

THE IASA BULLETIN



The Latest News and Research in the Arabian Peninsula



IASA
International Association
for the Study of Arabia
الرابطة الدولية لدراسة الجزيرة العربية

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(IASA)

formerly the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia

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The IASA Bulletin is an e-publication for members of the IASA. It is published twice a year, in Spring and Autumn. The Bulletin depends on the good will of IASA members and correspondents to provide contributions. News, items of general interest, details of completed postgraduate research, forthcoming conferences, meetings and special events are welcome.

Please email: bulletin@theiasa.com

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors of the articles. They do not purport

to reflect the opinions or views of the IASA or its members.

Membership

Membership details are available from the IASA website <https://iasarabia.org>. For membership renewals contact William Deadman, IASA Membership Secretary, Department of Archaeology, Durham University, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE, or email: membership@theiasa.com

For any enquiries:

contact@theiasa.com

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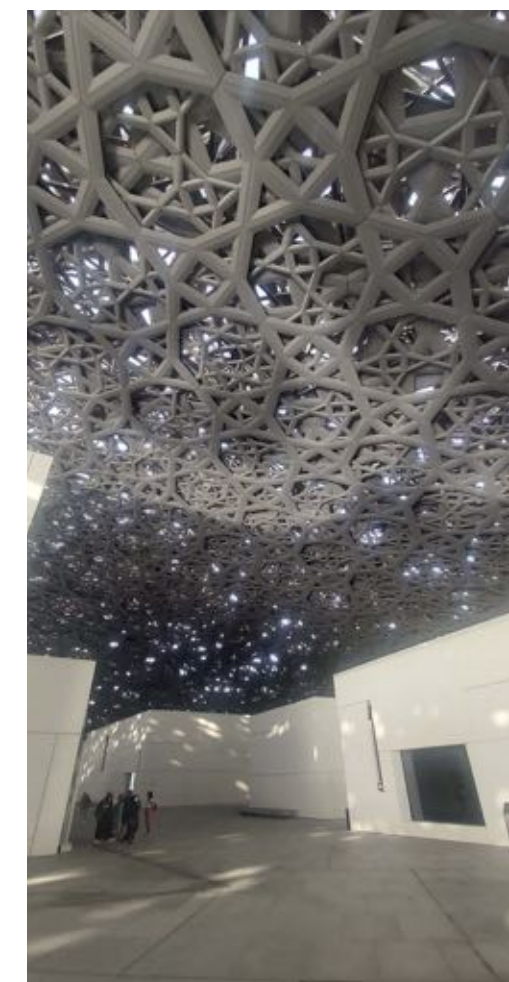
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WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

IASA, like many other organisations, has been learning how best to operate in a world changed by Covid. It was exciting to organise with our partners the 55th Seminar for Arabian Studies in Berlin as a hybrid event with many attendees in person and even more by Zoom, making it one of the largest seminars we have held. We owe enormous thanks to the Seminar Committee, chaired by Julian Jansen van Rensburg, Derek Kennet, Kate Ayers-Kennet (the Seminar Secretary) and to our German hosts. I want to thank on behalf of IASA Arnulf Hausleiter and his team for the excellence of their organisation and the warmth of their hospitality. Please see Julian's report in this Bulletin for more details.

Preparations are already under way for the next Seminar, which will be held in Aarhus in Denmark in early August 2023. We are even starting preliminary discussions for the 2024 Seminar in Paris. Several institutions in Europe and the Arabian Peninsula have expressed an interest in hosting future Seminars. What the seminars in Leiden, Cordoba and Berlin have shown is that the new peripatetic model works. In the process IASA is becoming more international and we will need to consider the implications for our structure, including the committee of trustees. The Seminar has long been and will remain our most important activity, and Zoom, for all its frustrations, does mean that hybrid or



Interior of the Louvre Abu Dhabi (c) Amy Crossman. (see p 19)

virtual lectures and events are here to stay – and for IASA the advent of Zoom and similar platforms has been of great benefit, not least in making lectures and events open to a widening international membership and audience.

IASA also wants to do more to encourage research and researchers on the Arabian Peninsula – and we launched a Research Grant Fund earlier this year. I want to thank our Patron Valeria Piacentini for another donation. Her generosity to IASA and support for future research have been outstanding – as has her advice to IASA. She has been instrumental in enabling us to make the awards. I also wanted to thank other donors to the fund. It was disappointing that in 2022 there were no applications for the first time caused, we think, by the small sum we were able to make available this year. However, with the new donations and a transfer from our reserves we will be able to make available substantially more in 2023. Deadlines for applications are 31 May 2023 and details of how to apply are on our website at [Grants | IASA \(iasarabia.org\)](https://iasarabia.org).

For the last two years we have been investing in Outreach to try to increase awareness of IASA, raise our profile and attract more members. Thanks to the efforts of Carolyn Perry and Sarah Campbell (and Kate Ayers-Kennet as Seminar Secretary) we continue to attract new followers on social media, and we increase membership steadily – though

we know that will be more challenging in the next year or so given the extremely gloomy economic outlook.

Our Facebook and Twitter accounts can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/IASArabia/> and The IASA (@IASArabia). We are also on Instagram (theiasarabia), LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-international-association-for-the-study-of-arabia/>) and YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS_9Wc-v_oOKuJGQZ92IKDA). Videos of our lectures are now available on YouTube.

We particularly want to build up our international membership so that IASA continues to meet the objectives of changing the name in 2019 from the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia. The peripatetic nature of the Seminar does now mean that most seminars will be held outside the UK and the Seminar Committee already has a significant number of international members. We would like to recruit more Trustees from outside the UK and I would be delighted to hear from any members or supporters who might be interested in joining our committee. If you are interested or would like to more about the responsibilities of being a trustee, please write to me at contact@theiasa.com.

Our AGM is likely to take place before this Bulletin is published. Legally, it covers the year 2021 but we also try to look at the current and future situation. Apart from the Seminar we have organised five lectures since the previous AGM and another (by Professor High Kennedy on Al Baladhuri, the historian of the Muslim conquests) will be delivered before the AGM. We have also launched the new website which is a major improvement on the previous one and much easier to use. It is a key part of our Outreach. We plan to put more information on it – mostly information on sources of funding for research not just in the UK but also internationally. Some of this was previously published in the Bulletin but as information changes little from year to year it seems more appropriate for it to be on the website. If you have comments for improvement of the website or its future development, please do send them to outreach@theiasa.com.

Noel Brehony
Chair

International Association for the Study of Arabia
contact@theiasa.com

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I have been with IASA as Outreach consultant for a year and it has been a very enjoyable experience – I've loved seeing what trustees and members are up to, following updates from the Seminar in Berlin, and putting together the Bulletins.

For this edition we have a slightly different line-up, with fewer regional reports (of which we had many in Spring) and more unusual offerings with a link to the Arabian Peninsula region.

From Jerzy Wierzbicki we have Abandoned Homes of Oman – a visual testament to something that many of us who have been lucky enough to work and travel in the region in recent decades will have seen in some form or another, as traditional buildings give way to the march of modernisation, in whatever form. But on the other hand, local designers are looking to traditional buildings and building technologies to address the pressing issues of the modern world – as shown in Marsya K. Ariffin Abdulghani and Salman Ghanem S A Al-Sulaiti's research on traditional houses of Qatar as a more eco-friendly cooling solution. At a time where the march to a tipping point on our heating planet is accelerated on by the very air-conditioning units that people are using to try and keep cool. We also hear from our own Amy Crossman, on the important work of museum preservation.

In this issue we also have our Book Reviews section, as well as a list of new publications on Arabia, and we remember friends lost in this past year.

As ever, if you have work that you would like to share with the IASA membership – be it something you think should be highlighted on twitter or LinkedIn, an article you would like to submit for inclusion in the Bulletin, or an idea for a lecture or a book review – please get in touch! I am also particularly keen to see photos from your research and travel in the Arabian Peninsula, and to share these with the membership through our Instagram, so do share these with me if you are happy to.

I am sorry to say this will be my last Bulletin, for now at least, as I am going back to postgraduate study, but I hope to keep in touch and to cross paths with you all again.

Sarah Campbell

outreach@theiasa.com



IASA NEWS

TRUSTEE UPDATES

Trustee biographies may be found on our website. Here we feature updates from two of our Trustees.

Research Update from Prof Clive Holes

I recently had an article published in a Festschrift (Libellules arabes, sémitiques, italiennes, berbères) in honour of Prof Jérôme Lentin, of INALCO, Paris. My article is entitled 'Gulf dialect poetry: the Iraqi connection' and discusses the possibility that certain genres of modern Arabic dialect poetry have their ultimate origins in the literary cultures of pre-Islamic Iraq.

I am continuing to work on an annotated and cross-referenced Glossary of the Arabic Dialects of Northern Oman, which is to be published on an Open Access platform, Cambridge Studies in Semitic Languages and Cultures, run by the University of Cambridge Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. The work is based entirely on fieldwork conducted in Oman (excluding the southern province of Dhofar) over many years, going back to the mid-1980s when I was living and working in the Sultanate. It is based on the testimony of around 50 speakers from all over Northern Oman recorded in situ. The glossary covers such specialised topics as palm cultivation, farming, irrigation systems and techniques, fishing, long-distance maritime trading with India and East Africa, camel rearing, weaving, building practices, the so-called Jabal War of the 1950s (based on eye-witness accounts), inter-tribal fighting (the so-called hurūbāt), traditional medicine, traditional education, as well as the common core of the Omani Arabic dialects as still spoken by the older generations of Omanis. When complete (in 2023-24) it is expected to be around 500 pages in length. It will form a companion work to my three-volume series Dialect, Culture and Society in Eastern Arabia published by Brill (2001-16) and based on the eastern Arabian dialects of Bahrain.

An Update from Michael Macdonald

I had two long delayed articles appear in print in 2022:

'The oral and the written in the religions of ancient North Arabia', in F.M. Donner & R. Hasselbach-Andee (eds) *Scripts and Scripture. Writing and religion in Arabia circa 500–700 CE. (Late Antique and Medieval Islamic Near East, 3)*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, pp. 17–41, 251–278 (bibliography).

'The desert and its peoples' and 'The Arabs' in T. Kaizer (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic and Roman New East*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, pp. 327–333 and 397–401 respectively.

Also, expected to appear before the end of 2022 are:

M.C.A. Macdonald and Mohammed Al-Najem, *Taymā' III. Catalogue of the Inscriptions in the Taymā' Museum and*

other collections, with contributions by F. Imbert, J. Norris & P. Stein. Oxford: Archaeopress.

M.C.A. Macdonald and C.J. Robin, 'The Arabs and Warfare before the 7th century CE.' In K. Raaflaub & B. Meissner (eds), *The Cambridge History of War, volume I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press is also expected to appear before the end of 2022.

Finally, I am at present completing a 'A preliminary catalogue of stone vessels with Safaitic, Hismaic, and Nabataean inscriptions' which I hope will be published in 2023.

It may also be of interest that my lecture 'The curious history of written Arabic' put on Youtube in June 2020 has now had over 12,000 views.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2IWYfm3510>.

IASA LECTURES

The IASA holds at least three online events per academic year, in addition to the Annual Beatrice de Cardi Lecture, named in honour of our late President, usually held in the Summer following the AGM, although in 2022 we will be holding this in the Autumn.

If you are a likeminded organisation and would like to hold a joint event please contact us via bulletin@theiasa.com. Members with suggestions for events are also very welcome to forward them.

Nomads and connectivity in the Gulf in the early Islamic period: an archaeological assessment

IASA lecture by José C. Carvajal López, May 24, 2022.

In this lecture José C. Carvajal López explored the link between the nomadic communities in the Arabian/Persian Gulf in the early Islamic period and the sudden outburst of connectivity of the region with the Indian Ocean. As is well known, this expansion led to the establishment of direct routes between Baghdad and Basra in the Gulf and Guangzhou and Yangzhou in China. But did the nomads have a role in this? The analysis of this issue requires to question the current paradigm of understanding of Indian Ocean Trade, which is based on the assumption that the expansion of connectivity was made possible under the sponsorship of states. This is what López has called the top-to-bottom paradigm of trade expansion. Against this perspective, he proposed to consider a bottom-to-top paradigm that sees the early Islamic connectivity of the Indian Ocean in a great part as the result of the engagement of nomads with the expansion of Islam.

A careful consideration of the available information of the Indian Ocean Trade of this period (c. 600-1000 CE) shows that state sponsorship of the expansion is unlikely. Only three states in the period were in a position to fund this enterprise: the Sassanians, the Tang and the early Caliphs. The sponsorship of navigation routes of the Sassanians never went beyond Sri Lanka (even if land connections did reach China). The Tang did show interest in tightening control of sea trade in the China Sea, but there is no evidence that they organised expeditions – much less direct routes of navigation – between the East and the West. The usual suspects of the organisation of the Indian Ocean Trade routes are the Abbasid Caliphs, and indeed the foundation of Baghdad in 762 is considered their most conspicuous move to set a centre of control of this lucrative sea trade. However, the dates that we know about the early Islamic expansion in the Indian Ocean do not support the idea that the Abbasids, or indeed any of the previous Islamic dynasties – the Rashidun and the Umayyads – were behind it.

The main instrument that early Islamic states had to control trade was the establishment of towns and markets within them. The foundation of Baghdad in 762 is the most famous example, but other towns founded in the Gulf were also fundamental for the connection with the Indian Ocean. Basra, originally founded in 637 as a *miṣr*, a military camp, became Baghdad's sea port in the 8th century. Sohar, in Oman, was probably a Sassanian outpost that became a very important enclave in the late 7th and early 8th centuries. The most famous emporium after Baghdad was, however, Siraf, on the Persian coast, founded around the late 8th and early 9th centuries. And beyond these towns there was a crowd of smaller places (villages and minor towns) where nomads and settled inhabitants of the Gulf mixed and had access to the products of trade (perhaps through periodic markets). An example of these places is Murwab, in Qatar, dated between the 9th and the 10th centuries, although earlier examples have been detected all over the Gulf: Jumeriah in Dubai, Hulaylah in Ras al-Khaimah, Muharraq in Bahrain, etc. All this suggests that a network for reception and distribution of products from the Indian Ocean Trade had been created in the Gulf by the 8th and 9th centuries. This network was indeed solidly based in towns (like Siraf, Sohar and, especially, Baghdad) and could be easily controlled by agents of the state. But at the same time, this network seems to have developed quite late in comparison with the first evidences of connectivity noted on the other side of the Indian Ocean.

We have solid evidence of the presence of traders from the Gulf in the China Sea by the mid-7th century and onwards. Persian ships (which by this time were probably Islamic) are mentioned in chronicles. The presence of colonies of merchants is acknowledged on the island of Hainan, in Guangzhou and in Yangzhou in the mid-8th century. The itineraries documenting the travel between Guangzhou and Baghdad are only a bit later, from the late 8th to the early 9th centuries. The presence of Gulf merchants in the Far East is

therefore well acknowledged before the foundation of some of the major towns, like Baghdad and Siraf, and probably before the reorientation of other earlier towns like Basra and Sohar to become ports of trade. If the towns of the Gulf were not engaged in commerce so early, then it is unlikely that the Caliphate was behind the expansion. But in that case, who were the merchants connecting the Gulf with the Far East?

