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# 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



# International Association for the Study of Arabia (IASA)

formerly the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia

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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: [current\\_research@theiasa.com](mailto:current_research@theiasa.com)

## Grants in aid of research

The grants scheme has been reformulated and details including deadlines are announced on the IASA website

[www.theiasa.com/research/grants/](http://www.theiasa.com/research/grants/)

## Membership

Membership details are available from the IASA website [www.theiasa.com/](http://www.theiasa.com/). For membership renewals contact William Deadman, IASA Membership Secretary, Department of Archaeology, Durham University, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE, or email: [membership@theiasa.com](mailto:membership@theiasa.com)

## For other enquiries, contact:

The Hon. Secretary, Mr Daniel Eddisford: [bulletin@theiasa.com](mailto:bulletin@theiasa.com)

Website: [www.theiasa.com/](http://www.theiasa.com/) or tweet @IASArabia



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**On the cover:** Excavations at Hili 14, located in Al Ain, UAE, this is one of the largest known Iron Age fortified settlements in SE Arabia.

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## WELCOME

Over the last few months the world has changed dramatically as we all try and limit the spread of COVID 19. My thoughts are with all those battling this virus and I hope you, your families and your communities remain safe. The response to this crisis means we are unable to currently produce the Bulletin in hard copy, but we hope it will be available later in the year. The crisis also means this year's Beatrice de Cardi lecture and the next IASA AGM have been postponed until later in 2020. We will keep our members informed of these events via email and our website. This year's Seminar for Arabian studies has been postponed and will now take place in Casa Arabe, Cordoba, from 14th to 17th July 2021.

As always this edition of the Bulletin contains information on all of the IASA's work over the last year as well as information on current research and events, publications, fieldwork and conferences relating to the Arabian Peninsula. Other resources in the Bulletin include details of grants and awards available to researchers working in Arabia as well as

information on societies and journals that may be of interest.

In the Research Notices section Michael Macdonald discusses the varied indigenous alphabets used by both settled and nomadic groups in North-West Arabia between c. 500 BC and AD 300. In the same section Harriet Nash introduces us to the fascinating star knowledge traditionally used in Oman to allocate water shares. The Last Word section this year features the work of the Socotra Heritage Project as they map and record the island's fascinating and much neglected cultural heritage.

Thank you to the contributors to the Bulletin, and to all our members for their support of the IASA. Thank you also to the MBI Al Jaber Foundation for supporting the Bulletin. If you have anything to contribute to next year's Bulletin please email: [current\\_research@theiasa.com](mailto:current_research@theiasa.com).

**Daniel Eddisford** (Editor)



# IASA NEWS

## Welcome to our Patron

We want to welcome Valeria Piacentini as Patron of the IASA for her outstanding support for the IASA over many years and her generosity in providing the funds that have helped sustain our ability to award grants for research in Arabia. We cannot thank her enough for all that she has done, in particular for scholars at the start of their research careers.

## From the IASA Chair

I was delighted and honoured to succeed Carolyn Perry as Chair of the IASA at the 2019 AGM. I had been a trustee for several years, so I was aware of the way that Carolyn - and Derek Kennet before her – had managed the many changes and made IASA into such a strong organisation. We are reviewing our strategy to ensure that we can build on their work and enable the IASA to sustain its development. Our activities have been disrupted by Covid-19. We have to reschedule the 2020 Seminar for Arabian Studies until 2021, postpone the AGM and the Beatrice de Cardi lecture and put on hold some other activities. The committee meets by Zoom.

The annual three-day Seminar and will remain our most important activity but it will be a challenge to learn how best to ensure it retains its formidable reputation whilst also expanding its geographical reach now that it is detached from the British Museum and has taken on a peripatetic course. We were all incredibly pleased with the success of the 2019 Seminar in Leiden, which proved to be a magnificent and generous host. Registration numbers were high and the venue appropriate with its long history of involvement in the Arabian Peninsula. It showed that the peripatetic model can work well.

The 2021 Seminar will be held at Casa Arabe, Cordoba, another exciting location with two special sessions dealing with Andalusia - Al Andalus which was an integral part of the Islamic civilization that originated in the Hijaz in Arabia. I want to thank our colleagues in Spain for offering this great venue. On current plans, the 2022 Seminar will be in Berlin – with Aarhus and Paris potential venues for the two following years. Each Seminar is likely to be different and we will need to be flexible in our approach.

We are proposing to increase the number of trustees to reflect the more international character of the IASA whilst retaining its strong links to the UK and our status as a UK Charity. We have co-opted Julian Jansen Van Rensburg, who chairs the Seminar committee; Gerard Russell, a

distinguished Arabist and former diplomat and author of *Heirs to Forgotten Kingdoms*; Professor Peter Magee who among other positions is Director of the Zayed National Museum in Abu Dhabi and Amy Crossman who is currently working for the British Council as a Conservation Consultant, and will be nominating them for election at the 2020 AGM. Fuller biographies appear in this bulletin. We are a small organisation that depends on volunteers and we would like to hear from any members who would be interested in helping us with the management of this Bulletin, organising meetings, working on outreach and assisting with fundraising. I would like to pay tribute to the current IASA trustees for making so much of their time available. I also would like to acknowledge the support we continue to receive from the MBI al Jaber Foundation and its staff for organising several of our events and assisting with the Bulletin.

Though we have ample reserves we need to keep them higher than might be normal to ensure that we can finance the Seminar for at least another five years. The funding model has changed as we have become more international and arrange Seminars in different locations where the ability of our host institutions to support some of the costs will vary from place to place, making it more difficult to forecast costs. We also want to maintain our award scheme at least at the level of recent years. We will be able to do so in 2020 but thereafter we will need to raise funds ourselves. This can be quite challenging for a small organisation with limited administrative capacity, but we are determined to do what we can. I will let you know more of our plans later this year. We would welcome volunteers with the fundraising experience to help us.

We aim to hold at least four lectures each year. After the next AGM, Professor Hugh Kennedy from SOAS will give the Beatrice de Cardi Lecture on the ninth century Muslim Historian Al-Baladhuri's account of the Muslim Conquest of Arabia. Other lectures planned for the next year include Julian Jansen Van Rensburg on Soqatra, Quentin Morton on the history of Qatar and Michael Macdonald on the very revealing graffiti of pre-Islamic nomads in the deserts of Syria, Jordan and Arabia.

I hope you and your families remain safe and well.  
**Noel Brehony** (Chair of the IASA)

## THE IASA

The International Association for the Study of Arabia (IASA) aims to act as a focal point and advocate for the study of Arabia's cultural heritage and to advance public knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula through the promotion

of research into its history, antiquities, archaeology, ethnography, languages, literature, art, culture, customs, geography, geology and natural history. We do this through the raising of money, organization of events and the supporting of research and publications.

The IASA organises lectures, oversees the annual Seminar for Arabian Studies, publishes its own monograph series, and supports research and publications on the region. Full details can be found at our website: [www.theiasa.com/](http://www.theiasa.com/). The following IASA News pages will explore this work in more detail.

## IASA LECTURES

The IASA Events Subcommittee is planning a range of events in conjunction with like-minded organisations or institutions with relevant collections for the academic year 2020/21. If you have any suggestions for topics for Study Days, lectures, or other events, or belong to an institution that might wish to jointly host an event, please get in touch with Noel Brehony via [contact@theiasa.com](mailto:contact@theiasa.com).

### **MBI Al Jaber Foundation Lecture Series: Endangered Cultural Heritage of the Middle East: Yemen and Oman**

by **Dr Robert Bewley and Dr Michael Fradley**

11th April 2019, MBI Al Jaber Building, SOAS, London

Robert Bewley started by introducing what the Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa Project (EAMENA) is and explaining who its partners and patrons are. Its partners include the Arcadia Fund and the Cultural Protection Fund, as well as a network of universities from across the UK.

Robert explained what preserving archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa regions means by providing a few examples from aerial photography projects that EAMENA has run in Jordan and Iraq, including sites that are today on the World Heritage List. Robert also pointed out how the main tasks for archaeologists involved in projects of this kind include recording, storing and analysing the data that they collect, to allow local and international authorities to decide about further actions to be taken. In this regard, EAMENA has so far collected 252,000 records of sites in the Middle East, which date from the prehistoric to Islamic ages.

