen. Serguei A. Frantsouzzoff: A Minaic Inscription on the Pedestal of an Ibex Figurine from the British Museum. Alessandra Avanzini: Ancient South Arabian Anthroponomastics: Historical remarks. Michael J. Zwettler: Binding on the Crown. Manfred Kropp: Burden and Succession: A proposed Aramaicism in the inscription of Namāra, or the diadochs of the Arabs.

Part Two: Additional New Research on Arabia. Søren Fredslund Andersen and Mustafa Ibrahim Salman: The Tylos Burials in Bahrain. Djamel Boussa: A Future to the Past: The case of Fareej Al-Bastakia in Dubai, UAE. Paolo M. Costa: Jank Archaeological Project: A preliminary report. Rémy Crassard, Joy McCriston, Eric Ochse, Kabd Al-

Aziz Bin Kaqil, Julien Espagne and Mohammad Sinnah: Manayzah, Early to Mid-Holocene occupations in Wādī Canā (JāPramawt, Yemen). Roland de Beauclair, Sabah A. Jasim and Hans-Peter Uerpmann: New Results on the Neolithic Jewellery from Al-Buhais 18, UAE. Ronald W. Hawker: Tribe, House Style and the Town Layout of Jazirat al-Hamra, Ras al-Khaimah, UAE. Moawiyah Ibrahim: Report on the 2005 AFSM Excavations in the Ovoid Precinct at MaʿHram Bilqīs/Mārib: Preliminary report. Mutsuo Kawatoko and Risa Tokunaga: Arabic Rock Inscriptions of South Sinai. M. Mouton, A. Benoist, J. Schiettecatte, M. Arbach and V. Bernard: Makaynūn, a South Arabian Site in the JāPramawt. Adrian Parker, Caroline Davies and Tony Wilkinson: The Early to Mid-Holocene Moist Period in Arabia: Some recent evidence from lacustrine sequences in eastern and south-western Arabia. T. Steimer-Herbet, G. Davtian and F. Braemer: Pastoralists' Tombs and Settlement Patterns in Wādī WashKah during the Bronze Age (JāPramawt, Yemen). Yosef Tobi: The Cubayrī Collection in the Harvard Peabody Museum and Harvard Semitic Museum. Donatella Usai: A Fourth-Millennium BC Oman Site and its Context: Wadi Shab-GAS1. Eric Vallet: Yemeni "Oceanic Policy" at the End of the Thirteenth Century.

*Tribulus*, Journal of the Emirates Natural History Group, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, UAE. ISSN: 1019-6919. Vol. 16.1 (Spring/Summer 2006): G.R. Feulner: Rainfall and climate records from Sharjah Airport: Historical data for the study of recent climate periodicity in the UAE. P. Hellyer & S. Aspinall: An archaeological and ecological curiosity – *Terebralia palustris* (Linnaeus, 1767) in the north-east of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. H. Kallweit: A new type of tool from Umm al-Zamul Neolithic sites, United Arab Emirates. S. Javed, S.B. Khan, R. Al Mansouri and E.A. Al Hosani: Satellite tracking of Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus* from the United Arab Emirates. M.P.T. Gillett: *Lindenbergia indica* (Scrophulariaceae) a newly-recorded foodplant for the Blue Pansy butterfly (*Junonia orithya* here) in Arabia (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae). S. Aspinall: Soldier's Orchid *Zeuxine strateumatice* marches on.

*Sandgrouse*. Publication of the Ornithological Society of the Middle East. Available c/o The Lodge, Sandy Lane, Bedfordshire. England. [www.osme.org](http://www.osme.org)

*Yemen Update - Bulletin of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies* 48, 2006. Details on website <http://www.aiys.org/>

*Who's who in Saudi Arabia* Sydney, Australia: Asia Pacific InfoServ Pty Ltd, 2006. Book & CD combined edition \$US475.00 incl. delivery).