Dr López's proposal consists of a bottom-to-top paradigm. The development of the connectivity between the Gulf and China required two main elements: the availability of capital and the capacity to move between regions and borders. The situation of the nomadic communities of the Gulf in this particular period of history made them rich in both. The expansion of the Muslims over the Byzantine and the Sassanian empires in the early Islamic period made capital widely available to the nomads that took part in the military campaigns or that benefitted from establishing trade links with distant places (capital was also available to the Christian monasteries of the Gulf, but that is a story for further research). Movement was part of the nomadic lifestyle in any case, but the conquests opened new routes and links that these communities were perfectly ready to exploit. López's own excavations in the site of Yughbi, in the desert of Qatar, demonstrated the flowering lifestyle of a nomadic community that had been frequenting the area from at least the late Sassanian period (550s) and at some point in the Umayyad period (660–750) was secured enough to become sedentary or semi-sedentary. The material culture of the Umayyad phase indicated that this was an extremely well-connected community, with links to Iraq, Iran, different parts of Arabia and even India. In Qatar, where the desert landscape is less affected by urban growth than in other Gulf countries, surveys have revealed a dense cloud of early Islamic sites which at first glance show the same characteristics as Yughbi: early Islamic dates and well-connected sets of material culture. If research progresses and shows that a large number of small nomadic communities like Yughbi existed before the foundation of places like Baghdad, Siraf or Murwab (which lies only three kilometres east of Yughbi), then the role of the nomads in the organisation of the Indian Ocean Trade needs to be considered.

The bottom-to-top paradigm of the organisation of Indian Ocean Trade requires further clarification and study. As noted by colleagues in the question session after the lecture, the dating of the towns and nodes in the Gulf network needs to be refined and consideration needs to be given to the trade infrastructure in the pre-Islamic period. The idea, however, remains. The role of the nomadic communities, in combination with other circumstances, no doubt, is a relevant factor in the understanding of that unique outburst of connectivity that led to the direct connection between the Gulf and the China sea in the early Islamic period.

This lecture is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jcG1dgaPPjw>

Charles Huber: France's Greatest Arabian Explorer

The French-Alsatian geographer Charles Huber (1847–84) was the subject of William Facey's lecture on 22 June 2022, given to coincide with the publication of his new book, *Charles Huber: France's Greatest Arabian Explorer* (Arabian Publishing).



Charles Huber poses in his Arab clothes, in a studio photograph taken in Strasbourg by Gerschel Frères in 1882 or early 1883. By kind permission of the Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Strasbourg.

Huber achieved fame as one of the 19th century's great Arabian explorer-travellers, alongside Burckhardt, Burton, Guarmani, Palgrave and Doughty. In fact, his meticulous observation and obsessive recording of topographical and meteorological detail make him the true forerunner of the 20th-century British explorer Harry St John Philby, who greatly admired him. On his two heroic journeys between 1880 and 1884, Huber pioneered the scientific mapping of inland Arabia and made some of the earliest records of ancient North Arabian inscriptions and rock art.

Huber came to a tragic end at the young age of 36, when in 1884 he was murdered by his Bedouin guides near Rabigh on the Red Sea coast. As a consequence he published little, and the only connected narrative that he managed to write was of his first journey in 1880–81 – a highly significant document of Arabian exploration that has not been published since 1885, and which is presented in the new book for the first time in English translation.



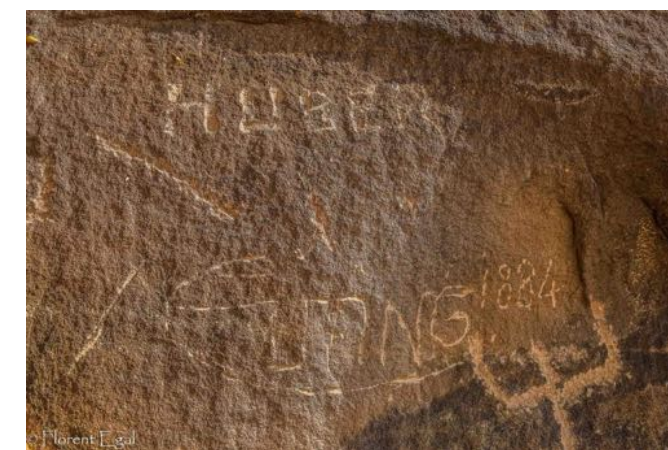
The great rock of al-Mahajjah, on Huber and Euting's route to Tayma in early 1884. With thanks to Florent Égal.

Despite Huber's great posthumous reputation, almost nothing until now has been written about him, even in France. Facey's lecture for IASA delved into his origins

in a Catholic, French-speaking, working-class family in Strasbourg. Much that was hitherto unknown was revealed about Huber's complex and risk-taking personality, his experiences as a fervent French patriot coming of age in Strasbourg during the annexation by Germany of Alsace in 1870–71, his troubles with the German authorities, his first encounter with the Arab East in Algeria, his efforts to educate himself, and his bibliophilia and obsession with head-measuring.

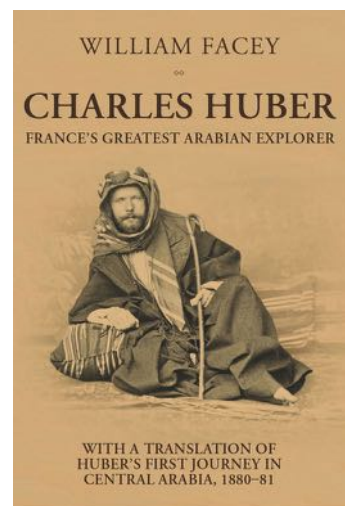
New light was shed on the dates and itinerary of his first Arabian journey, an epic quest of some 5,000 kilometres on camelback requiring immense fortitude. Leaving Damascus in April 1880 and overcoming an almost comical succession of obstacles, he traversed the waterless Wadi al-Sirhan to al-Jawf, and then crossed the Great Nafud to Jubbah. On the way to Ha'il, he made sure first to introduce himself to its puissant Emir, Muhammad Ibn Rashid, then lord of much of northern Arabia, in his pomp as a desert chieftain at the wells of Umm al-Qulban. Having formed a close protective friendship with the Emir, Huber then used the Shammar capital as a base, making six pioneering excursions that would revolutionize Europe's knowledge of northern Najd. He mapped the extent of Jabal Aja for the first time, travelled round al-Qasim, and made a long and dangerous round-trip to Tayma, Mada'in Salih, al-'Ula, Khaybar and al-Hayyit, during which he identified the watershed of northern Arabia. He then travelled with the pilgrim caravan from Ha'il, going up the mediaeval Darb Zubaydah to Iraq, where he spent most of 1881, and thence back to Syria by the old Courier Route from Baghdad to Damascus. The journey earned him the Gold Medal of the Société de Géographie in Paris.

The focus of the lecture then shifted to Huber's return to Arabia in 1883 with Julius Euting, the eminent German Semitist. Unlike the self-taught Huber, Euting came from a prominent Protestant background in Stuttgart, and very shortly after the German occupation of Strasbourg had taken up a prestigious academic post there, becoming a close friend and colleague of Theodor Nöldeke. The twists and turns of Huber's difficult collaboration with Euting were described, and their differences in class, personality,



Huber carved his signature on this rock at Ġabal Mismā', just south of the sands of the Great Nafūd desert, among ancient rock drawings and beneath a long Nabataean inscription. Julius Euting's signature appears beneath Huber's, with the date 1884. With thanks to Florent Égal.

religious affiliation and – most of all – funding, examined. Having travelled over some of the same ground as Huber's 1880 journey, including Tayma, the two men parted company at the great Nabataean site of Mada'in Salih in the northern Hijaz. Huber then went back into central Arabia before making a dangerous journey to Jiddah. His murder came shortly after, on 29 July 1884, as he tried to make his way back to Ha'il again to collect his baggage and inscriptions, including the famous Tayma Stele, which he was determined to keep for France.



Finally, the affair of the Tayma Stele, the celebrated Aramaic inscription now in the Musée du Louvre briefly came under the spotlight. Referring to the new analysis of this notorious Franco-German imbroglio presented in his book, Facey held up to scrutiny the prevailing idea that Huber first saw it in 1880, and gave Euting his belated due for its discovery in 1884.

The lecture is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skrvnz6gvIE>

Reference

Facey, William (2022), Charles Huber: France's Greatest Arabian Explorer. With a Translation of his First Journey in Central Arabia, 1880–81. In collaboration with Michael C.A. Macdonald. Foreword by Christian Julien Robin. Cowes: Arabian Publishing. ISBN 978-1-911487-67-8

See our review, p. 22



FORTHCOMING IASA LECTURES

The much anticipated Annual Beatrice de Cardi Lecture scheduled for 2021 will take place in 2022.

Professor Hugh Kennedy FRSE FRAS FBA, SOAS University of London 'Al-Baladhuri's Account of the Muslim Conquest of Arabia'

6 pm (BST) October 17; Vestry Hall at St George's Church Bloomsbury.

Please join us for what promises to be a fascinating lecture, as well as an opportunity to reconnect in-person over a glass of wine after an unusual few years.

Professor Kennedy says "This lecture will discuss the way in which Prophet Muhammad and his immediate successor Abū Bakr established Muslim control over the Arabian Peninsula. For some years I have been working on a new English translation of al-Baladhuri's classic account of the Muslim conquests of the Near East (written c. 865) and I shall use this account to show not only the process of conquest but the way in which a historian from the Abbasid period, two centuries later, presents and describes it."

Hugh Kennedy is Professor of Arabic at SOAS, University of London and the author of numerous books and articles about the first four centuries of Islam, including *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* (4th ed. 2022) and *The Caliphate: The History of an Idea* (2016).

The remainder of the IASA 2022/23 lecture series is currently being finalised and members will be sent details in due course. Non-members may check our social media accounts for details, or contact outreach@theiasa.com.

SEMINAR FOR ARABIAN STUDIES

The Seminar for Arabian Studies, founded in 1968, is the only international forum that meets annually for the presentation of the latest academic research in the humanities on the Arabian Peninsula from the earliest times to the present day or, in the case of political and social history, to the end of the Ottoman Empire (1922). Papers read at the Seminar are published in the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies in time for the Seminar of the following year. The Proceedings therefore contain new research on Arabia and reports of new discoveries in the Peninsula in a wide range of disciplines.

BERLIN 2022

The 55th Seminar for Arabian Studies, organised by the International Association for the Study of Arabia (IASA), was held on 5-7 August 2022 at the Humboldt University of Berlin. This year's Seminar was made possible with the kind support of the staff and students of the Humboldt University Berlin, the Museum of Islamic Art/National Museums of Berlin, and the German Archaeological Institute, the Museum of the Ancient Near East, and the German Research Foundation which supported the Special Session "Scents of Arabia: interdisciplinary approaches on ancient olfactory worlds".



After a short hiatus due to Covid it was great to be able to meet our colleagues both in-person and online to enjoy the lively debates that followed each of the over 70 talks that were presented. While I wish I could provide an in-depth report of all of the wonderful papers that were delivered time and space do not permit. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile highlighting a few of the sessions and papers therein, starting with Day 1 and our first parallel session the Palaeolithic and Neolithic and the Sasanian and Early Islamic Arabia, both of which tackled some of the burning questions that have kept Arabia archaeologists awake at night. Indeed, it was quite difficult to decide which of the sessions to attend and the papers in both were phenomenal. Within these sessions we were provided with spectacular insights into the latest findings concerning the prehistoric,

Sasanian and early Islamic periods, while also learning how innovative and new methodological approaches can provide us with a deeper understanding of the cultural material from these periods.



On Saturday morning, we dived straight back into the second parallel session looking at the Climate and Agriculture and Epigraphy and Language. With such a great line up of papers it was again difficult to choose between sessions and whilst this would certainly have been based on your interest the difficulties of choosing to learn more about the broader landscapes or the defined and new discoveries made in the field of inscriptions and languages was tough. After a short break for coffee, and to catch up again with our colleagues and friends, it was time to enjoy a range of olfactory talks in the Scents of Arabia Special Session. The speakers in this Special Session tackled a wonderfully wide range of topics that entranced all of our senses and touched upon the wide range of incense studies taking place. With the final discussion panel, we were guided 'by our noses' through the various themes concerning incense in Arabia.

At the end of this session, we were given a wonderful keynote lecture by Kiersten Neumann entitled, 'Assur, accept! Assur, Listen!' Connecting Arabia and Assyria through Incense and Olfaction, which I trust those of you who were not able to attend in person could have also watched on Zoom. Although you would sadly not have been able to join us afterwards for a drink at the James-Simon-Hall terrace for drinks to celebrate another day of stimulating and provocative talks.

The final day, where we had to again choose between two parallel sessions, the Late Bronze and Iron Ages followed by Landscape and Settlement and the two student sessions, which included a wide and highly interesting range of talks.



Tackling this parallel session was, much like previous sessions over the weekend, a matter of jumping between rooms, thankfully close to each other. The range of talks once again provided us with a stimulating insight into the latest research being undertaken with historians and archaeologists providing us with much food for thought. This was echoed in the student sessions, which also allowed us a glimpse into the future as these scholars being their journey into their studies of Arabia.



Ultimately, the 55th Seminar for Arabian Studies was a resounding success and with the possibility of having both in-person and online attendance we have had the highest attendance at the Seminar for Arabian Studies to date with over 200 attendees. Once again a big thank you to our hosts and the volunteers who made this possible.

We hope to see you in Aarhus 2023!

Julian Jansen van Rensburg for the Seminar Committee

AARHUS 2023

The 56th Seminar for Arabian Studies 2023 will be held in Denmark at Moesgaard Museum and Aarhus University from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 August 2023. This will be a special year and it will be a special Seminar because it will mark the 70th anniversary of the Aarhus archaeological expedition to Bahrain directed by P.V. Glob – which itself marked the first truly scientific archaeology to be carried out in the Gulf region. The governing vision behind the expedition and Moesgaard was to expand knowledge of the diversity of mankind. Supported by funding from local governments and the Carlsberg Foundation Glob and Bibby's first expedition to Bahrain (1953) was soon to expand to all the other Gulf countries. The Moesgaard and Aarhus University (AU) based expeditions discovered the archaeological counterparts of the lands known to the



Professor P.V. Glob and T.G. Bibby, Bahrain 1959.



The new Moesgaard Museum exhibition building.

Babylonians as Dilmun and Makkan in the form of the Barbar/Dilmun and Umm an-Nar cultures. Hundreds of surveys and excavations heralded a thriving local and international archaeological tradition which has been a hallmark of the region to this day. It the wake of the pioneering expeditions (1953–86) the Arabian Gulf countries saw the rise of national museums and new and temporally much deeper national identities.

The original excavations of the Moesgaard/AU expedition have been extensively published, and its research continues in collaboration with local partners in several Gulf countries.

To mark this important anniversary and the legacy of P.V. Glob and T.G. Bibby, we are planning several related events, including a Special Session focussed on the Bronze Age archaeology of the region. This Special Session will set out to address major open questions, qualify the limits of our understanding, and suggest directions for new and more targeted research.

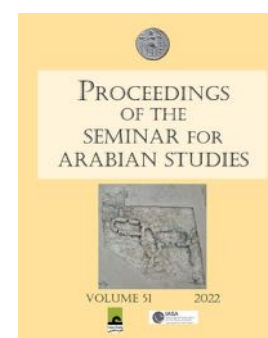
It is also our intention to set up a small exhibition of memorabilia, photos and finds from those early years, as well as to organize an informal forum where new generations can meet some of the pioneers of the early expeditions to Bahrain, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman. We hope to see as many of you as possible in person in Aarhus, but if you aren't able to physically attend, the seminar will also have a hybrid component.

Further announcements can be expected in due course – keep your eye on the IASA website (<https://iasarabia.org/the-seminar/>) as well as our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Steffen Terp Laursen
Julian Jansen van Rensburg

IASA PUBLICATIONS

The Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies Volume 51 2022, comprising papers from the 54th meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held virtually at Casa Árabe Córdoba on 2–4 and 9–11 July 2021 is now available from Archaeopress.



<https://archaeopresspublishing.com/ojs/index.php/PSAS/issue/view/57>

The editors of IASA Publications are always keen to hear from potential contributors, who in the first instance should contact either: Dr St John Simpson: ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk or Dr Derek Kennet: derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk.

A full list of Monographs may be found on our website: <https://iasarabia.org/publications/> All titles can be ordered from Archaeopress at www.archaeopress.com.

IASA RESEARCH GRANTS

Each year the IASA makes a number of grants intended to support research in any academic area covered by the IASA's aims, which are to promote research relating to the Arabian Peninsula, in particular, its archaeology, art, culture, epigraphy, ethnography, geography, geology, history, languages, literature and natural history.