Although EAMENA's archaeological interest stretches from Morocco to Iran, this lecture specifically focused on Yemen and Oman; the former being discussed by Dr Michael Fradley. He started by highlighting the difficulties that archaeologists are faced with in war-torn countries. Yemen's cultural heritage doesn't appear to have been damaged as badly as that of other territories, which allowed for a better performance of new technologies employed by the EAMENA team, such as satellite imagery. This type of

investigation enables those interpreting satellite data to determine the conservation state of a given site over a certain timespan with accuracy and to identify the potential causes of damage.

Another focus of EAMENA with regard to Yemen has been that of collecting historic materials, for instance from the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford (where the project is based), in order for archaeologists to compile an all-encompassing, digitised and open-access archive of references for damaged and destroyed archaeological heritage from as early as the time of British rule over Southern Yemen. The final scope of the surveys that have so far been conducted is to provide local authorities working with cultural heritage with data, so that they can continue the work started by EAMENA.

Robert Bewley then shared some of the results from his experiences with aerial photography in Oman. What stood out during his talk is the richness of unknown archaeology in the country. The status of Omani archaeological heritage is a constantly evolving one, with modern settlements sometimes being built around or inside the sites. Robert recounted his experience of flying over Oman, the assistance his team were given by the Royal Air Force of Oman and the success of their operations during 2018 and 2019, despite the hardships posed by flying restrictions within the state itself. Report by **Marylyn Whaymand**

### **The 3rd Beatrice de Cardi Lecture: Our days on the sea are gone but our stories remain: The Life of the Red Sea Dhow**

by **Professor Dionisius Agius**

10th June 2019, Institute of Archaeology, London

Following the 2019 AGM, our 3rd Beatrice de Cardi lecture was given by IASA Trustee Dionisius Agius. Dionisius is, among other things, an ethnographer and anthropologist specialising in the seafarers of the Arabian Peninsula. His latest publication is *'The Life of the Red Sea Dhow'* and this formed the basis of his lecture.

Dionisius has a very lyrical delivery and the experience was akin to sitting around a camp fire on a beach listening to tales of the way things used to be. We were taken back to the days when the Red Sea was a vibrant network of interconnected fishing communities with no borders and a shared culture. A time when the closeness of your neighbours was measured in sailing hours not road distance. A time still celebrated by munching sweet biscuits on festive occasions.

Dionisius first became fascinated by the Dhow in 1984 when he happened upon a traditional Kuwaiti boatyard and followed the construction over a number of weeks immersing himself in the craftsmanship of the process. His talk was illustrated with both his own photographs and those sourced from local archives and national collections. We followed the

story from accounts of the Red Sea trade by early travellers such as Ludwig Burckhardt via more recent sailor explorers such as Villiers to modern interviews by Dionisius and his team ranging along both coasts from Djibouti and Yemen in the South to Egypt in the North via Saudi Arabia, Eritrea and Sudan.

We learned how the generic term ‘dhow’ encompasses a wide range of specialised hull types suited to pearling, fishing and cargo haulage over both short and long distances. We saw maps and photographs of old port towns such as Suakin in Sudan and Quseir in Egypt with their traditional buildings and relics of their past still embedded in the architecture.

Finally, we heard how the advent of the Suez canal, the steamship and modern territoriality have virtually swept away those old traditions of freedom under sail. Dionisius showed us, however, that those traditions are not dead, they still live in the cultural memories of the people and some wooden dhows are still being used despite the greater efficiency and availability of the fibreglass hull.

After a question & answer session, the evening adjourned to the Leventris gallery for a reception where Dionisius continued to answer questions and sign copies of his new book over a few welcome drinks.

The lecture can be found online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp4uTfR7rPA&feature=youtu.be>

Note that due to recording limitations, the video is subject a strobing effect that may be unpleasant for some viewers.

Report by **Alan Hall**

## **Walking the Longest Wadi in Arabia**

by **Chris Bradley**

21st Nov. 2019, Brunei Gallery at SOAS

Chris Bradley, a member of the British-Yemeni Society, described his journey through the Wadi Hadhramaut, the longest wadi (valley) of the Arabian Peninsula, which he crossed in the 1990s. His talk was illustrated by many of the beautiful photographs taken during his expedition. Chris started by introducing the Hadhrami people, their culture, their legendary origins and the reason that prompted him to write a guidebook about the Wadi Hadhramaut: the absence of such a book and the difficulty of finding any information on where and how to travel through the area.

Chris followed a trail described by Harold Ingrams, a British colonial administrator from the time when the British were based in Aden. He commenced his journey through Wadi Hadhramaut alone and decided to walk, unlike his predecessors who had traversed the wadi either on a camel or in a vehicle. In this way, Chris was able to experience hospitality from the local people while at the same time, discovering their day to day activities and, for example, the

businesses that they ran.

Chris showed the audience stunning pictures of all of the sites he visited, such as Shibam, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. He also shed light on some of the traditions that are unique to Yemen, such as class systems that exist nowhere else in the Arab and the larger Islamic world, myths, pre-Islamic sites, as well as building practices. Wealthy families from Yemen, who had made their fortune in trade, both locally and abroad, became patrons of the arts and had edifices built following various architectural traditions, not only from the Arabian Peninsula but also Indian and South-East Asian. The lecture was co-hosted by the British-Yemeni Society and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation.

Report by **Daniele Martiri**

## **Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires: Tim Mackintosh-Smith in conversation with Ian Black.**

11th February 2020, Djam Lecture Theatre, SOAS, London

Tim Mackintosh-Smith is an eminent Arabist, translator and traveller and in 2011 was named by Newsweek as one of the twelve finest travel writers in the past one hundred years. He has lived in Yemen for over 35 years, virtually since first visiting the country as an undergraduate from Oxford and is the author of *Yemen: Travel in Dictionary Land* and of several books on Ibn Battuta. His new book, *Arabs*, is a formidable piece of scholarship but told using anecdote, quotation, striking and original analogy and parallels between the past and the present to make it a joy to read. It received many highly favourable reviews.

The event took the form of a conversation between Tim and one of those reviewers Ian Black, who worked for The Guardian for many years as its Middle East editor and is now a Visiting Fellow at LSE. His book had been many years in the making but it was in part inspired by the “history outside my window” in Sanaa, being written mostly in 2017 as Sanaa was being hit by the war that started in 2015 and is continuing. It deeply saddened him that there is no end in sight and there are too many red coffins, often small ones.

Tim collected “gems of information over years to make a necklace” – in this case language. He spoke of the three outstanding conquests of Arab history – those of arms, Islam, and of Arabic – “the first and most enduring has been the victory, over themselves, of the tongue that bears their name,” he quoted from the book. It is language more than anything else that binds Arabs together. Much of the conversation related to the first 1,500 years. The first known inscription in Arabic dates from 893 BC, making the first recognition of Muhammad as a prophet in 582 AD about the mid-point of the 3,000 years of Arab History, Yemen – south Arabia

The first Arabs were nomads existing in the vast Arabian Peninsula and coming into contact not just with the Fertile

Crescent of the north but the kingdoms of southern Arabia, itself a fertile crescent. Linguistic evidence suggests that the Saba and Himyar may well have had origins in the north. In their heyday these kingdoms would not have considered themselves Arab but by the ninth century they were almost completely Arabised. They brought to Islam a sense of unity through their previous devotion to Ilmaqah and other deities and the organisational requirements of its complex watering system exemplified by the Marib dam and a greater tradition of urbanism. Tim Mackintosh-Smith draws on recent scholarship that suggests that there has been a disconnect between Islamic and pre-Islamic studies that has marred a full understanding of the influence of south Arabia. There was a particularly interesting interchange between Tim and Werner Daum who were in agreement on this issue.

Tim did not just hold the attention for over 90 minutes of the audience of around 100 (several had travelled from abroad especially for this event) but managed to keep enjoyment on their faces throughout with his skills for finding the right anecdote.