## OBITUARIES

### Ralph Daly OBE 1924 – 2006



Photograph © Andrew Spalton

Ralph Daly died on 24 September 2006 after a long battle with cancer and was buried in Oman where he had lived for the last 37 years. Ralph Hinshelwood Daly, the son of an army officer was born in Glasgow in January 1924 and educated at Sherborne. He was commissioned into the Welsh Guards in 1944 and fought in

Europe. On release from the army in 1947, he joined the Sudan Political Service until the eve of independence when he transferred to the Colonial Service. In 1955 Ralph was posted to the Eastern Aden Protectorate and later became a senior political adviser in the Western Aden Protectorate. On retirement from the Colonial Service in October 1967, shortly before South Arabia achieved independence, he was appointed OBE.

In 1969 Ralph found new employment with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) at a time when the Company needed Arabic linguists to work with the tribes in new areas of oil exploration. Ralph had attended a course at the Middle East Centre of Arabic Studies in Lebanon and with his previous experience as a political officer in Sudan and Yemen was ideally suited for this work. At the time few westerners travelled into the interior of Oman, but Ralph's work gave him the unique opportunity to study the flora and fauna of the desert. In 1971 he reported seeing wild oryx close to the Yemen border. This was probably the last time they were seen in the wild, having been decimated by hunting parties from the neighbouring states.

In 1974 Ralph left PDO and was appointed the first Adviser for the Conservation of the Environment in the Diwan of the Royal Court in the recently formed government of Sultan Qaboos Bin Said. In this capacity he was asked by the Sultan to restore the Arabian oryx to Oman. In 1962, three oryx had been captured in the Empty Quarter and transported to Phoenix Zoo in Arizona as part of a breeding programme to save the oryx from extinction. The first of the descendants of these and other captive animals were brought to Oman in 1979 and released into the wild in 1982. By 1996 the herd numbered some 450 oryx free to roam over the desert of central Oman (*Jiddat al-Harasis*), later

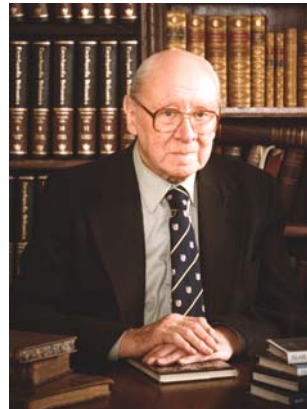
listed by Unesco World Natural Heritage as the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary. In spite of employing the local tribesmen as wardens, the numbers of oryx were again depleted by poachers but at least the Arabian oryx has been saved from extinction.

For this achievement and many other environmental activities that included his work with the WWF, The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Flora and Fauna Preservation Society (FFI), Ralph was awarded the Order of Oman by Sultan Qaboos in 1980. He also received the Order of the Golden Ark in 1985 and was similarly honoured by the Royal Geographical Society and by Durham University with an honorary degree.

Ralph retired in 2002 but remained a committed conservationist, who was an inspiration and support to many young academics and researchers studying the biodiversity of Oman. He will be remembered by those who knew him as a professional colleague, delightful travelling companion and engaging personality. Both he and Elizabeth were always most hospitable and made a point of receiving visitors in their Oman home. It was a joy to be entertained by them with a never ending feast of interesting anecdotes and good humour.

Julian Paxton

### Professor W. Montgomery Watt 1909 – 2006



W. Montgomery Watt, who in his long lifetime was probably the foremost non-Muslim interpreter of Islam in the West, was an enormously influential scholar in the field of Islamic studies and a much-revered name for many Muslims all over the world.

Born in Ceres, Fife, in 1909, William Montgomery Watt, like many other famous Scots, was a son of the manse. His father died while he was still a baby and he was brought up, as an only child, by his mother, uncle and aunt in Edinburgh. Educated at George Watson's College, he then studied at the universities of Edinburgh, Jena and Oxford.

Although he specialised initially in philosophy and theology, he became interested in Islam through lengthy conversations with an Indian lodger who was of the Ahmadi persuasion. His serious study of Arabic began with Richard Bell, the Edinburgh Orientalist. He was ordained in the Episcopalian Church in 1939. His subsequent appointment as chaplain to the Bishop of Jerusalem took his interest

in Islam to a new level. Soon after he returned to Scotland, he was appointed Lecturer in Arabic at Edinburgh in 1946; there he spent nearly all his long and fruitful career. He was awarded a personal chair in 1964 and he retired in 1979.