Grants may be used to fund fieldwork, library or laboratory-based research or research support. The number of grants awarded each year depends on the amount of money available.

We expect to be able to offer Small Research Grants (up to £1,000, for all categories of researchers) and Main Research Grants (up to £2,000, or possibly more, for post-doctoral research).

The next deadline for the IASA will be 31 May 2023. See the website: <https://iasarabia.org/grants/>

Here we present reports from two of our previous grant recipients.

Reassessing the Tihamah Plain (Yemen) using declassified Kh9 Hexagon satellite imagery: an interim report

Michael Fradley

This project aimed to better understand landscape change and its impact of the historic environment of the Tihamah Plain on Yemen's Red Sea coast. The IASA grant was used to facilitate the scanning of Kh9 Hexagon data, declassified covert satellite imagery captured by United States through the 1970s and early 1980s (Fowler 2016; Hammer, et al 2022). The imagery, with an optical resolution of c.1m, was taken over western Yemen in 1973, and sixteen frames were scanned to be used to assess landscape change over the past five decades and to potentially identify archaeological sites that are no longer visible on more recent satellite imagery.

Prior to the analysis of the imagery, the frames have to be geo-rectified in QGIS, a process that is made difficult over areas of the Tihamah Plain that are relatively featureless. The imagery is then systematically analysed for evidence of potential archaeological sites. While analysis is ongoing, it is clear that there have been widespread changes to the landscape of the Tihamah Plain over the past 50 years, most notably in the expansion, redevelopment and abandonment of agricultural cultivation. A range of sites have been identified through this analysis, most notably in the foothills at the eastern edge of the Tihamah Plain and along the principal wadi systems that run across the coastal zone which have been subject to the most change and development since the 1970s. All the sites identified via this analysis will be uploaded to the EAMENA database (database.eamena.org).

Now these image frames have been scanned the unrectified images can be downloaded open-access from the USGS by anybody with an account at earthexplorer.usgs.gov, and will hopefully be used by archaeologists and researchers from other disciplines. While the imagery was utilised to investigate the Tihamah Plain, the panoramic frames cover a far wider area, roughly from 42.75 degrees to 45.25 degrees longitude.

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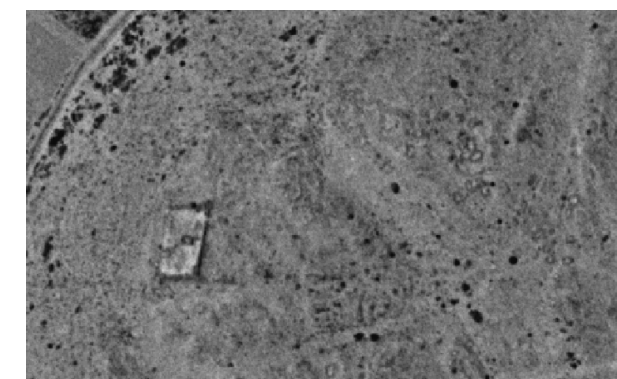


Figure 1. An example of features identified kh9 Hexagon imagery captured east of al-Hudaydah.

Looking for Omana. A geoarchaeological study of the Akab Island in the Umm al-Quwain lagoon

Michele Degli Esposti^{1, 4}, Luca Forti^{2, 3}, Federico Borgi, 4 Andrea Zerboni 2

¹ Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences, Nowy Świat 72, 00-330 Warsaw, Poland.

² Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra "A. Desio", Università degli

Studi di Milano, via Mangiagalli 34, 20133 I-Milan, Italy

3 IGG-CNR, Pisa, Italy

4 Italian Archaeological Mission in Umm al-Quwain

The archaeological site of Ed-Dur, extending for 3-4 km along the coast of the Umm al-Quwain lagoon and over 1 km inland (Haerinck *et al.*, 1993, p. 183), is believed to be the place of the ancient port of *Omana/Ommana* mentioned by Pliny the Elder (NH 6.32.149) and the anonymous writer of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (§ 36) in the 1st century AD (Casson, 1989; Haerinck, 2001, p. 4). This hypothesis, however, is not unanimous (e.g., Jasim, 2006, p. 36) and lacks definitive evidence in its favour. Such an assumption mostly relies on the extent of the archaeological site and on the abundance and variety of exotic and prestige goods collected during several seasons of excavation. Such findings suggest that the site served as a commercial hub for its hinterland from about 100 BCE to 300 CE, receiving goods from the whole of the Persian Gulf and from as far away as the Roman Empire and India (Boucharlat *et al.*, 1989; Haerinck, 2001, 2011).

The most striking flaw in the identification of Ed-Dur as *Omana/Ommana* is the absence of any harbour facilities in the immediate proximity of the site consistent with the geomorphological configuration of Umm al-Quwain lagoon, where shoals and marshy areas obstruct the mooring of even mid-size ships.

The first tip for a possible solution to this apparent absence came from the observation of satellite imagery which led F. Borgi to identify the squared shape of the north-eastern shoreline of the island of Akab,¹ strongly suggesting human modification aimed at the creation of a safe inlet for boats (Figures 1 and 2), as well as revealing traces of possible paleochannels and anthropic features, which could have been instrumental to harbour activities. This prompted a first, quick survey of the island by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Umm al-Quwain (IAMUQ), which confirmed the previously reported evidence for a Late Pre-Islamic (LPI, c. 3rd century BC – 3rd century AD) occupation of the island (see Mouton 1992/2008: 181-182) but suggested this could also include non-funerary remains. Scatters of Middle Islamic (14th-15th century AD) sherds were also located.² Such evidence suggested the possibility that the artificial



Fig. 1 – The island of Akab and the site of Ed Dur within the broader context of the UAQ lagoon

inlet, surrounded by heaps of sediment likely resulting from the modification of that part of the lagoon, could indeed represent an ancient harbour linked with the main coastal site of Ed-Dur, located less than 5 km to the southeast. Although fascinating, this preliminary identification, which would provide strength to the identification of Ed-Dur with *Omana* and thus be of great relevance to the general reconstruction of trade routes over the Arabian Peninsula, necessitates detailed investigation to try and assess the nature and chronology of the Akab Island inlet.

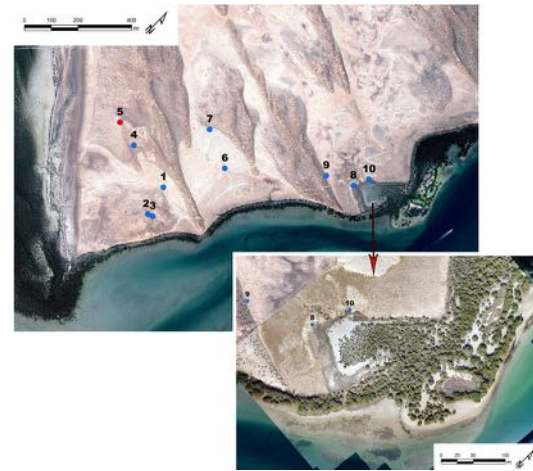


Fig 2 - Location of the test pits excavated on the island of Akab, with a detail of the artificial basin. The red dot indicates the pit excavated manually on top of the main dune (see also Fig. 3/top).

The research project of geoarchaeological investigation co-funded by one IASA Grant in 2021 builds upon these earlier results and is aimed at documenting the archaeological record and reconstructing the late Holocene geomorphological evolution of the Akab Island within the palaeoenvironmental context of the Umm al-Quwain lagoon and against the broader background of relative sea-level changes along the lower Persian Gulf. The project represents a collaboration between the IAMUQ and the Department of Earth Sciences of the University of Milan, which provided most of the funds. The work is being conducted with the support of the Tourism and Archaeology Department of Umm al-Quwain.³

The programme is articulated in three stages. The first comprised the preliminary study of different sets of high-resolution satellite images that provided the basis for remote sensing and GIS applications aimed at highlighting the geomorphological and environmental settings of the research area. This informed the identification of potential archaeological sites and relict/buried geomorphological features, thus indicating the preferable location for geological coring and archaeological test trenches. This phase was followed in November 2021 by geoarchaeological fieldwork in Umm al-Quwain, during which specific areas of Akab Island were re-surveyed with specific attention to landforms and sedimentary markers for relative sea-level changes and evolution of coastal areas. A total of 10 test pits were mechanically excavated, including two which cut across the assumed artificial levees of the inlet. Moreover, a small hand trench was dug at the top of the main dune that crosses

the island along a W-E direction, representing the relic of Pleistocene fossil dunes reworked by subsequent marine transgression (see Bernier *et al.* 1995: fig. 2/top left.). The stratigraphic sequence revealed in each test pit was surveyed and described. The third phase of the project implied the sampling of a selection of the sediments identified in the test pits, that were exported to Italy for micromorphological investigation and dating. Thin sections were obtained from undisturbed blocks of sediments and the result of their study is awaited.

Some preliminary observations stemming from the results thus obtained can be mentioned here.



Fig. 3 - The manual trench excavated on top of the highest dune revealed the presence of a shell midden (top); the structure of the partly-cleaned Late Pre-Islamic grave quickly cleaned (bottom).

The date of the LPI occupation on Akab Island seems generally more consistent with the late phases of Ed-Dur's occupation during the so-called PIR.D period (i.e., the final LPI period), between the second half of the 2nd century CE and the mid-3rd century CE (Mouton 2014: 55; see also Mouton 2008: 182), possibly extending towards the 4th century CE, although more systematic work is necessary and a thorough collection of surface pottery from selected areas is planned for the 2022 autumn season. One of these areas embraces the top of the island's main dune, an area rich in LPI pottery where graves of the same period are also evident. Half of one of the graves, standing along the crest of the dune and badly eroded, was quickly cleaned to provide a clear view of its structure (Figure 3/bottom). The test trench manually excavated at the south-western end of this dune revealed the presence of a substantial shell-midden just below the surface level (Figure 3/top). Although LPI graves appear to cut the upper exposed surface, a substantial erosion of the topsoil is likely, given that the first radiocarbon date

obtained from one of the anthropic levels revealed in the trench indicates a date into the medieval period. No useful date was so far obtained for the lower anthropic levels. To investigate the formation of the shell midden, during the next campaign the trench will be enlarged and new samples suitable for radiocarbon dating will be collected, as well as shells being chosen to compare their age with those of the organic samples from the corresponding layers.

The geomorphological and geoarchaeological survey focused on the eastern part of the island, in the proximity of the possible harbour (test pits 8, 9, 10) and in an area where pottery and shell scatters are mainly concentrated (test pits 1 to 7) (Figure 2). The aims of these test pits were the reconstruction of the palaeoenvironment during the Late Holocene, alongside the investigation of the archaeological sequence possibly revealed by each of them.

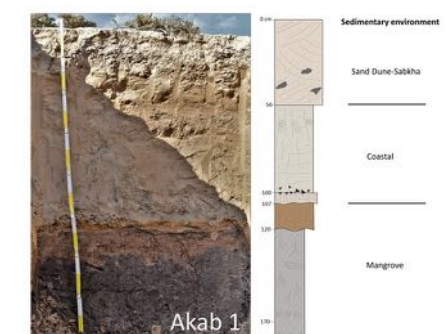


Fig. 4 – An example of the stratigraphy from test pit 1, cut in a depressed area.

Indeed, the test pits were cut in different geomorphological situations, including sand dune footings (test pits 2, 3, 4, 8, 10), depressed or flat areas (test pits 1, 6, 7, 9), and the top of the main sand dune mentioned above (test pit 5). The stratigraphy of the pits cut at the footings of the sand dunes is quite monotonous and consists of medium to fine sand with scarce shells fragments; conversely, the stratigraphy observed along the depressed or flat areas is more complex. There, we observed (from the bottom to the top) thick layers of dark-grey, organic, silty sand with common shells, overlaid by a black to reddish organic rich layer that toward its top becomes yellowish grey and fine to medium sand in texture. This body is interlayered by calcrete lenses and shell-rich layers. The top layer consists of a bed of fine-to-medium sand (Figure 4).

The test pits were sampled for sedimentology, radiocarbon dating, micromorphology, and palaeontological analysis. The surveyed stratigraphic sequence allows the interpretation of the evolution of this part of the lagoon. In fact, the identified layers formed in different sedimentary environments – from mangrove to sand dunes – which migrated seaward over time, always following the general setting of coastal environments in arid to semi-arid zones (dune-sabkha environment/coastal environment/mangroves).⁴

Apart from the pending results of the laboratory studies, a new field season has been scheduled for the autumn of 2022,

thanks to the funding that the project has received from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Data collected in the field will help to improve the initial GIS project and will be elaborated with statistical and geospatial tools to interpolate the relationships – if any – between the distribution of archaeological sites, their chronology, and the local relative sea-level variations, and Holocene climate change. In turn, this information will contribute to the creation of the geomorphological and archaeological map of the Umm al-Quwain lagoon. Also thanks to the collaboration established with the UAE University within the framework of the archaeological and geomorphological project “The Historic Environment of Khawr al-Bayḏā’, Umm al-Quwain: 7,000 Years of Coastal Settlement in the United Arab Emirates” (Degli Esposti *et al.*, 2022).

End notes

1. It must be underlined here that the official toponymy of the UAQ lagoon islands as defined by the UAQ Municipality differs from the one commonly adopted in the archaeological literature. Thus, the island which hosts the famous “dugong mound” (e.g. Méry *et al.* 2009) is officially identified as al-Ghallaḥ and not Akab, the latter name being associated with the larger island immediately south. That is, the use of the two toponyms is reversed from the one commonly adopted in archaeological studies so far.

2. We are indebted to Tim Power for the preliminary identification of these sherds.

3. The results will also be integrated into the wider study of the lagoon’s geomorphology, a project that sees also the participation of the UAE University (see Degli Esposti *et al.* 2022).

4. Reading 2013.

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Cataloguing and communicating the endangerment of Palaeoenvironmental sites in Southeast Arabia Kenta Sayama

After months of delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I stayed in Oman and the UAE for my DPhil project from the 9th of July to the 11th of September 2022. The focus of my trip was to conduct fieldwork on my research project that focuses on the conservation of Quaternary palaeoenvironmental (QP) sites in these two countries. Thanks to the fantastic support from IASA, I could dedicate part of my stay to the database portion of my project, in which I have developed an online database on QP sites, their conservation status, and their chronological and spatial relationships with regional archaeological sites. During my fieldwork, I was able to visit sites studied by palaeoenvironmental researchers such as the travertine

deposit sites near Nizwa, Oman, studied by Clark and Fontes in 1990 (Figure 1). These visits were important to ground the accuracy of the endangerment analysis for QP sites, which I conducted using satellite imagery. With the visits, I could confirm that openly available satellite imagery from Google Earth and Bing Maps provides adequate precision to conduct assessments of the state of QP sites in most cases.



Figure 1 Travertine deposit near Nizwa, Oman, studied by Clark and Fontes (1990)

The fieldwork was also important to communicate and build connections with local stakeholders and to develop relationships with potential collaborators for my research. I had meetings with museum professionals and university professors from both the UAE and Oman. From these meetings, I could gain a much better understanding of the

status quo and the overall recognition of QP sites in this region, as well as the cultural framework with which I am conducting my research. One of the best outcomes from these meetings was gaining support from the Geological Society of Oman and to have the president of the society, Mr Husam Al Rawahi (second from the left in Figure 2), join as a collaborator for my research.

His experience in educating and communicating geology to Omani people will be an invaluable addition to my research.

With the input from this fieldwork trip, I have finished writing a journal article on the database project and the manuscript is currently under review. I would like to thank IASA for the generous support for my project and I look forward to investigating more about how best QP sites can be protected in this region.