Report by **Noel Brehony**

## **The Birds of the Arabian Peninsula**

by **Rob Sheldon**

18th February 2020, Institute of Archaeology, London

The lecture, 'Birds of the Arabian Peninsula', was presented by Rob Sheldon, a freelance conservationist who has worked in the field for almost 20 years, including 12 years with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Most recently, Rob has worked as the director of the King Khalid Wildlife Research Centre in Saudi Arabia and has been a council member of the Ornithological Society of the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia (OSME) since 2009, currently acting as Chair.

Rob introduced the lecture, which focussed on the varied bird life of the Arabian Peninsula, by presenting OSME, founded in 1968 as the Ornithological Society of Turkey, which then expanded to cover a much wider territory over the years. The regions covered by OSME provide conservationists with a wide range of avian species to observe and study. OSME is also committed to raising the interest of young people from the Middle East in the preservation of endangered wildlife.

Rob discussed how vegetation appears throughout the Arabian Peninsula and how birds interact with it; he also stated that the mountains, the Red Sea coast, the Farasan Islands, as well as the Oman-Gulf shores are the most biodiverse habitats of the region. Rob then traced the flyways that most species follow during their migrations in wintertime and highlighted how most birds will spend the cold season in East or West Africa. However, the proliferation of irrigated areas in the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula in particular, have proved attractive to

birds as well, with a number of species actually choosing to make those areas their new dwelling spaces. These newly irrigated areas started to appear during 1987, and by 2012 new habitats had been established by several migratory species. Over the years, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain have seen an increase of irrigated habitats which started to host songbirds and other small-sized species that are not native to the Arabian Peninsula. Most of these species have adapted very well, as Rob pointed out.

Rob also discussed a number of issues concerning the Gulf States and Yemen. The latter's vegetation has proved to be very valuable for a number of species, especially juniper. Nonetheless, habitat degradation in mountainous areas has been especially difficult to deal with, owing to the ongoing conflict. Studies have also provided evidence that camel raising, which constitutes a major status symbol, is also a practice that is endangering some species of birds, because of the huge consumption of vegetation by these animals. The development of urbanisation in desert regions, where resorts now flourish, has impacted upon birds in a detrimental way too, although there is no way to know the extent of this because of a lack of monitoring.

One of the very recent and great achievements of OSME is the creation the first Arabic guidebook to birds of the MENA region, a tool that had been available only in European languages. The guide is also available as a smartphone app (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.natureguides.bome>). OSME have a regular publication entitled 'Sandgrouse' that contains papers and short notes on ornithology, conservation news and a comprehensive round-up of bird sightings in the OSME region. The lecture was followed by a reception kindly provided by the IASA. This lecture was co-hosted with the MBI Al Jaber Foundation

Report by **Daniele Mariri**

## **Interested in joining OSME?**

The Ornithological Society of the Middle East The Caucasus and Central Asia is a UK registered charity. Its aims are to collect, collate and publish ornithological data, to encourage an interest in and conservation of birds of the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia and to assist environmental and conservation organisations and natural history societies in and concerned with ornithological studies and activities in the region.

Membership is from £20 per year and will support conservation projects as well as giving you access to a large network of birders and conservationist. You will also receive the Sandgrouse journal twice a year. Members are also encouraged to share and log their sightings to help with conservation in the region where, out of more than 1000 species, at least 80 are classed as globally threatened. Find out more at the OSME website <http://www.osme.org> or by emailing [info@osme.org](mailto:info@osme.org).



## IASA CONFERENCES

### The 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.

Please note the 54th Seminar for Arabian Studies will now take place in Casa Arabe, Cordoba, Spain, from 14th to 17th July 2021. This is the first time since its establishment that the Seminar has been held in Spain. On this special occasion, there will be two special sessions to explore the cultural links that connect the two peninsulas: Iberian and Arabian. For further information see: [www.theiasa.com/seminar/](http://www.theiasa.com/seminar/)

### The 53rd Seminar for Arabian Studies

11th - 13th July 2019, University of Leiden

The 53rd Seminar for Arabian Studies, organized by the International Association for the Study of Arabia, was hosted by the University of Leiden and took place in the Lipsius Building from Thursday 11th to Saturday 13th July. In total 73 papers and 23 posters were presented at the three-day event, the only annual international forum for the presentation of the most up-to-date academic research on the Arabian Peninsula.

On Friday 12th July a session on the Stone Tools of Prehistoric Arabia was held. Focusing on patterns and changes in stone tool assemblages from Arabian prehistory this session brought together a large number of lithic experts working in Arabia. With 17 papers presented, covering a wide range of sites dating from the Palaeolithic, the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, this session provided insights into patterns of lithic use and technology in Arabia. The papers presented will be published in a supplement to the main Seminar Proceedings, edited Knut Bretzke, who organized the session.

Other sessions at this year's Seminar covered a variety of subjects including Arabian languages, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, Arabian Landscape and Early and Late Islamic Arabia. The event attracted a large number of delegates and the papers and posters presented stimulated interesting and lively debate between speakers and the audience. Other events at the Seminar included a special visit to the University of Leiden Library to examine the collection of Yemenite palm stick inscriptions and a visit to the Textile

Research Centre for a guided tour of their Middle Eastern collections.

On the evening of Friday 12th July the keynote lecture was held in the fantastic National Museum of Antiquities and was very well attended. The lecture was entitled *Changing Paradigms of Research: the Arabian Peninsula* and was delivered by Professor Marta Luciani from the University of Vienna, who directs several excavations in the region. Using a range of evidence from recent excavation in the region the presentation discussed how new analytical techniques could allow novel ideas to be explored and challenge long-established narratives. The keynote lecture was followed by a drinks reception.

After almost two decades of being hosted at the British Museum the new location for 53rd Seminar for Arabian Studies was great success thanks to the hard work of the organisers and student volunteers from the University of Leiden. The Seminar will continue to be held in European locations for the next few years and the 2021 Seminar will be hosted by Casa Arabe in Cordoba, Spain. Please note there will be no Seminar held this year. Many of the papers presented will be published in the next Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies (PSAS 50) which is published annually.

Report by **Daniel Eddisford**

## MONOGRAPH SERIES

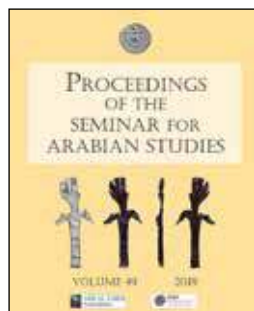
One of the core activities of the IASA is to contribute to the accessibility of research on the Arabian Peninsula, and this includes overseeing the publication of the monograph series originally begun by the Society for Arabian Studies. The series includes research-based studies, conference proceedings, archaeological excavation or survey reports, and MA or PhD theses where the contents mark an important synthesis or a significant addition to knowledge. The monographs are edited by Dr Derek Kennet and Dr St John Simpson and published and distributed by Archaeopress.

A selection of titles can be found on page 55 and a full list on our website: [www.theiasa.com/publications/monographs/](http://www.theiasa.com/publications/monographs/). All titles can be ordered from Archaeopress at [www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com).

As series co-editor Dr St John Simpson explains: "We have published eighteen monographs to date, covering a wide range of topics ranging from PhD theses on the prehistory of the Tihamah and star gazing in Oman to the proceedings of five conferences on the Red Sea and Death & Burial in Arabia. The purpose of the series is to support rapid refereed publication of these forms of research through a dedicated sub-series within the BAR International Series published by Archaeopress. We have several more volumes which are either in press or in advanced stages of preparation."

Potential contributors should contact either of the co-editors in the first instance: Dr St John Simpson: [ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](mailto:ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk) or Dr Derek Kennet: [derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk](mailto:derek.kennet@durham.ac.uk).

## PSAS49



### **Papers from the fifty-second meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held at the British Museum, London, 3rd to 5th August 2018**

edited by Daniel Eddisford.  
ISBN: 978-1789692303.

The *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* is a peer-reviewed series which each year publishes papers read at the Seminar the previous year. It is the prime source for the most recent research on the Arabian Peninsula within a wide range of disciplines and for the latest discoveries in the field. The *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* is edited by Daniel Eddisford, assisted by an Editorial Board formed from members of the Steering and Editorial Committee of the Seminar, and other distinguished scholars. The most recent volume presents papers from the 2018 *Seminar for Arabian Studies* which was held at the British Museum from the 3rd - 5th August 2018.