Unlike many famous Scots, Watt didn't seek his fortune south of the border, but settled in a charming house in Dalkeith, just outside Edinburgh, in 1947. There he and his wife, Jean (née Donaldson), whom he had married in 1943, enjoyed a long and happy life. As well as his academic duties, Watt continued as a serving minister of the Scottish Episcopal Church for many years until infirmity confined him to his home. He remained a member of the ecumenical Iona Community from 1960.

Watt's vast scholarly output – he wrote 30 books and scores of articles – has made his name renowned in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as in the West. He was a towering figure in the history of Edinburgh University Press, establishing the highly successful Islamic Surveys series in 1962 to bring the subject to a wider readership, and writing seven books for that press, all of which are still in print and are amongst its bestsellers. His other books have been translated into a vast array of other languages.

His early books on Islam concentrate primarily on the career of the Prophet Muhammad. They are based on a close analysis of the original Arabic sources and the two works *Muhammad at Mecca* (1953) and, especially, *Muhammad at Medina* (1956) remain classic studies. *Freewill and Predestination in Early Islam* – the subject of his PhD – was published in 1948 and reveals an interest in Islamic theology which stayed with him all his life. He translated the spiritual 'autobiography' of the great medieval Muslim scholar Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (*The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali*, 1953) and followed that with an excellent study of al-Ghazali entitled *Muslim Intellectual* (1963). Perhaps his finest achievement in the field of Islamic theology was his magisterial *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (1973).

For these works on theology Watt relied not just on primary Arabic sources but, because of his excellent reading knowledge of German, he could draw on the great pioneering traditions of 19th-century German scholarship on Islam. Especially in his later years Watt's writing concentrated on an abiding concern of his – dialogue between Christians and Muslims – and in this field he published, for example, *Muslim-Christian Encounters: perceptions and misperceptions* (1991). He also published steadily on Christian topics and his own faith gave a spiritual dimension not just to his discussion of Christianity but also to what he said about Islam.

Watt was awarded many academic honours; he held visiting professorships at the University of Toronto, the Collège de France, and Georgetown University, and received the American Giorgio Levi

Della Vida Medal and was, as its first recipient, the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies award for outstanding scholarship.

Long before the recent wave of Islamophobia in the West, Watt advocated dialogue with Muslims, not demonisation of them. He doubted the appropriateness of conversion and felt that those of all faiths should collaborate in friendship to stem the tide of materialism and secularisation. Unlike certain Orientalist scholars of previous generations, Watt was indeed convinced that the Koran was divinely inspired and that Muhammad received true religious experiences directly from God. Watt roundly condemned those in the West who sought to perpetuate scurrilous medieval misconceptions about the Prophet of Islam.

He was not afraid to express rather radical theological opinions – controversial ones in some Christian ecclesiastical circles. He often pondered on the question of what influence his study of Islam had exerted on him in his own Christian faith. As a direct result, he came to argue that the Islamic emphasis on the uncompromising oneness of God had caused him to reconsider the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which is vigorously attacked in the Koran as undermining true monotheism.

Influenced by Islam, with its 99 names of God, each expressing special attributes of God, Watt returned to the Latin word 'persona' – which meant a 'face' or 'mask', and not 'individual', as it now means in English – and he formulated the view that a truer interpretation of the Trinity would not signify that God comprises three individuals. For him, the Trinity represents three different "faces" of the one and the same God.

Always a shy man, he enjoyed the simple life with his family, either in Dalkeith or in his summer home in Crail on the Fife coast, walking, gardening, stamp-collecting, and latterly, in extreme old age, he derived great pleasure from doing several crosswords a day.