Figure 2 Recipient of the grant (first from the left) with Mr Husam Al Rawahi (second from the left) and local geologists and archaeologists at an informal meeting in Manah, Oman

NEWS AND RESEARCH BY COUNTRY

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Contributions from the Department of Antiquities and Museums in Ras Al-Khaimah (UAE)

The museum’s restoration project has steadily continued since 2019 in carefully planned phases while developing new exhibitions in parallel. After completing the restoration of more than 50% of the galleries on the ground floor, the museum’s large watchtower is the next step. Towards the end of summer, the restoration will be followed up by working on the first half of the Archaeology galleries. A new permanent exhibition for Archaeology is also being prepared with a new concept and gallery serving as an introduction to RAK Archaeology, with honorary mention to the late Beatrice di Cardi, and a recent discovery of Paleolithic tools from surveys done by a team led by our dear friend, the late Tibor Paluch in 2019–20.

During the restoration, the excavation team discovered a set of features in one of the rooms of the previously called “Recent Discovery”. The features are the remains of a traditional kitchen and a built-in ground tandoor (tanoor). These features were restored and have become a permanent part of the galleries. Two temporary exhibitions have been hosted in the space since January 2022, a historical exhibition by Ras Al Khaimah Military Museum which was later succeeded by an exhibition of RAK National Museum’s “Weaponry” collection.

Another space that has been refreshed after restoration is the new Welcome Area of the museum. The restoration and renovation of the space combined a



1. Ethnography Exhibit, before restoration



2. Ethnography Exhibit, after restoration

previously temporary exhibit space and a tour guide office, while also opening access to a new exit path/loading dock and the new Gift Shop (previously Majlis 2). The space aims to welcome visitors with an overview of the museum and allows them to plan their itinerary and navigate their visit. The space provides a hub that allows better flow of people, service, and objects that were not previously possible due to the main single zig-zag-shaped entrance that is also an exit. It also supports the RAK Department of Antiquities and Museums' effort to establish standards in public space safety and security following the guidelines from regulations set by the UAE Civil Defense authority.

The museum department is also preparing a few permanent and temporary exhibitions. The Jewellery collection will be displayed in a permanent gallery, while the Pottery-Ceramic collection will be on display in a permanent exhibit with an open storage concept. The museum continues its rotating theme for the ethnography galleries this year by following a temporary exhibition on Date Palm Tree Heritage (titled "Tamra") with "Growing Up in the Emirates". This joint exhibition presents one of the RAK Department of Antiquities and Museums' initiatives to support and collaborate with more than 30 RAK private museums, heritage associations, and other culture-themed communities within the emirate.

Annissa Gultom
 Manager: Museums Department
 Department of Antiquities and Museums
 Government of Ras al-Khaimah
 United Arab Emirates



3. Weaponry Exhibit, after restoration.

Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi (NHMAD) - A journey through natural history

Located in Saadiyat Cultural District, the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi will feature some of the rarest natural history specimens ever found on planet Earth.

The Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi will be a scientific research and teaching institution, as well as an educational resource for learning about the evolving story of our planet, aiming to ignite a life-long passion for the natural world in visitors of all ages.

Visitors will travel on a journey through time and space, from the beginning of the universe to a thought-provoking perspective into our Earth's future. A highlight of the new museum's collection will be the world-famous skeleton of 'Stan', the Tyrannosaurus rex, the Murchison Meteorite specimen, and other spectacular collections as part of its compelling curatorial vision, as well as fascinating experiences which will be created by a dedicated team in Abu Dhabi.

The museum will join a global community of natural history museums committed to public education and to the development and sharing of scientific research. Within the museum, the innovative scientific research facility will undertake studies in areas including zoology, palaeontology, geology, marine biology, molecular research (aDNA and proteomics), entomology and earth sciences. The primary aim will be to advance knowledge and increase understanding of our past, but also to create a think tank for future innovation and emerging technologies.



With a focus on exceptional specimens and immersive displays, the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi galleries

will take visitors on an inspirational journey back to the very beginning of time, narrating the evolution of our universe, the Earth's formation, and the history of life on our planet.

Covering an area of more than 35,000 sqm, lead architects Mecanoo designed the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi to resonate with natural rock formations, reflecting the museum's goal of improving understanding of and engagement with the natural world.

The Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi is due to be completed at the end of 2025.

Dr Mark Jonathan Beech
 Archaeology Unit Head - Al Dhafra & Abu Dhabi
 Historic Environment Department

OMAN

"Erosion of Tradition, Eroision of Presence"

Jerzy Wierzbicki

"Erosion of tradition, Eroding of presence" is a summary of my nearly eight years of exploration of the Sultanate of Oman. I lived and worked as a media photographer in the Sultanate between 2007 and 2015.



These photos show the interiors of traditional Arab homes I found abandoned in several locations in Oman. Mostly in Dhofar Governorate (mainly in Mirbat) and some isolated locations in Jabal Al Akhdar Mountains. Several images were captured in the old towns of Bahla and the abandoned part of Hamra. For the last part of the project I had photographed around the older part of Salalah at Al Hafa district. I am possibly the last photographer who consistently documented this group of homes facing the Ocean in old Al Hafa. Also, in January 2015, I documented the rapid and vast demolition those houses. Where they stood we now find palm trees park and a white sandy beach.

Homes have been abandoned voluntarily in the wave of changes brought by globalisation and modernisation in the Sultanate of Oman in recent decades. The entire project is a kind of study and reflection on the possibilities of contemporary documentary photography in relation to archaeology, which was one of the most important inspirations for me in the work of the project.



I shot the entire series on 6x7 cm medium-format cameras and Fuji Velvia colour reversal film.

The work consists of integral parts. There is the exhibition of twenty-seven colour photographs in 80 x100 cm, 40 x 50 cm, and large size photographs 120 x150 cm.

The exhibition and theoretical dissertation of "Erosion of Traditions, Erosion of Presence" was also my PhD project at the "Leon Schiller" National Film School in Lodz, Poland in 2017.



Currently I am in the process of finishing a photobook which will contain approximately 100 photographs taken as part of this project over the period 2013-15 as well as a few photographs captured in 2018 and 2021.

Many of the places from my photographs do not exist anymore and have passed into oblivion.

July 30 2022

Poznan, Poland



YEMEN

Avoiding a potential environmental disaster

Noel Brehony

The UN has warned that an explosion or oil leak from a decaying 45 year old former Japanese tanker, now used as a Floating Storage Offloading (FSO) moored eight kilometres off the Yemeni coast in the Red Sea could unleash “a humanitarian and ecological catastrophe”, not just on Yemen but on much of the Red Sea and its coastlands. On 30 August 2022, the UN Coordinator for Yemen described this as a ticking time bomb that could go off at any time.

The problem

The SFO Safer belongs to the Yemeni state-owned Safer Exploration and Production Operations Company (SEPOC) and was used for storing and offloading exports of oil produced in Marib. But those exports ceased when the war started in 2015, leaving the SFO Safer holding a cargo of 1.14 million barrels of oil. Since 2015 there has been no maintenance other than what can be done by the small crew left on board. All assessments indicate that the vessel is now beyond repair and at imminent risk of spilling oil due to leakages or an explosion because the systems required to pump inert gas into its tanks have not been functioning since 2017.

The scale of the potential disaster

According to the UN an oil spill could greatly add to the woes of Yemen, a country already decimated by more than seven years of war, and would result in lasting environmental damage and have profound economic costs across the region. Depending on the season, an oil spill could affect between 1.6 and 6.5 million people, impacting up to 1.1 million internally displaced people, affecting over 150,000 farmers and four hundred km2 of agricultural land, contaminating up to 8,000 wells, severely affecting up to half the fisheries on Yemen’s Red Sea coast, and closing Hodeida port for up to three months. Areas affected would include the Saudi coast towards the port of Jeddah, and the Dahlak Archipelago and approach to the port of Massawa in Eritrea. A spill would also have serious implications for shipping in the Red Sea as well as the long term health of fish life, mangroves and coral reefs. Desalination plants on the Red Sea coast could be closed, cutting off a water source for millions of people. Vital shipping through the Bab al-Mandab Strait to the Red Sea could be disrupted for an extended period, costing billions of dollars per day. Tourism in the Red Sea would be affected, even on the shores of Egypt many hundreds of kilometres away from the spill. (FSO SAFER UN- Coordinated Proposal Explainer July 2022 - <https://yemen.un.org/en/181199-fso-safer-un-coordinated-proposal-explainer-july-2022>)

Finding a possible solution

Despite the scale of the threat and countless and repeated warnings of the likelihood of a disaster, it had not been possible until this year to find a solution – or even to arrange for experts to assess the vessel. Apart from the cost of the operation and responsibility for financing it, the main reason has been the inability of the Supreme Political Council (the formal name of the Houthi - or Ansar Allah regime) in Sanaa, which now controls a majority of the Yemeni population, and the Internationally Recognised Government now based in Aden (IRG) to agree on a replacement facility and allocation of the proceeds from the sale of the oil on the Safer.

Finally in March 2022, after months of discussions with all stakeholders, the UN produced a coordinated operational plan to address the threat. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) there will be the installation of long-term replacement vessel or “other capacity equivalent” to the FSO Safer within a target 18 months. However, with the situation too dangerous to wait for the replacement, an urgent four-month emergency operation would be carried out to eliminate the immediate threat by transferring the SFO Safer’s oil to a secure vessel, which would remain at the same site until the permanent replacement vessel is put in place and the SFO Safer removed. What appears to have clinched the MOU was that the Ansar Allah will facilitate the operation but will not be required to pay or part-finance it. The government in Aden supports the initiative.

Paying for the operation

However, it is the UN that has to raise the money to pay for the operation. The first phase, which will be carried out by a Dutch company contracted by the UN, will cost just under US\$80 million covering the salvage operation, the de-mucking of the FSO Safer to make it safe for salvage, a very-large crude carrier to hold the oil, insurance, crew and maintenance for 18 months, as well as preparatory activities, including legal due diligence, a contingency fund, staffing, operational costs and management support. The total overall cost of the operation is US\$144 million.

These costs may seem high, but they pale into insignificance when compared with the estimated US\$20 billion cost of clearing up the damage caused by a major oil spill or an explosion. The UN was able – via a pledging conference in May and later securing donations of \$10 million each from the United States and Saudi Arabia – to raise US\$60 million but that still left a shortfall of almost US\$20 million for the first urgent phase. In a very unusual move, the UN launched a crowd funding campaign on 14 June to raise US\$5 million. While individuals are invited to donate, this seems to have been targeted primarily at the private sector as well as state-owned and private hydrocarbon corporations.

The operation cannot begin until the whole US\$80 million is in place. It had been hoped that the first phase could have started by 1 June 2022 before the season of high winds in

October that would increase the risk of an oil spill. Following a new commitment payment by the Dutch government, the UN indicated on 21 September that there were then enough funds to enable the project to begin the first phase.

EXHIBITIONS

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Insect Pests of the Middle East

Amy Crossman, Secretary of IASA, works as Conservator for Integrated Contamination Management UK (ICM UK). We asked her to write an article on a visit she made in June 2022 to the UAE with the intention of discussing potential collaborations and sharing of knowledge in relation to insect pests that destroy our cultural heritage in museums, libraries and historic houses, with a focus on insect pests of the Arabian Peninsula.

A day session was convened with cultural heritage professionals in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the Department of Culture and Tourism to discuss pest related issues. Sessions included: the impact of climate change on insect pest distribution and changes in insect pest behaviour; the use of integrated pest management strategies as a safe, effective and ethical approach to managing insects attacking our collections; and the options for the safe and ethical eradication of insect pest populations when they do occur.



Figure 1 View from Qasr Al Hosn (© 2022 Leen Gysen)

Highlights of the trip included site visits to the Louvre, Abu Dhabi and Qasr Al Hosn to learn more of the challenges of protecting cultural heritage from insect pest attack. My colleagues and I were able to explore some of the issues posed, including considering building structure and design to build pests out.

Pests are one of the ten agents of deterioration and can be extremely destructive forces in cultural heritage, attacking and causing serious and irreversible damage to valued

objects and museum and cultural heritage collections, posing a significant threat to the integrity of our cultural heritage. Woodborer activity can go unnoticed for many years, as the larvae live deep within the wood, and cause considerable damage when the beetles emerge by tunnelling and gnawing exit holes. The characteristic signs of an active beetle infestation, piles of dust, are often the first indications of a problem, by which time it is often too late as the damage has already been done. The common or webbing clothes moth (*Tineola bisselliella*) is the most important and damaging of the pest moth species. The larvae will attack and destroy textiles containing wool, feathers, fur and silk, producing tunnels of silk webbing which it lays across the material under attack.

From our counterparts based in the Arabian Peninsula, we learnt that there is little data to support our knowledge of insect pest species in the region. As there is little known entomological data available on economic, domestic, agricultural, and urban insect pests of the Middle East, let alone the more niche insect pest threat posed to museums and cultural heritage in the peninsula countries, it is difficult to determine the level of pest risk.

Empirically reported data suggests that the region experiences some of the same insect pest species as the UK, including the common or webbing clothes moth (*Tineola bisselliella*), which has a worldwide distribution. There have been further reports of the larvae of the carpet beetle, *Anthrenus* species having been identified as attacking wool, fur, feather and skin in some Middle Eastern museums. However, reported sightings of these insects are inconsistent and the species has not yet been determined.

A further risk to wooden building structures and many artefacts, is the threat of termite damage as a number of species are known to be present in the region. Termites can be very destructive, with infestations in buildings spreading to display and storage furniture and historic collections.

In more recent years, increasing inter-museum loans, international travel, tourism and trade, and also issues relating to climate change, the threat posed to our historic



Figure 2 Damage to a book caused by woodborers (Anobid beetle) (© 2022 Amy Crossman)



Figure 3 Dead clothes moths (*Tineola bisselliella*) and frass [excrement] in the bottom of a display case (© 2022 Amy Crossman)

collections have increased significantly. There is increased awareness of the risks posed by these factors and it is essential that the pest species are identified and recorded.

The impact of the region's climate on insect pest behaviour is currently unknown; it is likely that fluctuating relative humidity and warmer temperatures will modify insect pest response and behaviours, possibly putting cultural heritage at increased risk from these harmful agents of deterioration.



Figure 4 Common or webbing clothes moth adult, *Tineola bisselliella* (© 2022 DBP Entomology)

As part of the visit to the UAE, I launched a research project to identify and assess the level of risk posed to collections by insect pest attack in Middle Eastern museums. The objective of this project is to collaborate with key institutions in the region to start to build a picture of insect pest distribution and mapping across the region to gather evidence of insect pest movement, adaptive behaviours and climate change. Starting to identify and record these species now is crucial to determine any changes in insect pest distribution.

It is hoped that the research will be expanded to encompass more countries in the Arabian Peninsula. Those interested in taking part in this research can contact Amy Crossman for further information via amy.crossman@iparc.eu.

In support of this research project, factsheets intended for the non-specialist audience have been produced in English and have started to be tailored to be region-specific, including content translated into Arabic. The first in the series is "Integrated Pest Management: A holistic approach to managing pest damage to cultural assets", further factsheets are in process of being translated.



Figure 5 Larvae of *Anthrenus* species (© 2022 DBP Entomology)

My weeklong visit to the Emirate was

highly successful, as I gained a real insight into the approach taken to cultural heritage preservation. It is hoped that the collaboration between the UK and UAE continues and will be a fruitful and informative partnership going forward. I would like to acknowledge and thank our hosts in Abu Dhabi for welcoming us.

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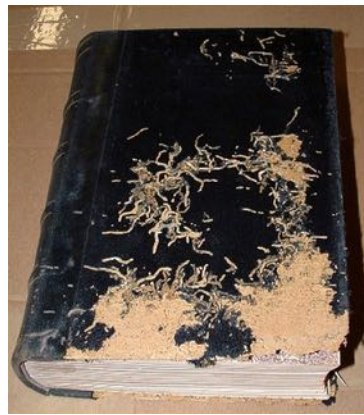


Figure 6 Termite damage (© 2022 DBP Entomology)



Figure 7 Screenshots of "Integrated Pest Management: A holistic approach to managing pest damage to cultural assets" leaflet, Arabic and English versions (© 2022 Amy Crossman).