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## GRANTS IN AID

In 2014 the IASA received a very generous donation from Prof. Valeria Fiorani Piacentini. We are extremely grateful to her. This exciting development has allowed the IASA to develop its research grant scheme and to increase the amount we award, enabling us to support more substantial and varied research projects.

The IASA grants are intended to support research in any academic area covered by the ISA'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 main objective of the research must fit within the scope

of the IASA's aims, and applications must be linked to clear and achievable plans for immediate publication. The number of awards made each year will depend on the strength of applications.

There are two types of research grant:

- Small Research Grants: up to £1,000 (for all categories of researchers)
- Main Research Grants: up to £4,000 (for post-doctoral research)

The application deadline is 15th May each year, awards will be announced by the middle of June. Applicants to the Main Research Grants should normally hold a doctorate at the time of application. Exceptions can be made for researchers with a proven track record of post-doctoral level research and publication. Applicants for Small Research Grants can be at any level of their career, though they would normally be expected to be at least in the second year of a relevant university undergraduate degree.

The grants are available to researchers of any nationality. Individuals or groups can apply but the Principal Investigator of any project must make and be responsible for the application. If funding is being sought for a component part of a larger project, the sub-project should be free-standing with its own objectives. Generally, equipment costs should not comprise more than about 10% of the total budget. Higher proportions will be considered if the case is made in the application. Conference attendance will not normally be funded unless it can be shown that attendance will contribute in a significant way to the research and publication. Institutional overheads will not be covered. Salaries for short-term research staff are allowed but replacement teaching costs for academic staff will not normally be considered. For more details, and how to apply: [www.theiasa.com/research/grants/](http://www.theiasa.com/research/grants/)

This year the IASA is happy to announce it awarded three grants. A summary of the projects funded and their Principle Investigators is provided below, full reports on the results of the work will be included in next year's Bulletin.

### **TaphoTraceArabia: Taphonomy and traceology of Palaeolithic stone tools from Arabia**

Yamandú Hieronymus Hilbert (CNRS, UMR 5133)

Research on human origins and dispersals shows that Arabia served recurrently as both conduit and habitat for populations expanding into Southwest Asia during the Pleistocene. The tools and techniques, however, that humans used to exploit the natural resources across South Arabia, and what those resources were, remain unknown. This project will study prehistoric human environmental interaction as reflected by lithic use and technology. Use-wear and residue analysis will be undertaken on Palaeolithic artefacts from Oman in order to explore site function and

resource management. By reconstructing site function and history this project will study uncharted terrain in Arabian archaeology.

**Stable isotopic signatures from tufa carbonates: Providing environmental context for Palaeolithic archaeology and palaeorainfall composition data to validate climate models**

Abi Stone (University of Manchester)

The Wadi Dabsa basin in the Harat Al Birk contains the richest locality of Palaeolithic artifacts (2.970) in southwestern Saudi Arabia, and it is a pivotal region in hominins dispersals out of Africa. Extensive tufa carbonates, including a partially tufa-encased basalt hand-axe, indicate a wetter basin in the past, which would have been attractive to prey and hominins. Analysing the stable isotopes of already field-collected tufa will reveal information about past source moisture composition and palaeotemperature (preliminary U-Th dates indicate Last Interglacial ages). These isotopic data also represent a rare dataset to help validate numerical climate models using simulations of the past.

**Tracing the late Akkadian and Ur III ‘Magan trade’ using Mesopotamian imported vessels in southeast Arabia**

Michel de Vreeze (Durham University)

This research will examine the Mesopotamian Magan trade during the late Akkadian and Ur III period (c. 2250-2000BC) by petrographic and elemental analysis of imported Mesopotamian ceramic vessel found at sites in southeast Arabia. These vessels form rare physical proof of the historically attested trade, with important new evidence for the involvement of the Batinah coast which strongly suggests trade routes involved sailing past the Hormuz strait. Further elucidating the unique archaeological evidence of this contact is crucial for our understanding of developments in maritime trade patterns and the local population’s involvement in this trade network.

## IASA TRUSTEES 2019

### **Dr Noel Brehony, CMG**

**Chair**

After doing a PhD on Libya and post-doctoral in the West Bank I joined the FCO and spent most of my career dealing with the Middle East with postings to Kuwait, Aden, Cairo and Amman. I was later Director of Middle East Affairs for Rolls-Royce plc, Chairman of Menas Associates, President of the British Society of Middle East Studies and Chair of the Council for British Research in the Levant. In the last few years I have focused on Yemen and was chair of the British Yemeni Society 2019-15 and 2018-9. My book on the PDRY, *Yemen Divided*, was published in 2011. I co-edited *Rebuilding Yemen and Hadhramaut and its Diaspora* and I

am also co-editor of *Global, Regional Local Dynamics in the Yemen Crisis* (published March 2020) and of two other books on Yemen due for publication later in 2020.

### **Mr Simon Alderson**

**Treasurer**

I am the odd trustee out in terms of my background. My MA (and unfinished PhD) are in archaeology, but my field is Medieval Britain, and most of my experience of Middle Eastern archaeology was an excavation in Jordan a few years ago. Fortunately, I’m a trustee because I offer other experience in another field: I’ve been a qualified accountant for 25 years, and have run my own practice for over 20 years. Over my career I have always dealt with charities, and currently serve as either treasurer or reporting accountant to a number of charities. Consequently, I offer both accounting advice and knowledge of charity law and regulations to the IASA. I became involved with the IASA because I’ve known Derek Kennet for many years and he asked me to! I’m a great believer in the work done by educational charities as a whole and, having a soft spot for archaeological charities in particular, it wasn’t and isn’t a difficult decision to get involved.

### **Dr Derek Kennet**

**Co-Editor of Monograph Series**

I am a lecturer in the Department of Archaeology, Durham University. I have been working on the archaeology of Islamic and pre-Islamic Eastern Arabia and the western Indian Ocean for almost 25 years. I am presently in the course of publishing field projects at Kadhima in Kuwait (in collaboration with the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters), at Qarn al-Harf in Ras al-Khaimah (in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities and Museums, Government of Ras al-Khaimah) as well as running a large survey project around Rustaq on the Batinah in Oman (in collaboration with Dr Nasser al-Jahwari of Sultan Qaboos University, the Anglo-Omani Society and the Omani Ministry of Heritage and Culture). At Durham I teach courses on the archaeology of Oman and Eastern Arabia and continue to supervise research students who are working on the archaeology of the region.

### **Prof Dionisius Agius FBA**

I am a Fellow of the British Academy and Al-Qasimi Professor of Arabic Studies and Islamic Material Culture at the University of Exeter and affiliated to King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah. Educated at the Jesuit Université St-Joseph, Beirut and University of Toronto, I am an Arabist, ethnographer and linguist working on the maritime cultural landscapes of the Western Indian Ocean. I am the author of: *Seafaring in the Arabian Gulf and Oman: People of the Dhow* (Kegan Paul 2005), winner of The Abdullah AL-Mubarak Al-Sabah Foundation and British-Kuwait Friendship Society major Book Prize; *In the Wake of the Dhow: The Arabian Gulf and Oman* (Ithaca 2010); *Classic*



*Ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean* (Brill 2014) and, most recently, *The Life of the Red Sea Dhow: A Cultural History of Seaborne Exploration in the Islamic World* (IB Tauris 2019).

### **Dr Robert Bewley**

Currently I am the Director of the *Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa project*, University of Oxford, a project that began in 2015. More information on the project is available at <http://eamena.arch.ox.ac.uk>. I trained as an archaeologist (at Manchester and Cambridge Universities) and was initially employed at English Heritage as an Inspector of Ancient Monuments in 1984. I moved to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in the Air Photography Unit in 1987, and became the Head of Aerial Survey until 2003 (by then back in English Heritage). I was Head of Survey 2003-4, and then English Heritage's Regional Director for the South-West 2004-2007 and became Director of Operations for the Heritage Lottery Fund (2007-2014). My research interests are in aerial archaeology, prehistory, landscape archaeology and the Middle East and North Africa.