Carole Hillenbrand  
University of Edinburgh

#### **Rosemarie Said Zahlan 1937 – 2006**



With the premature death of Rosemarie Said Zahlan in May 2006, after a long and stoical struggle against cancer, we lost a leading historian of the Arab Gulf who still had much to give to her field. Rosemarie spent a privileged childhood in Cairo, in a Palestinian family who

encouraged their children's educational and professional aspirations. She obtained her BA at Bryn Mawr College in the USA, and her MA at the American University of Beirut (AUB). She then went to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London where she obtained her PhD in modern Near Eastern History in 1968 with a dissertation on a little-known eighteenth century adventurer: *George Baldwin and British Interest in Egypt 1775–1798* (condensed in P. and J. Starkey (eds), *Travellers in Egypt*, London: I.B.Tauris, 1998). This work led her to deeper explorations of super-power rivalry and the establishment of strategic and commercial routes to India in the eighteenth century.

Rosemarie began to research more recent Gulf history soon after the 1967 Public Records Act which reduced the 75-year rule to 30 years, and first made available British government records for the twentieth century. Ploughing through thousands of files in the India Office and the PRO, she embarked on reconstructing the social, economic and political history of the Gulf States. An important early discovery was of the 1938 Reform Movement in Dubai (on which she published in *al-Abhath*, 1970). This aimed for proper harbour management, and an equitable taxation system which would disallow the ruler's monopolistic entitlement, and was the first such movement in the Arab world. Later she researched similar, simultaneous movements in Bahrain and Kuwait, and elucidated connections between these events and those in Palestine in 'The Gulf States and the Palestine problem, 1936–48' (in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 1981).

In the late 1970s, Rosemarie published comprehensive histories of the UAE and Qatar which were the first to document the dynamics of these societies in the context of British hegemony. These books, notable for their clear style, provide a systematic analysis of the early oil concessions, the emergence of ruling families, boundary disputes and constitutional development. Her 1989 book, *The Making of the Arab Gulf States*, was based on her study of contemporary events, and interviews with leading regional figures, as well as on archival material. In the Foreword to the revised and updated edition of this work, published in 1998, Roger Owen wrote: 'I have used this book as a teaching aid in all my Middle East politics courses for the last ten years in both Oxford and Harvard... There is, quite simply, no other short book which combines the same wealth of history, detail and insight.' In this work, as well as in many articles, she discussed state formation, the interaction of the Gulf states with Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia, and British-American rivalry in the region (on which she had planned to write another book). At the time of her death, she had nearly completed a history of the links between events in the Gulf and Palestine throughout the twentieth century, which is being prepared for publication.

Rosemarie taught for periods at the AUB and the Lebanese American University, was appointed an Honorary Fellow of the Centre for Arab Gulf Studies at Exeter University in 1996, and was regularly invited to brief and inform those professionally involved with the Gulf states. She also acted as an external examiner for PhD students at SOAS and the University of Durham, and as consultant to the Qatar Historical Committee and the Kuwait National Museum. Despite her knowledge and accomplishments, however, she never held a long-term university position, and spent most of her life as a free-lance researcher – impelled by intellectual fascination with her subjects of study rather than the desire for institutional advancement. She nevertheless felt part of the international community of scholars striving to understand and explain the Middle East, and maintained contact with colleagues throughout the world, many of whom enjoyed her generous hospitality in London. All of us will miss her lively mind, warm friendship and constant encouragement.

Rosemarie leaves her husband and greatest supporter, Tony Zahlan, a stepdaughter, Amal, and three sisters, Grace, Joyce and Jean. Her brother, Edward Said, died in 2003.

#### Publications

Rosemarie published many articles and reviews which were published in a wide range of specialist journals. The following are the books she authored:

*The Origins of the United Arab Emirates: a Political and Social History of the Trucial States.* London: Macmillan. 1978.

*Technology Transfer and Change in the Arab World* (ed. With A.B.Zahlan). Oxford: Pergamon Press 1978.

*The Creation of Qatar.* London: Croom Helm, 1979 (reprinted 1986).

*The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.* London and Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989 (revised and updated, London: Ithaca Press, 1999).

*Palestine and the Gulf: One Century of Linkages* (in preparation).

Shelagh Weir



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