THE YEMEN AMSTERDAM LIBRARY

The Yemen Amsterdam Library, or Maktabat al-Yaman al-Amstirdāmiyyah, of eminent Yemen specialist Dr C.G. Brouwer has now been fully integrated in the collections of Leiden University Libraries (UBL). Books and other documents from the collection are now available for loan via the UBL Catalogue.

Upon receiving the generous donation of Dr Brouwer's private library on Yemen in June of 2021, the UBL started a project to catalogue the collection in its entirety, using data provided by Dr Brouwers himself in his own Catalogue. Bahar Soohani, document processing & metadata staff member, completed the project in two months. The contents of the collection can be found in the UBL Catalogue upon searching "Amsterdam Yemen library" (Maktabat al-Yaman al-Amstirdāmiyya).

The Yemen Amsterdam Library is the largest coherent collection on Yemen in the Netherlands, consisting of 1,200 items, like books, maps, and posters. Throughout his years of scholarly work and travel, Dr Brouwer accumulated an impressive, specialized collection on Yemen's history, politics, socioeconomics, and maritime history.

Highlights from the collection

Some of the unique finds Dr Brouwer included in his collection are Al-'Arshī's Kitāb bulūḡ al-marām, and kitāb Tārīkh madinat San'ā', which he came across in bookshops in Yemen and Egypt. In antiquarian shops in Amsterdam and Paris, Dr Brouwer acquired Playfair's A History of Arabia Felix or Yemen, À la découverte de l'Arabie, and A'immat al-yaman bi-al-qarn al-rabi' 'ashar li-al-hijrah, which are presently regarded as some of the most important works on Yemen. Several books were gifted to him by fellow scholars and institutions. Dr Brouwer carefully documented the provenance of his books in his own comprehensive Catalogue. The Maktabat al-Yaman al-Amstirdāmiyya catalogue systematically divides the bibliographies of his collection by topic, timeline, and indexes, making it



The Maktabat al-Yaman al-Amstirdāmiyya catalogue, edited by Dr Brouwer



Kees Brouwer when he donated his collection in June 2021

easier for future Yemen researchers to conduct general or specialized research.

See <https://www.library.universiteitleiden.nl/news/2022/09/amsterdam-yemen-library-now-available>

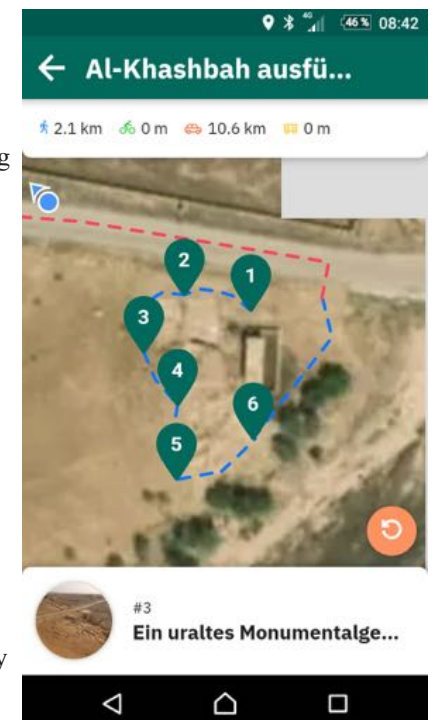
TECHNOLOGY

The ArchaeoTrail App – a tool to discover archaeological sites

Loges, L., Döpper, S., Ludwig, M., Gurjanow, I., Oehler, D.-X. K.

Archaeological sites, on the Arabian Peninsula and worldwide, offer valuable insights about the history of a place. Without additional background information, however, it is often difficult for both tourists and local populations to access this knowledge. Smaller and less widely known sites in particular often lack a good public presentation, due to lack of funding, or public and institutional interest. The newly developed smartphone application ArchaeoTrail aims to amend this situation, and gives non-specialist audiences an opportunity to discover the history of archaeological and heritage sites, such as the site of Al-Khashbah in central Oman, on their own. Through the app, visitors are guided by GPS along a suggested route around the site – the eponymous trail. At multiple stations along this trail, they can receive background information in the form of texts and multimedia.

The ArchaeoTrail project was initiated by Dr Stephanie Döpper from the Institute of Archaeological Sciences at the University of Frankfurt in Germany and sponsored by the



Volkswagen Foundation. Some of the first trails published in the ArchaeoTrail app, are trails of the Early Bronze Age ruins of al-Khashbah, which have been excavated by archaeologists from the Universities of Tübingen and Frankfurt since 2016, and the abandoned late Islamic settlement of Safrat al-Khashbah, which is being surveyed and studied under the supervision of Döpfer. For the most part, archaeological sites in the Sultanate of Oman lack on-site interpretation panels, signing, visitor orientation centres or knowledgeable guides, including Al-Khashbah. So far, local involvement with the ancient structures, despite being very visible, is rather limited. Self-guided smartphone tours with the ArchaeoTrail App are expected to change that. The trails that have been generated include a highlight trail of the Bronze Age settlement, an in-depth trail for visitors with a more specialist interest, and a trail for families and school groups that includes some educational quizzes to add to the experience.

The expert knowledge necessary for this experience is provided by the team at al-Khashbah, and the digital infrastructure is based on the successful system of MathCityMap (www.mathcitymap.eu), developed by Professor Mathias Ludwig and his team, also at the University of Frankfurt. This two-fold system entails a web portal, in which trails of sites can be created, and the actual app for mobile devices, in which they can be accessed and used to learn more about a site during a visit.

Eventually, trails can be generated for archaeological and heritage sites all around the world by heritage professionals and research institutions, but also volunteers – in essence, anyone who cares for an archaeological site and wants to present it to a wider audience. The ArchaeoTrail portal (www.archaeotrail.org) follows a collaborative approach to digital public heritage and provides an opportunity for archaeologists to generate tours of “their” sites. They can register to become part of an online community of experts and access the portal dashboard. The dashboard is based on wordpress and optimised for use on a desktop or laptop computers. It requires no specific digital infrastructure or IT skills, which is important to engage a maximum number of volunteer experts. It includes a GPS-referenced map tool, which trail creators can use to find the general location of their trails. From this point on, texts, photos, audio files and videos can be uploaded to automatically generate a new trail, which then, after a peer-review process, is published and visible on the application. Translations into several languages can be added as well. At the moment, the trail for al-Khashbah, for example, is available in Arabic, English, and German.

The app itself can be used even in places without an internet connection, provided the trail has been downloaded and GPS is turned on. It is envisioned that in the future, many more trails will be generated in Oman and beyond.

BOOK REVIEWS

Thanks to our reviews editor, Alexandra Hirst.

Charles Huber: France's Greatest Arabian Explorer

Arabian Publishing, 2022. Hardback, jacketed. £30.00.

552 pp. Footnotes, 18 Photographs, 13 Appendices, Sources and Reference, Index. Fold-out map.

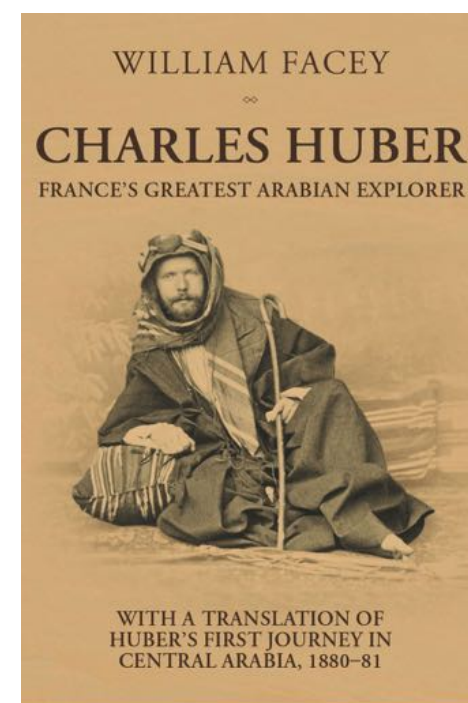
ISBN 978-1-911487-67-8

Among explorers of the Arabian Desert Charles Huber may not be completely unknown to Anglophone readers, but up to now very little in English or French has been written about his two journeys to central Arabia. This is not surprising given his early death and limited publication record. Several letters, one article on inscriptions, and a narrative of his first journey to central Arabia of 1880-81 were published in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* in Paris, the last appearing in three successive issues in 1884 and 1885, and then as a single volume in 1891. Huber's death prevented him from publishing an account of his second journey of 1883-84.

This reviewer cannot improve on Christian Julien Robin's summary in his Foreword: “Facey's translation of Huber's

first expedition brings this work back into the spotlight after a long period of quasi-inaccessibility...[It] is enriched by all the research required to clarify the text... embodied in the notes explaining the topography, pinpointing locations and accurately establishing Huber's itineraries... It was... necessary to identify the places and transliterate [Huber's] spellings according to a proper system.” Accordingly, “all specialists” in the field will agree to the author's comprehensive success in completing these tasks (p. xv).

In the past, the main takeaway of Huber's travels has been the part he played in the discovery of the Tayma stone or stele, first noted by Doughty in 1877 who, however, did not make a copy of its inscription. Trench (*Arabian Travellers: The European discovery of Arabia*. Macmillan, 1986: 136) reports the stone's removal to France via the chicanery of an Ottoman agent after Huber had been murdered by his guides. However, the rivalry between the Frenchman and his travel companion the Semitist Julius Euting is, for the first time, meticulously set out here and the German shown to be the one who deserves to be recognised as the stele's true discoverer. The part played in this episode by Ernest Renan and Snouk Hurgronje, in their capacity not just as notable orientalists but on behalf of substantial political interests, is established through correspondence recovered from the archive (in particular the Académie des Inscriptions et



Belles-Lettres, Institut de France, Paris) and printed in full in the appendices.

Huber's strained partnership with Euting, which eventually turned to hostility on the Frenchman's part, covered a single-minded determination not to have “his journey... reported back to Paris as a joint venture with a German” (p. 36). Facey diagnoses Huber's mental state as “deep-seated psychological reluctance to be associated with any partner in his Arabian enterprise” (p. 54). As a citizen by birth of the recently annexed province of Alsace, there was “boiling... political resentment” on Huber's part, but what Facey calls “the colossal omission” of all mention of his travel partner from his *Journal* is almost a convention of travel writing (p. 45).

On the primary level, Huber's writing presents as a monotonous register of rock formations, listings of wells, measurements of cisterns, temperatures of water personally extracted from wells, and the occasional disclosure of information about political arrangements in Shammar. In comparison with the British travellers – the Blunts and Charles Doughty – who had visited much the same terrain barely a few years earlier, Huber's effort is manifestly dedicated to presenting himself as the one best equipped to understand the features of the scene around him and to provide the most technical report. One of the claims he makes is to “have advanced our knowledge of the hydrology of northern Arabia” and he promises to correct existing maps of the course of Wadi Rimah (which he writes as Wadi Emek). A pledge he was unable to fulfil (p. 217).

Huber made Ha'il his main base, from there conducting several expeditions including visits to Tayma, al-'Ula, Khaybar, Buraydah and 'Unayzah. These are clearly indicated on the folded map, which is Huber's own, though the place names are difficult to decipher as he transcribed these “in a very idiosyncratic fashion” (p. xv).

Occasionally, Huber hints at his enjoyment of danger, such as his climb of Umm al-Silman against the advice of the locals but warranted, he claims, by the view from its peak and in spite of his hands and feet being “well and truly flayed” (p. 127). He also seems to have enjoyed the “extraordinary precautions” taken by the Emir of 'Unayzah in cordoning off the square in front of the main mosque owing to his presence under escort in the vicinity (p.173). He does enunciate his main aim – a determination to get to Buraydah and thence to al-Qasim, letting drop the occasional remark about his intrepid disposition, ignoring the consistent advice given him not to travel there beyond al-Rashīdi territory. But it would be his insistence on taking a final return route through Hijazi territory that led to his eventual murder.

When it comes to personal details about the traveller himself, however, Huber's report is strangely barren especially when judged as a piece of travel writing. Only in the penultimate phase of his first journey, to Iraq along Darb Zubaydah, does he allow a nostalgic note to slip into his descriptions of the construction of “four great wells, which are some of the most beautiful I've ever seen... Alas they contain no water and all that immense labour has totally gone to waste” (p. 240). For an interpretation of Huber's character, and an estimate of his significance from among the small number of Europeans who had up to that point penetrated the deserts of central Arabia, it is left to Facey – and his opinion is a high one, backed up by Huber's most notable admirer and peer, Harry St. John Philby. But we should also add that this is a task the author is especially qualified to accomplish, as evidenced by his previous studies on Arabian travellers of the ilk of Evelyn Cobbold and Eldon Rutter.

Huber's narrative raises significant issues beyond its value as a scientific record of time and place. Overall, the background to his life and travels, which this volume assembles, extends its scope beyond scrutiny of Huber's self-description as a scientific investigator of Arabian Desert topography equipped with thermometer, barometer and sextant. It is the encasing of Huber's text by an extensive introduction, appendices, and copious footnotes which, as Robin's quote correctly states, forms the main achievement of William Facey and his collaborator, the Oxford Semitist Michael C.A. Macdonald. The latter makes important interventions in the footnotes, updating the reader about the varied languages in which the epigraphs reported by the travellers are composed. Huber's own inscriptions, recorded in 1880 and collected in his published article of 1884, are reproduced in Appendix 1. Dr Macdonald has provided a concordance of these which comprises twelve pages of Appendix 2.

The reviewer's only criticism is that the transliteration system employs ġ instead of j, yielding reader-unfriendly transcriptions such as al-hiġr and haggis, and unnecessary defamiliarisation of familiar place names (al-Ġawf, Ġiddah) let alone the almost ubiquitous unfamiliar ones.

By Geoffrey Nash

The Life of the Red Sea Dhow: A Cultural History of Seaborne Exploration in the Islamic World

Dionisius A. Agius

London/New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2019.

359pp., 63 b&w images, 8 colour plates, 5 maps, 5 tables.
Hardback and paperback. £67.50 and £22.50.

ISBN 978-1838603427

The Red Sea has witnessed the development of maritime activities since the earliest of times. For millennia, this sea has served as a vital maritime corridor between two worlds: the Mediterranean in the west, and the Indian Ocean in the east. However, despite its historical significance, research on the maritime culture of this region has been relatively limited, especially when compared to other parts of the Indian Ocean, such as the Arabian/Persian Gulf and Oman. Hence, Agius' book fulfils a vital role. It is a comprehensive study of the Red Sea maritime world in the pre-modern and modern period centred around the 'dhow', here symbolizing all the different varieties of wooden watercraft used in the region. The book presents the results of extensive fieldwork conducted along the coasts of Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Yemen and Saudi Arabia between 2002 and 2013, and complements the author's previous ethnographic work in the Gulf and Oman.

Agius' approach is multidisciplinary and combines ethnographic research with historical sources and linguistic analysis. Most of the information presented in the book is derived from hundreds of interviews that the author conducted with old sea captains, sailors, fishermen, merchants and pearl divers. Agius' familiarity with the Arabic maritime lexicon enables him to engage in depth with his interviewees, discussing many aspects of their life at sea, including particularly sensitive topics, such as slavery, gun smuggling and magic rituals. It is good to see a woman (the widow of a sea captain of Obock) among the interviewees. This is an exceptional event in a man-dominated world such as the sea, and most welcomed for future studies on the topic. Textual documents, from medieval sources to nineteenth-century administrative reports, corroborate the oral accounts and anecdotes provided by the people interviewed, and reveal a strong link between the present and the past.