### **Dr Robert Carter**

I am Professor in Arabian and Middle Eastern Archaeology at UCL Qatar, where I run the MA in Archaeology of the Arab and Islamic World. I have broad interests in the archaeology and deep history of the region, from the Palaeolithic to the 20th century AD, particularly Neolithic seafaring, pearl-fishing and the foundation of the Gulf towns. I currently have two research projects: The Origins of Doha Project, funded by the Qatar National Research Fund, which combines archaeology, oral history and historical research to examine the life of the city from its foundation through to the coming of oil; and the Shahrizor Prehistory Project, funded by UCL Qatar and the Institute of Archaeology UCL, which investigates prehistoric interactions in northern Iraq during the 6th and 5th millennia BC.

### **Ms Amy Crossman**

Amy is an independent conservation consultant, with 16 years' experience working for national and international organisations, specialising in collections care and archaeological and ethnographic object conservation. For the last five years Amy has worked as an independent conservator. Amy has a particular interest in integrated pest management and provides specialist advice and training on pests in museums, archives and historic houses. Other interests include disaster planning and response, environmental management, exhibition design and hazardous collections.

Amy has worked extensively in the Middle East, as Metals Conservator for the Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah/United Nations Development Programme in Kuwait, as conservation consultant for UCL Qatar and as Lead Objects Conservator

on the Saruq Al Hadid Archaeological site in Dubai. Amy has long-term involvement in the delivery and development of the British Council's International Museum Academy Myanmar programme, designing and delivering a national conservation training framework in preventive conservation, specifically implementing and progressing Integrated Pest Management countrywide. She speaks the Arabic language and has translated conservation terminology from English into Arabic and proof-read conservation literature translated from English into Arabic. She is committee member for the Pest Odyssey UK Steering Group and is an assessor for the British Council Cultural Protection Fund.

### **Prof Clive Holes FBA**

During the 1970s and 80s, I was an Overseas Career Officer of the British Council, serving in Bahrain, Kuwait, Algeria, Iraq and Thailand. I was involved in setting up Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman in the mid-80s and was the Director of its Language Centre 1985-7 whilst on leave from Salford University, where I was Lecturer in Arabic and Applied Linguistics 1983-7. In 1987 I took up a Lectureship in Arabic at Cambridge and a Tutorial Fellowship at Trinity Hall, being promoted to Reader in Arabic in 1996. In January 1997 I moved to Magdalen College Oxford and the Oriental Institute to take up the Khalid bin Abdullah Al-Saud Chair for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World, from which I retired in 2014, becoming an Emeritus Professorial Fellow of Magdalen. I was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2002. My main interests are the languages, dialects and popular cultures of the Arabian peninsula from the earliest times to the present.

### **Dr Julian Jansen van Rensburg**

Currently I am the Project Leader for the British Council Cultural Protection Fund project "Integrating Soqatra's cultural heritage into conservation". I have a masters in Maritime archaeology from Southampton University and a Doctorate from the Institute for Arab and Islamic studies at Exeter University. I have worked extensively across the Middle East both under and above water, although my specific field of expertise is the Soqatra archipelago, where I have worked for the past 17 years.

My main research interests include cultural heritage management, rock art studies, GIS applications in archaeology, landscape archaeology, maritime archaeology, and Indian Ocean trade networks in Antiquity and the Islamic Period. I am specifically interested in conducting multidisciplinary research and my most recent project, funded by National Geographic, used ancient DNA in conjunction with the archaeological, historic and ethnographic record to revealing the population history of Soqatra.



## **Mr Michael Macdonald FBA**

I am an Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College and a Research Associate of the Khalili Research Centre in the University of Oxford. Between 2013 and 2017, I directed the Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia project, funded by the AHRC and based at the Khalili Research Centre. This has produced an online database of more than 40,000 inscriptions from ancient North Arabia and more inscriptions are being added all the time. I have worked for the last 40 years on the languages, scripts and inscriptions of ancient North Arabia (including Jordan and southern Syria), ancient literacy and the history of the nomads. I undertake epigraphic surveys in the desert of north-eastern Jordan and in northern Saudi Arabia where I direct the British component of the Saudi-British-German project Epigraphy and Landscape in the Hinterland of Taymā'. This records the numerous inscriptions in the desert around the oasis of Taymā' in their topographical, hydrological and archaeological contexts. In 2018 I was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Chicago.

## **Prof Peter Magee**

Peter Magee is Director of Zayed National Museum and the Head of Archaeology with the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi. From 2002 he served as Professor and then Chair of the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology at Bryn Mawr College in Philadelphia. At Bryn Mawr he also served as the Director of Middle Eastern Studies and the Assistant to the President on International Education. Prior to that he held academic posts at the University of Ghent and University of Sydney, from where he received his PhD in 1996. He has published widely on the history and archaeology of Arabia and adjoining regions and his most recent book was entitled *The Archaeology of Prehistoric Arabia* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). He has directed archaeological excavations in the UAE since 1994 and also co-directed an excavation at the late prehistoric settlement of Akra in Pakistan during the late 1990s. He was born in Northern Ireland and has lived in Australia, Belgium, the US and the United Arab Emirates. In his spare time he researches the origins of recipes and ingredients in the Middle East and South Asia.

## **Ms Carolyn Perry**

I am Director of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, a UK registered charity founded by philanthropist and businessman H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber which aims to build bridges between the Middle East and the wider world through activities in the areas of education, cultural dialogue and good governance. In my spare time I am a Board Member of Caabu (Council for Arab British Understanding), and a member of the Advisory Board of the Ancient History Encyclopedia, the world's most-read history encyclopedia. I'm also a freelance lecturer and, in addition to regular talks at the British Museum, I lead

cultural heritage tours to various destinations. I look after the IASA social media accounts, so would welcome any items for Facebook and Twitter.

## **Mr Gerard Russell**

I was a diplomat, serving mainly in the Arab world, from 1995 to 2009. During that time I lived in Cairo, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Jeddah and Kabul. I had some unusual jobs: I was seconded to the Iraqi Prime Minister's office in 2005 and also was for two years the British government's Arabic spokesman, a post which I helped to create after the 11 September terror attacks. In 2009 I went to work briefly for the United Nations before taking up a post at Harvard; it was there that I began a book on the religions of the Middle East called "Heirs to Forgotten Kingdoms" which was a joy to write, and hellish to edit, but which introduced me to a number of wonderful people and ideas. Since 2011 I have mainly been working as a consultant to clients in the Arab Gulf.

## **Ms Ella Al Shamahi**

Ella Al-Shamahi is a National Geographic Explorer specialising in fossil hunting in caves - in unstable, disputed and hostile territories. Ella believes that this is a risk worth taking because huge parts of the planet are being neglected because of instability, which is tragic because some of these places represent the frontline of science and exploration. She also believes that development is not just about aid, it is also about science and empowering locals. Ella is a stand-up comedian and uses comedy as a coping strategy and also to communicate science. She has been performing science stand-up for four years in the UK and the States, has also done a TEDxNashville talk, and has taken three shows to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Ella is currently undertaking a PhD in Neanderthal rates of evolution at University College London.

## **Dr Robert Wilson**

I retired from the Foreign Office in 2014, after a career of 32 years as analyst and diplomat concentrating on the Arab World, with postings in the UAE, Bahrain and Yemen, and also Iraq and Libya. Prior to that I was Assistant Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies at Cambridge University. I first lived in Yemen, teaching English in the highland town of Hajjah (then in the Yemen Arab Republic), from 1972 to 1973, and travelled extensively in the north-west region of Yemen gather data for my doctorate in the period 1975-1979. A revised version of my doctoral thesis, a Gazetteer of Historical North-West Yemen, was published in 1989. I was Chair of the British-Yemeni Society from 2015 to 2018 and continue to serve on its committee.

# NEWS AND RESEARCH BY COUNTRY

## OMAN

### Funerary variability and long-term reuse in Daba collective grave from I millennium BC

by Francesca De Cataldo, Francesco Genchi, Marco Ramazzotti & Alfredo Coppa

The Daba al Bayah burial complex is located on the east coast of Musandam Peninsula (Sultanate of Oman), near the border between Oman Musandam region and United Arab Emirates. The site was discovered in the summer of 2012 during work of a sports centre. It consists of numerous large collective graves, containing hundreds of individuals accompanied by thousands of valuable artefacts. Large Collective Grave 2 (LCG2) is a collective rectangular-shaped structure, which developed partially on the surface. It is dated from the Middle Iron Age (1000-800 BC) to the PIR (Pré-Islamique Récente) period (300 BC-300 AC) (Fig. 1).

LCG2 shows an intense and prolonged use characterized by changes in how human remains were buried. Different types of depositions have been detected: primary single and double burials, multiple depositions and secondary depositions (Duday 2005). The most recent phases of the site are



Figure 1. Panoramic view of LCG2 from south side (photo by F. Genchi).

characterized by scattered and fragmented bones that cannot be interpreted as intentional depositions. This may be related to an abandonment period of the site. The underlying layers of the site have yielded groups of human bones. These archaeological features are referred to as Bone Clusters (BC) (Fattore et al. 2018, Genchi et al. 2018, Nava et al. 2015) (Fig.2). It is probable that the bone clusters found in the upper strata of the site are associated with Iron Age objects. The mixing of remains and artefacts at the site are most likely linked to the action of making room for new burials.

Three types of Bone Clusters (BC) have been detected during field campaigns: spot, wide and tridimensional. The spot clusters (BC 01, 02, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 27, 32, 36, 41, 55, 56, 57, 60 and 61) are isolated skulls or assemblages of few bones placed in a well-defined space (purposely-used feature). With the term wide clusters (BC 08, 10, 15, 26, 29, 31, 37, 48 and 63) we include assemblages of human bones not delimited spatially and with vague borders. The tridimensional clusters (BC 09, 23, 24, 33, 38, 40, 51, 59, 62) are accumulations of bones characterized by a precise spatial organization in the three dimensions. In addition to these three types, sporadic bone accumulations were found, probably related to the same funerary practice of moving and accumulating osteological remains (BC 03=25, 04, 05, 06, 07, 14, 20, 22, 28, 29\_under, 34, 35, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 58). The osteological material from Bone Clusters were analyzed, along with the scattered skeletal remains, to determine the minimum number of individuals (MNI). Currently, an MNI of 224 individuals has been estimated.

During field campaigns, thirty-eight single or double primary depositions have been recovered. Twenty-four burials were located inside the main chamber or near LCG2, while all the others 14 were excavated inside Chambers built on the original walls of the grave. Thirty-five are single



Figure 2. The tridimensional Bone Cluster 24 (photo by L. Fattore).

primary burials, while three are double primary depositions of subadults individuals (burials 6A-B, 18A-B, 20A-B). Seventeen individuals are adults (seven males and ten females) while 24 individuals are sub-adults (0-18 years). Great variability has been documented regarding the orientation of the burials. Nine individuals were orientated N-S, nine E-W, ten S-N and five W-E. The remaining 8 burials were orientated three NE-SW, one SE-NW, two SW-NE and two NW-SE.

A certain degree of variability was observed for the positions of the bodies. Most of the individuals were laid on one side, all had flexed or hyper-flexed lower limbs, while greater variability was detected in the upper limb position.

Inside the Chamber B of LCG2 was a multiple deposition (Burial 14) feature of about 18 individuals (Fig. 3). Twelve individuals were in primary depositions and six individuals as secondary or rearranged depositions. Primary depositions belong to 10 adults (four females and six males) and to two sub-adults (0-6 years). A degree of variability has been found regarding the orientation of the depositions inside the Chamber B. Five individuals were orientated W-E, four S-N, one N-S, one E-W and one SE-NW. Most individuals laid on one side with hyper-flexed upper and lower limbs. The other individuals consist of two adults (one male and one female) and four sub-adults (0-18 years). The skulls were deposited along the margins of the Chamber, leaning against the walls, and were often at the same level of some primary depositions.



**Figure 3. Chamber B, Burial 14. Multiple burial with individuals in primary depositions and skulls placed along the margins of the Chamber (photo by F. Genchi).**

The excavation has allowed us to document the use of the funeral space of LCG2 over time. The bones belonging to the oldest burials would have been removed from the original deposition areas. The skeletal materials and, often, grave goods, would have been accumulated at locations inside or immediately outside the tomb, leading to the formation of the different types of Bone Clusters. This practice seems to be correlated with the discovery of primary burials found in the lower layers of the excavation area, inside Chambers that the archaeological investigations date to later phases.

The LCG2 tomb appears as a collective deposition whose formation over time represents a monumental tribute to tribal alliances dating back to the end of the second millennium and symbolizes the expression of a society strongly structured on parental ties and affiliations.

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## Iron Age survey of the Sharqiyah region, Sultanate of Oman

by Michela Gaudiello & Paul A. Yule

Located 3 km south-east of the most prominent Oman 'exotic' white mountain (altitude 845 m) in the area, the Ġebel al-Hawrah, lies a valley which contains evidence for copper mining and smelting from the Early Iron Age (EIA, 1200–300 BCE) and Middle Islamic periods (1200–1500 CE). This valley lies 1 km south of the eastern end of Wādī Musfah (Fig. 1). A mine, smelting areas, secondary slag crushing, 85+ dwellings and numerous hut tombs are all in



**Figure 1. Location of the Ġebel al-Şalaylī site.**





Figure 2. Ġebel al-Şalaylī site 1 contains numerous hut tombs.

evidence. Most striking is the good preservation of numerous hut tombs. After a Canadian mineral prospection company made a find notice in 1976 ('prospection site 45, Musfa'), a team of archaeologists and archaeometallurgists from the German Mining Museum in Bochum soon followed to research Oman's ancient copper production.

Since 1987, at first glance the site has changed little. First in 2018, confronted with site encroachment, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture erected three signs at the Ġebel al-Şalaylī site. In November, closer inspection of the tombs revealed stone quarrying in more accessible areas. We began to document the site, since efforts are afoot to level it for house building, if not for re-cycling of its copper slag. There is perhaps no hut tomb cemetery this well preserved in the Sultanate (Fig. 2). The tombs generally lie in wadis, but not in the sayl part, in which water flows. Some 237 tombs could be counted. To date, no hut tombs here appear to contain EIA diagnostic finds in situ. But nearby, a few contained such finds (Yule & Gaudiello 2017). Our survey project strives to document sites preliminarily explored in the pre-GPS days of the 1980s and 1990s in greater detail with present-day mapping technology.

The Ġebel al-Şalaylī site contains mine shafts and a relatively small slag field (estimated at 500-1000 tons). Gerd Weisgerber identified it as an important site for EIA copper production. Copper slags are built into some of the hut tombs. Until now only preliminary survey has taken place. A

main research question is the nature of the associated EIA settlement and how the settlement, mining and smelting could function with the amount of water present today. Operations such as fire-setting consume large amounts of water and fuel.

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#### Preliminary investigations on the local pottery in Dhofar (southern Oman) from the Iron Age to the Islamic period

by Silvia Lischi, Alexia Pavan & Agnese Fusaro

Within a wider program of archaeological investigations and study of the materials conducted by the Office of the Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs (Sultanate of Oman) and the University of Pisa (DHOMIAP Project), our analysis of the local pottery manufactured in Dhofar (southern Oman) is providing interesting results. The fortune of Dhofar has always been closely connected to the frankincense which, embarked in the ports along the coast since the 2nd century BC, was sent to the Mediterranean, India and, during the Islamic period, even to China. Despite its numerous commercial contacts that brought about the prosperity of the region and conditioned its economical and cultural development, some features related to its





**Figure 1. Satellite image (Google Earth) of the studied area. The sites of Inqitat and al-Balid are highlighted. The box shows the location of the area in the Sultanate of Oman. (Silvia Lischi)**

architecture, construction techniques, art and a number of productive cycles, such as its pottery production, remained unchanged until today.

The discussed materials come from two settlements, HAS1 and HAS2, on the Inqitat promontory in the area of Khor Rori – about 40 km from the modern city of Salalah, and from the port of al-Balid, today part of the city itself (Fig. 1). HAS1 was inhabited from 400 BC to 200 AD and the

discovery of a considerable number of imported materials highlights how the flourishing of the site was connected to its prominent role within the commercial circuits of the time. HAS2 was occupied between the 10th and the 11th century AD and it was a walled settlement, strongly involved in the commercial activities of the Early Islamic period. Al-Balid was an important port founded around the 10th century and abandoned in the 18th century. The large amount of imported ceramics and small finds discovered during the excavations confirms its leading role in the Indian Ocean trade of the Islamic period.