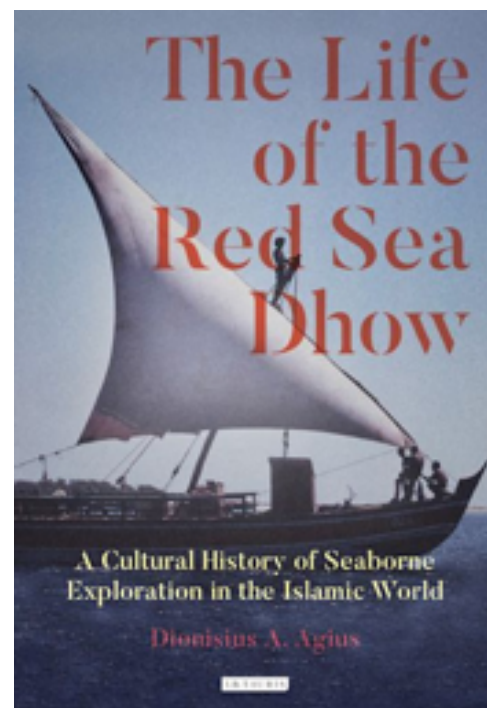
The book is well structured and consists of eighteen chapters organized by six main themes. The first two chapters present the aims, area of research and methodology of the work, while Chapters 3 and 4 introduce the geographical and historical context of the Red Sea. They also reveal the impact that the arrival of steam ships and the opening of the Suez Canal had on dhows, and on the coastal communities of the region.

The main theme of Chapters 5-9 is boatbuilding. Agius provides a description of the techniques and skills of the

Red Sea shipwrights, introducing the reader to the variety of vessels in the region, and to their main features. This section includes a chapter on the *sanbūk*, a term, as well as a boat type, that still puzzles maritime historians and ethnographers. This confusion stems from the complexity involved in classifying and recording watercraft across a broad region, where people might use multiple names for one boat, and use the same term for a variety of distinct vessels. The author's linguistic analysis of boat names is instructive, and reveals insights into the shape, function and performance of the vessels he discusses.

Chapters 10-13 concern seafaring and navigation. The author takes the reader aboard the dhows, describing the crew's duties, activities and skills. In this section, the stories of the old seamen interviewed reveal that seasonality is key to understanding life on the Red Sea, where land- and sea-based activities depended upon the rhythms of the monsoons, wind patterns and the movement of the stars. The chapter on sailing techniques might be a bit difficult for readers who are unfamiliar with the *settee* and *lateen* sails of Indian Ocean vessels, and this section would have benefitted from more detailed drawings illustrating this topic.

The next three chapters focus on the significant role that dhows played in the economic life of the Red Sea. In Chapter 14, the author draws on textual sources and accounts of captains and merchants to reveal the dynamics of trade in the region, highlighting the deep connections between boats, caravans, and the Muslim pilgrimage. The chapter on fishing and shell collecting offers an interesting view on the various practices used along the coasts of the Red Sea to exploit its rich marine resources, including pearl diving, which was one of the main activities in the Farasan and Dahlak islands. This chapter also describes the method used to pay for the labour of sailors, fishermen and pearl divers, revealing the unjust mechanisms of the "share system" and its extreme impact on crews.



Chapter 16 deals with slavery, one of the most profitable activities in the Red Sea, as well as in other regions of the Indian Ocean, and with gun smuggling. Slave trading was widespread in the region and persisted until relatively recently, despite the attempts of the British Royal Navy to stop it. Agius informs us that even Red Sea shipbuilders actively contributed to slavery and gun smuggling by so improving a particular type of vessel—the "swift and agile" *zārūk* (p. 200), that it was capable of outrunning the much slower British steamers.

Chapter 17 explores the divine, spiritual, and supernatural sphere associated with the maritime world of the Red Sea. Because of the unique nature of the topic discussed, this chapter is perhaps the most exciting and enjoyable of the book, since religious maritime practices are little discussed in any other literature on Arabian seafaring. It presents "the rich material culture associated with the folk beliefs" (p. 207), such as the colourful decorations carved and painted on the hulls of vessels, the use of the *oculus*, ubiquitous in the Indian Ocean vessels, and the variety of rituals—most dating from the pre-Islamic period—used to protect seafarers from the dangers of the sea.

The final chapter discusses the legacy of the Red Sea maritime culture. Agius here reveals the characteristics that define the cultural identity of the diverse communities living on the shores of the Red Sea, showing that these "share common cultural and linguistic features" (p. 218). One of these features is the "maritime Arabic lingua franca" (p. 221), an Arabic-based lexicon influenced by the language of the many ethnic groups living along of the Arabian and African coasts and spoken by the maritime communities of the Red Sea. The excellent glossary at the end of the book, apart from being a great tool for the reader, is the best example for this very rich lexicon.

Photographs, maps and diagrams complement the text, but one wishes there were more to illustrate the boat types, fishing gear, wind patterns and trade routes discussed in the book. Moreover, the preponderance of black and white photographs fails to convey the remarkable beauty of the region's seascape and landscape, and of the colourful decorative features of the vessels.

Agius acknowledges that "it was a privilege to meet the older people of the Red Sea before they depart from this world" (p. 218). For those of us who did not have this unique opportunity, this book represents an outstanding contribution on both the tangible and intangible maritime heritage of the Red Sea and constitutes an extraordinary tool for archaeologists and historians. The passage above also reminds us of the urgency of undertaking similar fieldwork in other coastal areas of the Indian Ocean where the traditional maritime heritage is rapidly disappearing.

By Alessandro Ghidoni

The religion and rituals of the nomads of pre-Islamic Arabia. A reconstruction based on the Safaitic inscriptions. (Ancient Languages and Civilizations, 1)

Ahmad Al-Jallad

Leiden: Brill, 2022. 8 Chapters, Illustrations, 2 Appendices, Bibliography, General Index, Index of Inscriptions.

Hardback and e-book (PDF). Hardback €99/\$119.

ISBN: 978-90-04-50426-4.

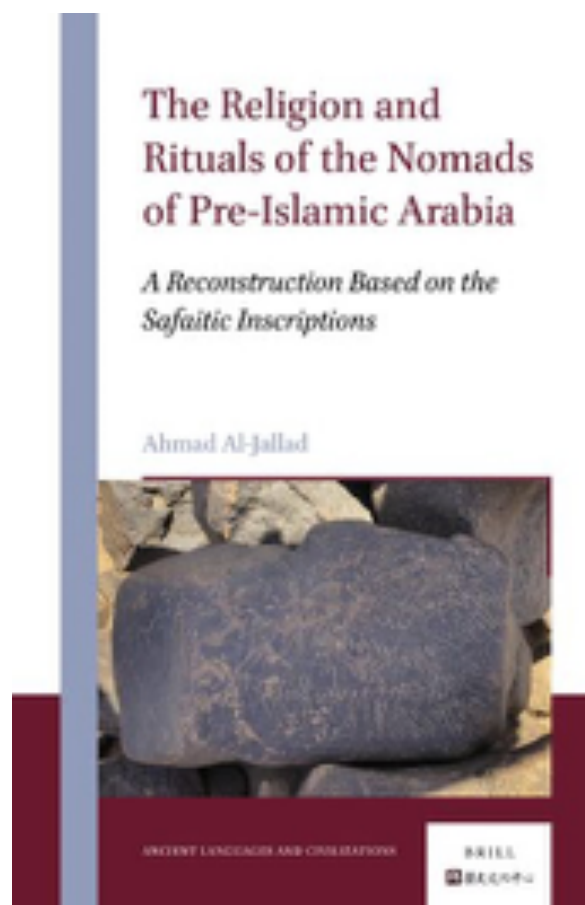
ISBN: 978-90-04-50427-1 (E-book) available through open access at: <https://brill.com/view/title/61413?language=en>

I am a little embarrassed in writing this review since the author has made so many warm references to my work, even when he disagrees with it. However, I shall try to be as objective as possible. For those who are not familiar with the Safaitic inscriptions, they are tens of thousands of graffiti carved between roughly the first century BCE and the early fourth century CE by nomads who had become literate and lived in the deserts of what is now southern Syria, north-eastern Jordan, and northern Saudi Arabia. Together, these graffiti provide a vast amount of fragmentary information on the way-of-life, society, personal feelings, and religion of these nomads and, as Al-Jallad has shown in this excellent book, they are one of the most productive sources of information on religion in the north of pre-Islamic Arabia at that period.

However, the Safaitic inscriptions are by no means easy to handle. They use an alphabet which shows no vowels at all and are carved continuously in any direction with no division between words. Al-Jallad has shown elsewhere that the language is one of the earliest recorded dialects of Arabic which is, in many ways different from Classical Arabic and the dialects known today. Moreover, because the authors knew what they were writing about and (pace Al-Jallad, see pp. 87–88 in the book) were writing for themselves not for a specific audience, they felt no need to explain the references they make which were obvious to them, and possibly their contemporaries, but alas not to us. Thus, to draw out and put into coherent order so many fragments of information is a magnificent achievement by the author, even if, in the process, the line between fact and speculation occasionally becomes a little blurred.

Nevertheless, he presents the inscriptions and their translations very clearly and provides many parallels from the Qur'an, the Hebrew Bible and in other Ancient Near Eastern cultures. The book also contains abundant illustrations which give a clear and fascinating picture of the inscriptions, rock drawings and the environment in which they were carved. It ends with a full list of the divine names found in the Safaitic inscriptions and an edition of those previously unpublished inscriptions used in the book.

Al-Jallad begins with a critical analysis of the Islamic



sources dealing with (or mentioning) pre-Islamic religion in Arabia. He shows that these represent folk-tales and exemplary stories used in Jewish, Christian and Muslim sermons of the seventh to ninth centuries CE from which it is impossible to extract any accurate information about pre-Islamic polytheism. He then proceeds with a detailed description of the different religious rites mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions such as animal sacrifice (dbh), the erection of cult stones (nshb), commemorations of the dead ('(n)fs), pilgrimage, offerings, etc., as well as exciting new discoveries of ancient structures related to some of these activities (pp. 33–36). On the other hand, the evidence for some of these is very slight, and Al-Jallad generally makes this clear, though occasionally (as in §1.4 Thanksgiving?) the point at which fact ends and pure supposition begins is not made sufficiently clear.

There are some minor points on which I would disagree with the author. For instance, I think he has approached the concept of 'graffiti' with a modern western, urban prejudice. He cites my definition of graffiti as "self-authored personal expressions written in a public place" (p. 7, his words not mine) but then assumes that this must mean I regard them as "frivolous" because I have suggested that most were carved to pass the time while their authors were doing boring, solitary jobs like pasturing the animals. But, after all, the majority of these graffiti consist simply of the authors' name, patronym and sometimes longer or shorter genealogy. Moreover, "personal expressions ... in a public place" can also, of course, be very serious, and those Safaitic graffiti which include narratives and/or prayers often deal

with very difficult and unpleasant conditions and appeal to the gods for help. They almost always start with the author's name and then describe his/her situation or emotions, and this is sometimes followed by a prayer, which may or may not be relevant to what has been said in the genealogy. This does not make them any less 'graffiti', a term which simply describes the circumstances of their creation.

Moreover, he asks "why are there no clear references to the birth of children? marriages? Or even mentions of abundant rain?" But in fact there are such references, though they are indeed far fewer than the references to unpleasant events or circumstances.

I would also question his idea that "a number of authors called out to the gods to be saved from Manay [Fate]" (p. 77), since it is clear from the inscriptions that their authors believed that Fate is unavoidable and even the gods could not divert its course, as Al-Jallad himself implies in the next sentence. In his "Worldview—a Reconstruction" (p. 91), he also treats Fate as if it was perceived of as a divine being, but I would suggest that this misunderstands the beliefs of the authors of these texts. The power of Fate (whatever anthropomorphic metaphors are applied to it) is that it is an inevitable, unavoidable force, it is in fact death. Thus, naturally, it is always "lying in wait", there can be no escape from it, and so there is no point in praying to the gods to turn it away.

There are also a number of small things which it would be good to have dealt with before publication. I give just two or three examples. For instance, the author says of 'Thamudic C' script that "no prayers are attested in this variety" (p. 5, n. 21) but on p. 96 under dtn he says that this deity "could be invoked in a group of inscriptions from North Arabia previously classified as Thamudic C". It would have been helpful if he could have clarified this. Of the drawing of BESS19 2 in Figure 21 (p. 104), he says that the rider is "carrying what appears to be a throwing spear" when it is clearly far too long to be this and would not be shown in that position but rather above the head of the rider in the conventions of Safaitic drawings. It is, in fact, a lance which is ready to transfix the prey. On p. 112 it is not clear why he puts Lihyān in Ḥegrā rather than Dadan. There are also quite a large number of misprints, and the author has not been well served by his copy editor.

However, these are all very minor matters compared with the enormous value of this book. It provides all the information known at present about the religion and rituals of the nomads who carved the Safaitic inscriptions and, in a beautifully written, very readable text, presents this as a coherent picture. The fact that other interpretations of some aspects are also possible is inevitable when dealing with evidence of this sort, and in no way diminishes Ahmad Al-Jallad's achievement in this excellent book.

By Michael C.A. Macdonald

An Introduction to Human Prehistory in Arabia. The Lost World of the Southern Crescent

Springer Textbooks in Archaeology and Heritage

Jeffrey I. Rose

Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022

324 pp., 174 figures, Glossary.

Hardback and e-book. £54.99 and £43.99.

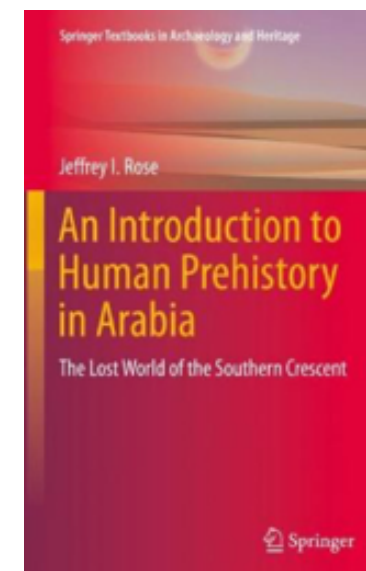
ISBN 978-3-030-95666-0

ISBN: 978-3-030-95667-7

Though his book, *An Introduction to Human Prehistory in Arabia*, Jeffrey Rose provides the first substantial overview of archaeological and paleoenvironmental records of the Arabian Stone Age. Beginning with the earliest evidence for the presence of archaic humans in the Peninsula – probably about 1 million years ago, Rose traces the interrelationship between climate change and human occupation of Arabia until the rise of human societies which developed subsistence strategies some 7,000 years ago. With his lengthy experience in Arabian Prehistoric archaeology and his well-developed communication skills, Rose combines an entertaining writing style with the presentation of extensive factual information.

The book is subdivided into twelve chapters, including an introduction and an epilogue. There is also a glossary at the end, which allows easy access to explanations of the many technical terms used in this book. The first three chapters introduce the premise of the book, through arguing that there is a lost prehistoric world under the sand of modern Arabia, and review how research has revealed the Earth's deep time history and how climate change can be traced through time. Chapters 4 and 5 present the basic approaches to the study of stone tools and summarize evolutionary basics. Arabian archaeological records and their contexts are presented and discussed in Chapters 6-11. The book terminates with Chapter 12, which explores the question of how durable oral tradition is and why it matters. At the end of each chapter there are up to ten review questions, an addition which reflects the book's intended textbook character as well as each chapter's references.

Chapter 1 starts by asking: "Who are we?" and "Whence do we come?" Rose notes that humans have sought



answers to these questions for thousands of years and have developed a plethora of creation myths. Some of these are still known to our modern societies, but most were lost on the long journey of our species. From this human curiosity, Rose develops the framework for this book and states that: "This book seeks to restore our frayed tapestry of creation stories and undo its knots through an exploration of human prehistory, environmental science, and archaeogenetics, superimposed with Middle Eastern mythology" (p. 2). The key myth here is that of the 'Ad – people from southern Arabia described as giants, who once lived in well-built cities with an abundance of livestock and pasturelands, but who became cursed for their excess, pride and violence and came to live in desiccated lands (p. 4). Following the summary of the 'Ad myth, Chapter 1 introduces the search for the lost city of this civilization in the early 20th century – a search which would eventually extend the previously-held view of Arabia as a static land with hostile deserts, to one that was more dynamic and included the possibility of human occupation of Arabia's inland regions.