The local pottery found in the three sites shows clear conservative traits visible in the production techniques, in the type and quality of the fabric, in the shapes, as well as in the techniques and decorative typologies. What can be seen from a first analysis is a general increase, in the pottery assemblages, of the local productions: they start from around 30% in HAS1 (4thcent BC – 2nd cent AD), passing for a 65% in HAS2 (9th-11th cent AD), and arrive up to 80-90% in al-Balid (14th-18th cent AD).

Five main ceramic groups were identified, according to the fabric, the surface treatment and the decoration: Grit Ware (GW), Shell Ware (SW), Mica Ware (MW), Red Ware (RW)



**Figure 2. Northern view of the main gate of Inqitat in the top, southern view of Husn al-Balid in the bottom. (IMTO archive and Office of the Adviser to H.M. the Sultan for Cultural Affairs)**

and Dot-and-Circle Ware (DCW).

All the local vessels have the same characteristics: they are hand-made (wheel production has never been used), they are unglazed and they were fired using an open-firing technique, which involved setting vessels and fuel together in a heap, in large pits or simple kiln-like structures.

Fabrics GW and SW are attested in all the three settlements with rather high percentages (around 40-50%). The closed shapes are mostly globular with, at times, perforated handles. Some simple decorations, made with red paint or incised motifs in the form of rice grains, may occur. Fabric MW is present only in HAS1 and HAS2 with shapes similar to the ones made in fabrics GW and SW. It is completely missing from the al-Balīd corpus, where mica is only sporadically attested among the inclusions. This type of fabric does not appear in association with specific surface treatments. Fabric RW, numerically consistent at al-Balīd, has been found only sporadically in HAS2 and it is completely absent in HAS1. It is a tableware item with purified mixture, sometimes covered with a purple-red thick slip. Traces of burnishing are not uncommon.

Fabric DCW is attested only at al-Balīd where it was commonly used until the 14th/15th century. Its name derives from the principal motif on the vessels, stamped or rouletted on the still-wet clay. In the RW and DCW fabrics, there are often decorations made with red paint, similar but more complex than those present in the GW fabric. Incised and



Figure 3. Diagnostic sherds and complete forms of local pottery from the mentioned sites. (Office of the Adviser to H.M. the Sultan for Cultural Affairs)

stamped decorations are common and the motifs are almost exclusively geometric, including crosses and large painted dots at the centre of the bases.

This on-going study, although still at a preliminary level, does nevertheless corroborate that the characteristics of the discussed productions present a temporal continuity which reaches, in some cases, the current era. In fact there is clear evidence of an increase of local ceramic production during the Islamic period, in line with the results that are emerging from the very recent research projects focused on the Iron Age/Classical period in Dhofar. In ancient times, as in modern traditional ceramics, the most attested forms were the closed ones. An evolution in the decorative motifs has been noted: at the beginning decorations, rarely attested, were simple, with a clearly evident increase in RW and DCW fabrics where the decorations became complex, made of geometric, cruciform signs and incisions. This continuity in the ceramic tradition makes it possible to highlight a stable cultural facies which, even if it sometimes absorbed foreign characters, has never lost its own identity.

Today, a number of small local centres adopt systems similar to the ancient ones to produce ceramic objects destined for the tourist market or for internal use.

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## SAUDI ARABIA

### A new perspective on the site plan of al-Ḥawrā', a medieval port on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast

By So Hasegawa, Risa Tokunaga, Shin-ichi Nishimoto & Abdulaziz Alorini

Since 2018, a Saudi–Japanese joint archaeological mission has been conducting an archaeological survey at the al-Ḥawrā' site on the Red Sea coast, about 10 km north of Umluj, in Tabūk Province (Fig. 1). Although the site was surveyed by Ingraham (Ingraham et al. 1981), partially



excavated by al-Ghabbān in the 1980s and yielded many artefacts and structures dating to the 9th–12th centuries (Al-Ghabbān 2011), the majority of the site remains unexcavated. Before the discovery of the Nabataean port of ‘Aynūnah, this site was regarded as one of the most likely candidates for Leuke Kome, a Nabataean port mentioned by Strabo and others. In addition to the al-Ḥawrā’ site surveys, our team is conducting epigraphic surveys in the site’s hinterland to understand how people and commodities from the port city related to the inland towns and holy cities.



Figure 1 Location of al-Ḥawrā’ (Saudi Japanese Archaeological Mission at al-Ḥawrā’)

Al-Ḥawrā’ appears in early Islamic sources by Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 819), Ya‘qūbī (d. 897/898), al-Ḥarbī (d. 898/899), al-Hamdānī (d. 945), al-Muqaddasī (d. 1000), al-Idrīsī (d. 1164), al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil (d.1199), and Yāqūt (d.1229). We know from their accounts that al-Ḥawrā’ flourished as a waypoint for pilgrims from Egypt and a port for the towns of Wādī al-Qurā and Khaybar. In 578 AH/1183, the crusaders who plundered the ports of Ḥijāz reached al-Ḥawrā’, and were then captured by the army sent by al-ʿĀdil, brother of Salāḥ al-Dīn (La Viere Leiser 1977). The account of 1228/1229 by Yāqūt describes al-Ḥawrā’ as a deserted town with a ruined fortress, but it is uncertain whether this abandonment was related to the crusader attack. After the 15th century, al-Ḥawrā’ was mentioned frequently in Ḥajj literature by pilgrims from Maghrib.

The al-Ḥawrā’ site extends 2 km from north to south and 0.5–1.0 km from east to west. The site is divided by a modern roadway and protected by wire fences. Artifacts are spread throughout the area along the seashore, where modern villas and farms stand. The distribution of structural remains and objects, observations of topography, and spatial information analysis indicate that the site can be divided into a port area and settlement areas. The medieval port seems to have been located in a recess south of the early modern port. In the port area, we found five wells and some sherds of 16th–17th century Chinese blue and white porcelain and

Ottoman pipes, as well as medieval pottery and glassware concentrations. The settlement areas were located on hills to avoid wādī streams. The largest settlement area is located at the southernmost part of the site west of the roadway, where remains of buildings are concentrated within a 0.3-km expanse from east to west. In general, buildings at this site are made of coral and volcanic rock blocks. Outer walls are approximately 70 cm thick, and inner walls approximately 40 cm. The buildings’ upper parts have collapsed, and most of the remains are either foundations or the traces of furnaces at ground level. They do not seem to be disturbed, so careful excavations may reveal an early Islamic cityscape.

The southern settlement area appears to consist of several residential complexes. During the excavation in the 1980s, a mosque with a lintel decorated with part of a Qur’ānic verse was found in this area. Most of the artefacts collected from the surface—such as earthenware, glazed pottery, a stone lamp, tools, and ornaments—are related to daily life. The Islamic glazed pottery includes ‘Abbāsīd green-glazed pottery, lusterware, and pottery with yellow glaze on painted geometric designs that is indigenous to al-Ḥijāz

The survey of the southern settlement area yielded a square-shaped landmark structure on a mound commanding the port. The structure measures 35m on each side, and its walls are approximately 1.5m thick, indicating its defensive nature (Fig. 2). This structure may be the fortress mentioned in al-Muqaddāsī’s 10th-century account: “it [al-Ḥawrā’] has a fortress, and the suburbs are densely inhabited” (al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm*, translation by B. Collins).