Chapters 2-5 provide the scientific foundation for the exploration of the early prehistory of Arabia. How researchers identified deep time and how they estimated time depth and chronological order is discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter also introduces important time structuring records such as the Ice Ages and Marine Isotope Stages as well as processes causing their change (e.g. Milankovitch Cycles). Chapter 3 summarized the basics of how researchers gain insight into the characteristics of climate change and its impact on the biological environments. The Indian Ocean Monsoon, environmental proxies and a summary of Arabian flora and fauna are important topics in this chapter. In Chapter 4 the reader is introduced to the study of stone tools, while Chapter 5 explores the basic concepts and processes related to biological evolution.

In Chapters 6-11 Rose provides information on human biological and cultural evolution between about 3.3 Mio and 6,000 years ago or, in other words, from the earliest scavenger and hunter-gatherer populations of the Pleistocene to the hunter-herding societies of the Holocene. Arabian archaeological records are contextualized within a wider geographical, genetic as well as chronometric framework. Chapter 6 focuses on the earliest part of human evolution, the evolution of archaic hominins such as *Homo erectus* and the first expansions into Arabia. Chapter 7 deals with the time between 300,000 and 100,000 years ago, when our species *Homo sapiens* emerged. Chapter 8 explores an important period between 130,000 and 70,000 years ago. It is in this time period when climatic and paleoenvironmental proxies show widespread favourable living conditions in Arabia, in landscapes lush with vegetation and permanent rivers. One key concept introduced in this chapter is the Menschenpumpe. The term Menschenpumpe describes a link between climate evolution and human biogeography. Human populations were 'pumped' onto the Arabian Peninsula during wet phases, while they were pushed away

during periods of aridity (p. 185). Archaeological and genetic information is presented to support the idea of climate determining human presence in Arabia. Chapter 9 discusses a severe genetic bottleneck caused by the eruption of the Toba volcano about 74,000 years ago, and archaeological evidence that potentially shows the survival of a small human population in southern Arabia. Rose hypothesizes that descendants of these survivors left Arabia and colonized western Asia between 70,000 and 50,000 years.

In Chapter 10, a genetic phantom population, the ‘Basal Eurasians’, is discussed as potential survivors of the harsh climatic conditions during the Last Glacial period. Archaeological evidence comes from only one site in Dhofar, but Rose argues here that the Gulf basin would have been largely dry at that time and hence much of Arabia’s prehistoric records from the Last Glacial period could be laying on the bottom of the now flooded Gulf. The final chapter presenting empirical records is Chapter 11, which focuses on the early to mid-Holocene (about 12,000 to 6,000 years ago), a period when human subsistence developed from acquiring food to producing it. It is in Chapter 11 where Rose describes the development of the Arabian Neolithic. Cultural and genetic data as well as paleoenvironmental characteristics of this period assist Rose in bringing the narrative of this book full circle by asking: “Were these lofty cattle herders the same mythical giants of ‘Ad [...]?” (p. 288).

Rose completes the book in the epilogue in Chapter 12. Here he explores the topic of oral traditions, in particular how long they may last and why this matters. He cites Aboriginal tribes in Australia who describe in their folklore natural events more than 7,000 years ago. He concludes that these myths are more than fanciful stories but rather handed-down reminders of the possibility of fatal climatic events and the necessity of behavioural flexibility and continuous innovation.

As this review has already mentioned, An Introduction to Human Prehistory in Arabia is well written and entertaining. In addition, the figures are well produced and allow the reader to easily understand the content. As such, I would certainly recommend this book to all seeking an introduction to Arabian Paleolithic and Neolithic archaeology. Moreover, the contextualization of Arabian prehistoric records with oral traditions provides a rarely seen perspective in paleolithic archaeology, something which I think makes this book all the more interesting to a broader audience.

Whilst I do recommend this book, I also have to say that, in my humble opinion, the kind of storytelling writing style used here is not my personal favourite, especially given that this book is sold as a textbook. One consequence of this writing style is that the content is not always easy to access if one has not read the book from start to finish. Consider chapter titles such as: “Turtles All the Way Down”, “Seeking Solace” or “Lands of Legend”. What should the reader expect to find in these chapters? The writing style used here may have something to do with the history of this book

and where it developed from (see p. ix). Unfortunately, this narrative style is also visible in the content. There is a very strong focus on southern Arabia, although the title of the book promises to introduce the reader to the prehistory of Arabia. There is some information on central and northern Arabian records, but I would have found it interesting, for example, to briefly contrast the records from the different parts of Arabia, particularly since there seems to be a contrast in the human-environment relationship among northern and southern parts in Arabia. For instance, as mentioned in the book, there are regions in the south that may be described as refugial areas. In the north, however, there is currently no indication of the existence of such areas. As such, ecological conditions and related population dynamics can be expected to be quite different.

The book uses two terms, namely Southern Crescent and Menschenpumpe (man pump), which were new to me. While on the one hand these catchy expressions might be useful in getting the message across to the reader, they also bear the risk of creating an unintended impression. In my view, this is the case with both terms. The Southern Crescent is a term derived from the Fertile Crescent of the north, where, due to favourable environmental conditions, one development towards producing subsistence strategies occurred. I fully understand the desire to use the term crescent in southern Arabian prehistoric contexts, for one thing southern Arabia somewhat approaches the shape of a crescent. Moreover, an astronomical crescent is constantly waxing and waning, making it a useful metaphor for changing climatic and environmental conditions; and, of course, using a term derived from one that is established draws attention. The main issue in the context of Stone Age archaeology is, in my view, that the term Southern Crescent suggests that South Arabia is a region of shared cultural developments during the Paleolithic. I think the current state of research does not allow such a conclusion.

I also see no advantage in the term Menschenpumpe (p. 185). It suggests that human occupation of Arabia was a purely passive process for humans, whose existence was exclusively at the mercy of climate. I think this is too simplistic since it negates human behavioural creativity and flexibility in response to changing living conditions. Equally important, it masks the environmental diversity in Arabia as well as the importance of local, groundwater-fed habitats, which exist largely independent of changing climatic conditions.

The last issue that I would like to draw the reader’s attention to is the idea of the existence of a Gulf Oasis (p. 246). There is no doubt that in periods of sea-level low-stand large parts of the Gulf basin were exposed, likely forming a land bridge between Arabia and Persia. However, there is only limited empirical evidence supporting the idea that in periods of sea-level low-stand the Gulf basin would turn into a lush environment with plenty of fresh water and organic resources available for hunter-gatherer groups, as proposed by the Gulf Oasis model. One could formulate a competing model of equal likelihood that proposes that the exposed

Gulf basin turned into a muddy marshland devoid of lithic raw material with only sparse organic resources and brackish water available. While I do not exclude the possibility that the Gulf basin could have been home to a human population during periods of sea-level low-stand, I would like to remind the reader that Rose’s Oasis model is not the only possible scenario. We clearly need more data from the Gulf basin to test the competing models.

Despite the issues mentioned above, I very much appreciate the efforts Rose has invested in producing this book. I think it is important to have such a resource which presents the records from large parts of Arabia alongside numerous hypotheses and models. This provides an important foundation for scientific exchange, both in the context of expert debate and the training of future generations of researchers. Thank you, Jeff!

By Knut Bretzke

Across Arabia: Three Weeks in 1937

Geraldine Rendel

Introduction by William Facey

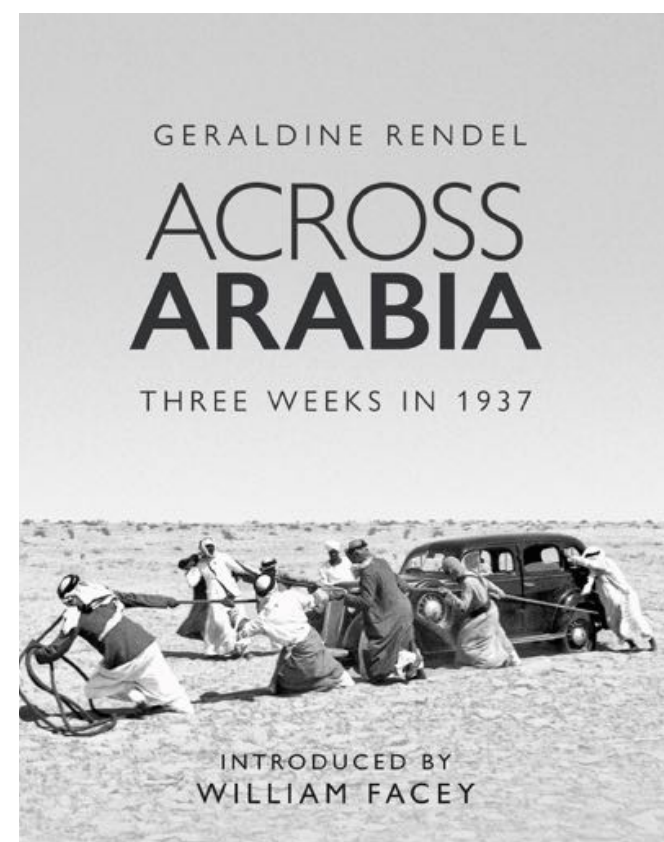
London: Arabian Publishing, 2021

228 pp. Maps. Original monochrome photographs throughout. Detailed notes. Picture credits. Index. Bibliography. Hardback. £25

ISBN 9780992980856

One morning in March 1937 a crowd of curious onlookers gathered outside the door of the King’s Palace in Riyadh. They were there for the spectacle of the arrival of a British diplomat, Mr George Rendel, for a formal call on the Emir Sa’ud bin Abdul Aziz. Visits by Western diplomats and businessmen were uncommon though not unheard-of. However, this case was special, since Rendel was accompanied by his wife, Geraldine, and the couple were engaged in a journey all the way across the Peninsula, from al-‘Uqayr in the East, to Jiddah on the Red Sea. Geraldine was probably only the second European woman to cross Arabia, the first being Dora Philby, the wife of Harry St John Philby (Hajji Abdullah). And she is thought to have been the first non-Muslim woman to have travelled openly across Saudi Arabia, the first to have been received openly by King Abdul Aziz (Ibn Sa’ud), and the first to be received at a dinner in the Royal Palace at Riyadh.

Across Arabia offers us remarkable insight into Saudi Arabia in the late 1930s, just a few years after Ibn Sa’ud consolidated his Arabian conquests into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Geraldine’s husband, George, was head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office and played an important part in bringing Arabian affairs out of the purview of the Government of India and into London’s control. At a time when visits abroad by Foreign Office officials were rare (it was the job of overseas missions to conduct direct contacts with foreigners), and almost unheard-of for such



tours to include a spouse, Rendel and his wife visited the Middle East together, twice – first in 1932, travelling to Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon, and returning via Egypt; and secondly in the journey covered in this book.

The reader of literature about Arabia can find plenty of material on the explorers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, including women travellers such as Gertrude Bell and Lady Anne Blunt. The period between the First and Second World Wars is, however, less well covered. This book is a reminder that the Arabian Peninsula remained relatively undeveloped until well into the last century, and quite unknown to non-Muslim Westerners. Even in 1974, when my wife and I accompanied the British Ambassador Alan Rothnie and his wife to Ha’il in the northern part of Najd, Rothnie and I reckoned that our wives were only the seventh and eighth non-Muslim European women to visit there.

In Across Arabia we find several remarkable features in addition to the mere fact of the journey taking place at all. Geraldine managed to keep a detailed diary – a feat in itself, considering the tough conditions of travel and the variety of places (and tents) in which the couple stayed – and afterwards wrote it up in a 39,000-word travelogue which her family, only recently, made available for publishing. On top of this vivid account, both George and Geraldine had the presence of mind to take a series of photographs in the course of their journey, recording faces, buildings, and even the trials that beset any desert traveller such as getting vehicles stuck in the sand.

William Facey has done us all a great service in bringing their images and Geraldine’s text inside the covers of this fine volume. He has prefixed it with a carefully researched

introduction, describing the family background and the lives of both Rendels, together with a clear summary of the development of relations between Britain and Saudi Arabia in the inter-war period. This was the time when Ibn Sa'ud emerged from obscurity to defeat first the Al Sa'ud's traditional rivals, the Al Rashid, then the Hashemites in the Hijaz, and finally the Ikhwan revolt (not forgetting campaigns elsewhere in Najd and on the Yemen frontier), to create a vast area of control bounded approximately by the current borders of Saudi Arabia. Despite the extent of Saudi power, it was still far from certain that wealth and prosperity would follow. Oil had been found in Kuwait and nearby Bahrain (and of course resources had been exploited since the early 1900s in Persia and soon afterwards in Mesopotamia), but the British were sceptical of success in exploration in mainland Arabia – scepticism that was all too soon to be seen as ill-founded. Facey explains how the main British interests in Arabia at this time were in settling border issues with Ibn Sa'ud's neighbours (principally the Trucial States) and in air communications. He helpfully sheds light on the dynamics of this moving picture of "Britain's Moment in the Middle East", as the historian Elizabeth Monroe has more fully recounted it (John's Hopkins University Press, 1963). Some readers might welcome more explanation of the division of responsibility for Gulf affairs as between the Government of India and the Foreign Office, i.e. with the Resident in Bushire and the Agents appointed from Delhi (or previously Bombay and Calcutta), and consular and Legation officials from London in Jiddah. And, in the context of George Rendel's later visit to the Kingdom, with his daughter Rosemary, in 1964, the reader could have been helped by a fuller narrative of Ibn Sa'ud's closing years and the weaknesses of his son Sa'ud as King in the mid-1950s.

The actual text of Geraldine's travelogue is a delight to read. She never loses sight of the bigger picture – the journey that will culminate in the meeting in Jiddah with Ibn Sa'ud – yet fills her narrative with fascinating detail of the places they travel through, the people they meet, and even the plants she observes (dutifully explained by Facey, often with reference to Mandaville's work: *Bedouin Ethnobotany*, University of Arizona Press, 2019). You can open the book at random and find passages that put you by her side:

I visited the women's tent in this camp and found a young mother sitting with a child on her lap. She had a silver amulet suspended from a chain round her neck, which showed through her ragged shift, and her eyes looked weak. Another woman was stirring a pot of some whiteish broth over the fire with a bunch of dry camel-thorn sticks. They told me it was truffles cooking in milk. Truffles are fairly plentiful in eastern Arabia and are a favourite food of the Bedouin... (p.102).

At another time she describes how she offers a young Bedu boy some chocolate, which he spits out in disgust before accepting with gratitude a loaf of flat bread (p. 145). These and other episodes remind us how a Western woman travelling in Arabia could often mix with the men as well as

being welcomed into the company of Arab women. Her pen picture of Ibn Sa'ud is one of the highlights of her descriptive powers (p. 181).

Geraldine's treatment of the issue of slavery is interesting. In the early part of the narrative, she skirts round it, referring to certain servants simply as "negroes". Later she acknowledges their slave status. And, on the journey west of Riyadh, she records a longer conversation on the topic, probably with Hafiz Wahba, Ibn Sa'ud's ambassador in London, who was with the Rendels throughout (p. 144). By the 1930s slave trading into the Red Sea and the Gulf had largely declined, but Saudi Arabia did not prohibit the import of slaves until 1936 (with questionable enforcement), and slavery itself was made illegal only in 1962. So, the Rendels would have seen significant numbers of slaves during their journey.

The photographs form an extraordinary collection, for which we have to thank the Royal Geographical Society for making them available, and the Rendel family for depositing them with the RGS. Of the 280 in the collection, Facey has selected about 90, providing a range of images – places, people (from Ibn Sa'ud and the Emir Sa'ud, to the Rendels' travelling companions and butler/cook), and incidents of the journey. They are well reproduced, and carefully fitted to match the relevant places and timings of the narrative.

William Facey has enhanced his own introduction and Geraldine's text with copious notes, often drawing on his in-depth research developed in his other books on Arabian history and culture. Many of these notes go beyond literature references and add substantively to appreciation of the narrative. The reader needs to keep a marker in the notes section, to ensure that Facey's valuable commentary is not missed. Putting the substantive comments in footnotes might have made this easier.

The combination of Geraldine's interesting narrative, William Facey's strong introduction and diligent research, assisted once more by Martin Lubikowski's clear maps, with Arabian Publishing's excellence in presentation, has produced a book that adds much to our picture of Saudi Arabia's early days, and of Britain's relationship with the newly formed Kingdom, and will give pleasure as well as information both to the lay reader and to the scholar of Arabian affairs.

By Stuart Laing

LIVES REMEMBERED

Tribute to the life and archaeological career of our colleague Tibor Paluch (1977 – 2022)

On the 9th of June 2022, Tibor Paluch died a tragic death in the United Arab Emirates while working for the Government of Ras al-Khaimah's Department of Antiquities and Museums.

Tibor was a gifted and experienced field archaeologist, and a very well read, multilingual professional. Archaeology was his life. While his many interests included the prehistory of the Great Hungarian Plain, Carpathian Basin, Balkan Peninsula, Near East, and Central Asia - the Neolithic period in particular remained his personal favourite.

In 2004, Tibor finished his archaeological education at the University of Szeged in Hungary with a Master's degree and his thesis 'Early Neolithic Graves from Hungary'.

From 2001 to 2017, he was employed for various archaeological museum and excavation projects in his homeland, exploring and studying the Hungarian Neolithic Period; Copper, Bronze, and Iron Age; as well as the Roman, Avar, Arpadian, and Middle Ages.

Between 2006 to 2007 and from 2009 onwards, he taught 'The Neolithic and Copper Age in the Carpathian Basin' as a guest lecturer at the Universities of Szeged and Pecs, and 'The Neolithic and Copper Age in the Middle East and the Balkan' at the University of Szeged.

Following his lifelong fascination for the prehistory of the Near East and Central Asia, Tibor embarked on an archaeological mission to Afghanistan. From 2012 to 2013, he joined a large, international project in Mes Aynak. Work on this vast and culturally rich archaeological site, which has been inhabited for thousands of years, changed his life fundamentally. Despite the devastating war and terrorism, Afghanistan and the Afghan people left a lasting impact on Tibor. In 2014, he completed a second Master's degree in history at the University of Szeged with his thesis 'A forgotten Town along the Silk Road – Mes Aynak in Afghanistan'.

Tibor's numerous publications and his editorial work include, besides many more, the Neolithic Period and Körös Culture in eastern Hungary, Mes Aynak in Afghanistan, and works about Buddhism and Islam for the National Geographic Hungary.

Between 2013 and 2014, Tibor started his archaeological work in the Arabian Gulf, where he initially joined 'The Origins of Doha Project' in Qatar. Back in Hungary, he continued to work for a private archaeological company, before returning to the Arabian Gulf for good.

He became part of the archaeological team of the 'Jazirat al-

Hamra Restoration Project' in Ras al-Khaimah in 2017, where he joined several of his former colleagues from Mes Aynak.

In 2018, Tibor was appointed a member at the Department of Antiquities and Museums, where he successfully organized and supervised various archaeological excavations and surveys during the following years. His tragic and untimely death has bereaved us of a dedicated, gifted, exceptional, and irreplaceable colleague.

Tibor Paluch was an incredibly kind-hearted person. A loving husband and father, whose family was the most important thing in his life. He is survived by his beloved wife and fellow archaeologist Yvett Kujani, his dearly loved daughters Sara Paluch and Dorka Horvath, and his darling dog Lüszi.

Fulfilling his personal wishes, the funeral ceremony was arranged in accordance with his lifelong dedication to archaeology. Tibor Paluch was buried on the 6th of July 2022 in Szeged/Hungary, and honoured with an authentic Neolithic burial.

May the soil be light to you, Tibor.

May future archaeologists marvel at your lovingly prepared grave goods, your beautiful Neolithic tools and weapons.

Christian Velde | Chief Archaeologist & Researcher
Imke Möllering | Senior Archaeologist & Researcher
Department of Antiquities and Museums
Government of Ras al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates

Andrew Thompson

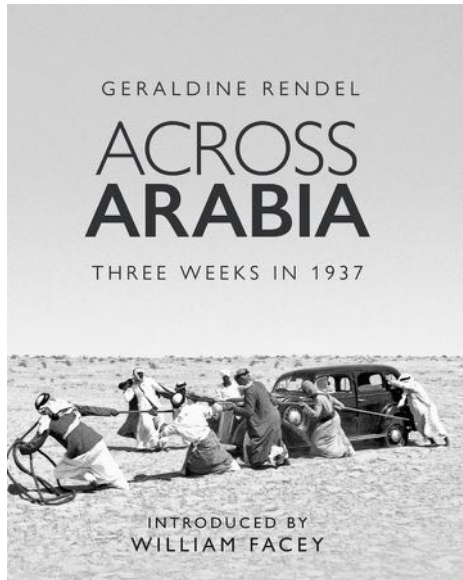
It is with great sadness that we inform you that Andrew (Andy) Thompson passed away on 20 August. He was Treasurer of the Seminar for Arabian Studies and the Society for Arabian Studies before their merger to form what is now the IASA and remained Treasurer for the Seminar in the early years after the merger. Both he and his wife Ionis gave strong support to IASA. Andrew had a deep fascination with the geology and the Palaeolithic and Neolithic eras in Arabia and was the author of *Origins of Arabia on the geology and evolution of the Arabian Peninsula*. His life will be recalled in the 2023 edition of the Proceedings of the Seminar of Arabian Studies. We offer our condolences to Ionis.



NEW PUBLICATIONS ON ARABIA

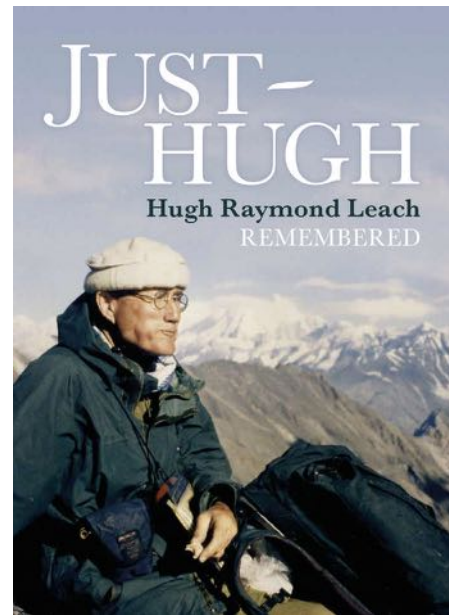
Be sure to check out the Book Review section on page 22 for detailed information on several key books on the region.

If you have a publication forthcoming, please share the details with us at outreach@theiasa.com



Rendel, Geraldine, with an Introduction by William Facey. *Across Arabia: Three Weeks in 1937*. Arabian Publishing, 2021.

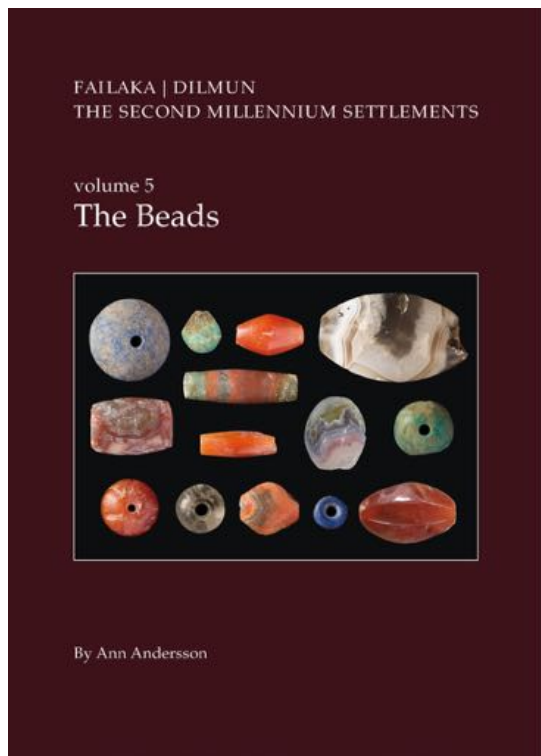
ISBN: 978-0-9929808-5-6



Just Hugh: Hugh Raymond Leach Remembered. Arabian Publishing, 2022.

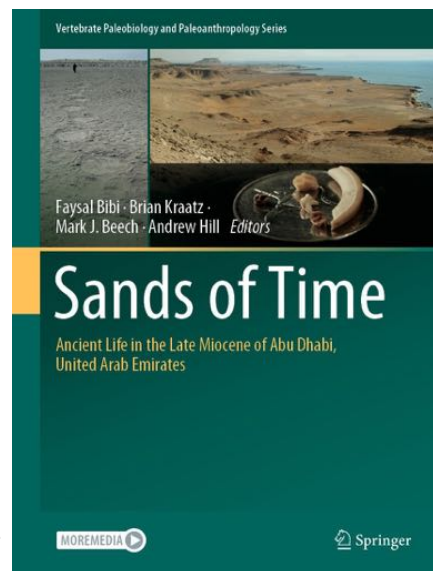
Memories of Hugh Leach - Arabist, explorer and author of the highly praised *Seen in the Yemen* and *Strolling About on the Roof of the World*, the centennial history of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs (RSAA).

ISBN: 978-1-911487-74-6



Andersson, Ann: *The Beads. The Second Millennium Settlements. Volume 5*. Danish Archaeological Investigations on Failaka, Kuwait. Jutland Archaeological Society Publications, 2022.

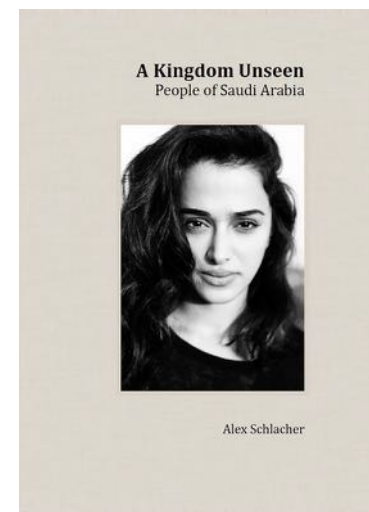
ISBN: 978 87 9342 372 5



Bibi, Faysal, Brian Kraatz, Mark Jonathan Beech and Andrew Hill (editors.). *Sands of Time: Ancient Life in the Late Miocene of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates*. Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2022.

Hardcover ISBN: 978-3-030-83882-9

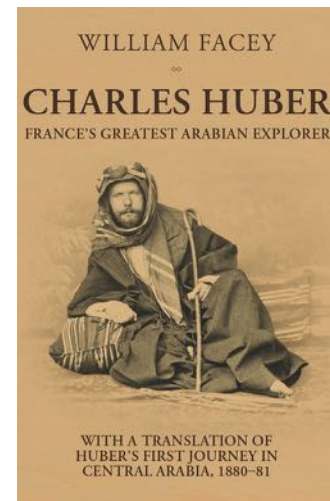
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Schlacher, Alex. *A Kingdom Unseen: People of Saudi Arabia*, Medina Publishing, 2022.

A vivid portrait of the early days of Saudi Arabia from the unique perspective of the first Western woman to travel openly across Saudi Arabia as a non-Muslim

ISBN: 978-1-911487-42-5



Facey, William. *Charles Huber: France's Greatest Arabian Explorer*. Arabian Publishing, 2022.

ISBN: 978-1-911487-67-8

BRITISH LIBRARY

The British Library/Qatar Foundation Partnership is pleased to announce the start of Phase 4 of the partnership in July 2022. This new 3.5-year phase will add to the Qatar Digital Library another 675,000 pages of historical material on the Gulf from the British Library's collections including archives from the India Office Records, Arabic Scientific Manuscripts collection, and sound archives. We look forward to keeping in touch on @blqatar



IASA SOCIAL MEDIA

If you do not already follow the IASA on social media, please do so. You do not need to have a Facebook account to see our page, and as well as posting our own news and information about events and lectures etc., we repost articles and items of interest from the news and from other organisations. It's a great way of keeping up with what is happening in the Arabian Peninsula.

As well as [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/theiasa), we are on Twitter (@IASArabia), Instagram (@theiasarabia) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/theiasa).

We also welcome any items of interest to share, or even just your photographs of sites, museums, the natural landscape or flora and fauna of Arabia. Just message us via any media!

Thank you to our members for your continued support, and to all of the contributors to this edition of the IASA Bulletin.

THE LAST WORD

The Last Word in this Edition of the IASA Bulletin goes to writer Tony Walsh

ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY, TOURISM AND 221,796 WORDS



Arriving into Oman on a warm, humid March day in 1986, my job was to manage a business that wholesaled much of the product it imported, so I travelled around the country for work. My weekend pleasure was to further explore the country, which was so unlike my native England. Embossed letterheads from the commanding general in Muscat's Beau Geste-style army headquarters permitted me to ascend to the Saiq Plateau in Al Jabal Al Akhdar, and a smile somehow enabled me to wander through the police station occupying the 18th-century Al Hazm Castle.



Tony and officer in Al Hazm Fort in 1987.

However, what was truly remarkable was that the modernisation of the country had been so rapid that often I stepped through a portal into Oman's not-so-distant past. Friends in Dhofar would explain the logistics of life in their cave, though they now lived in a mansion. Others in Ash

Sharquiyah still lived in communities of Barasti, date palm frond, homes. Clustered around the northern mountains, some families still had not moved into the breeze-block housing of today, and continued to live in their quite practical mud-brick properties on the edge of the oasis.

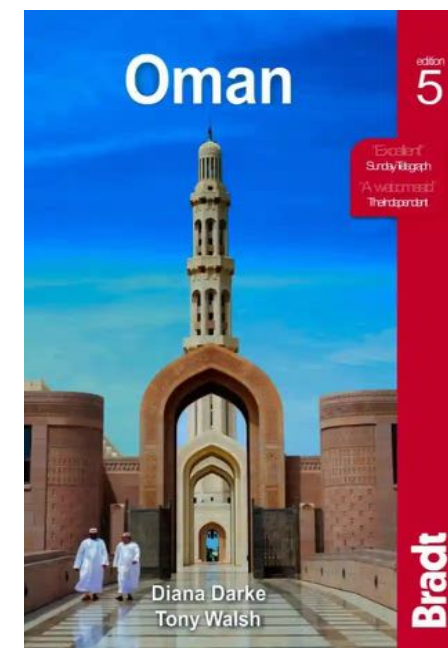
Archaeological remains almost leapt out of the landscapes; many, like aflaj, remain an intrinsic part of life in the country without changing their function. Morphing between its original purpose and a football pitch is the 1.5 sq hectare 18th-century agricultural platform in Wadi Bani Kharus.

As Oman developed, so did my business. It transformed into a tour company for inbound visitors. It was now that Oman's archaeology and history became more than a pleasure. It was part of my work.



UNESCO Al Ayn Tombs

Touring in Oman, away from Muscat, covers hundreds of kilometres in a single day. I needed to organise regular, meaningful breaks for the company's drivers and our tourists. In a country such as Jordan, these breaks focus on handicraft sellers. Though individually worthwhile, they lose their interest when visited consecutively. I made use of one of Oman's key assets, a country with innumerable places that, woven together, could help create a memorable experience. When combined with Oman's obvious modern infrastructure and public facilities, these would help any visitor better understand the maze of Oman's past and



cosmopolitan, sophisticated present.

So, I now made researching what Oman could offer to an inquiring tourist a key part of my work. As 5,000-year-old towers were exhumed from silt-covered plains, they made a perfect stop to learn about a topic, off the beaten track. The

nearby shopping mall brought the tourist into up-to-date Oman, sometimes offering them a glimpse of their own future shopping experience.

Further research was needed when, wonderfully, Bradt Guides asked me, in 2016, to re-write their Oman guide. Sifting out what could be done by tourists travelling without a guide resulted in edition 4 of their Oman series.

Countries in Arabia are in a constant state of change, so a new edition of the guide soon rose above the horizon. New maps, extra text; and all my exploration fitted nicely into 221,796 words, for edition 5.



Bayt Al Ridaydah 1986