In the hinterland survey, we registered graffiti and petroglyphs at 14 sites with the help of the locals. Rock conditions in the wādīs behind al-Ḥawrā’ are not suitable for writing, and graffiti distribution was confirmed from approximately 20 km inland. In total, we found 39 Ancient North Arabian (ANA) (Fig. 3), one Ancient South Arabian

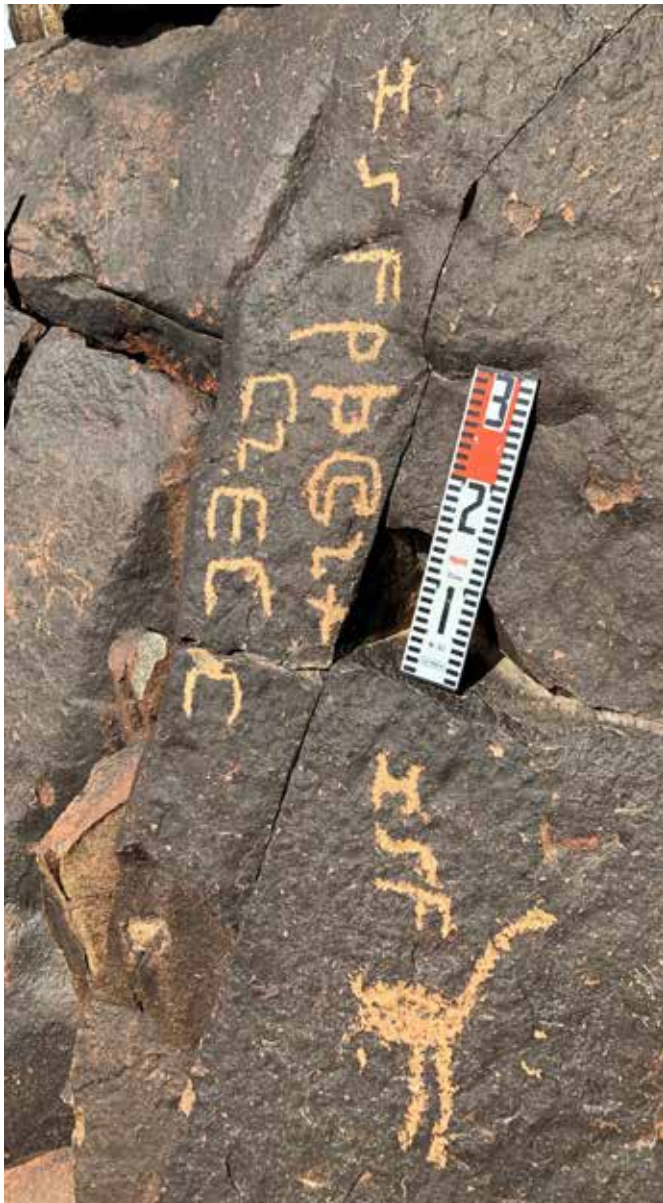


Figure 2 Aerial photo of the “fortress” after cleaning. (Saudi Japanese Archaeological Mission at al-Ḥawrā’)

(ASA), and 24 Islamic Arabic graffiti, as well as several petroglyphs from various periods (e.g., ibexes chased by hunting dogs, camels, and humans). We found no Nabatean graffiti in the surveyed sites. Most of the ANA graffiti sites were distributed near seasonal creeks. The ASA graffiti, discovered at al-Quşbah in the al-‘Īş area, is fragmentary, but the word “the Minaean” is discernible at the end of the personal name in the text. Also, it is noteworthy that a petroglyph of a Bactrian camel was discovered in al-Ghawţ located between Umluj and al-‘Īş. Although it has no accompanying graffiti, it cannot be a modern work judging from the patination of the curved surface (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4: Petroglyph of a Bactrian camel of al-Ghawţ (Saudi Japanese Archaeological Mission at al-Ḥawrā’)**



**Figure 3 ANA inscriptions of al-Sahlah (Saudi Japanese Archaeological Mission at al-Ḥawrā’)**

Based on our present survey results, al-Ḥawrā’ was inhabited from at least the 9th to the 12th centuries, as indicated by the previous surveys and the historical sources. Also, the early modern artifacts suggest that al-Ḥawrā’ functioned as a port in the later period. However, we found neither evidence which suggests the occupation of this port city in the ancient

period, nor the traces of Nabataeans from its hinterland. While the ANA graffiti have been incised by the ancient local inhabitants, the ASA graffiti and the petroglyph of a Bactrian camel might be related to the inland distant trade routes, although the sites where they were discovered are not on the previously known major caravan routes. Our survey of al-Ḥawrā’ and its hinterland has just begun. The excavations, which will start from February 2020, will reveal the origin and function of this port city.

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# UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

## The Umm al-Quwain Abraaq Research Project

by Michele Degli Esposti & Federico Borgi

In November 2019, the first field season of the joint Italian/Umm al-Quwain Abraaq Research Project (ARP) focused on the excavation of four trenches within the eastern part of the multi-period site of Tell Abraaq, the one included in Umm al-Quwain's territory.

The ARP is a newly launched collaboration between the Italian Archaeological Mission in Umm al-Quwain (IAMUQ) and the Archaeology Department of Umm al-Quwain, a section of the Department of Tourism and Archaeology (DTA) of the Government of Umm al-Quwain, targeted to the archaeological and geomorphological investigation of the area of al-Abraq (قربال), just south of the capital town of Umm al-Quwain (Fig. 1).

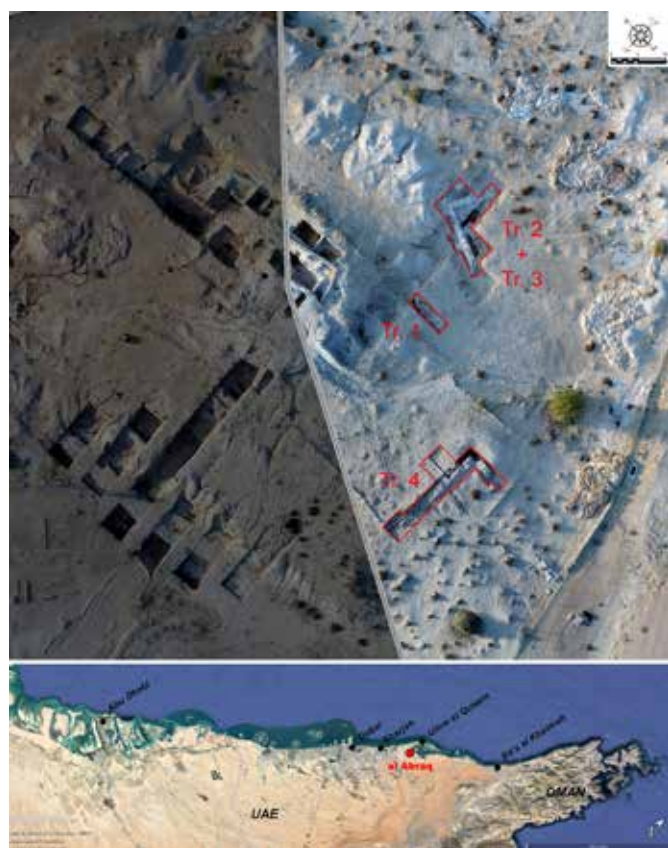


Figure 1. Location of the al-Abraq area (bottom) and an aerial view of Tell Abraaq with indication of the excavated trenches (top). Shaded area lies in Sharjah's territory. (Satellite image from Google Earth; ©IAMUQ/F. Borgi)

Tell Abraaq is well known as one of the key sites for the reconstruction of the chrono-cultural sequence for South East Arabia, being one of the few sites where uninterrupted

occupation occurred from the Early Bronze Age (c. 2500 BC) to around 300 AD (most recently, Magee at al., 2017: 210). While the first excavation seasons, between 1989 and 1993, did take place within Umm al-Quwain's territory (Potts 1990; 1991; 1993; 2000), the following activities between 2007 and 2017 were focused on the Sharjah's part of the site (Magee at el. 2017). After a hiatus of more than 25 years, therefore, the start of the ARP excavations at the site represents a renewed endeavour of the local Archaeology Department towards the valorisation of Tell Abraaq as part of its rich archaeological heritage.

The main aims of the first, three-week season at Tell Abraaq included the general evaluation of the stratigraphic sequence and of the archaeological assemblage, in order to collect data upon which a detailed programme for the next, longer campaigns could be built. Three of the four trenches were excavated in proximity and partial connection with the long stepped trench excavated in 1990 (Potts, 1991) so that the exposed sections could serve as a guide to horizontal excavation.

Along the eastern slope of the mound, Trench 1 was stopped at the depth of c. 1m from the current surface. The results confirm the presence of a thick stratigraphy comprising a dense sequence of occupational surfaces, often extremely ephemeral, that can all be dated to the Late Bronze Age period and later, on the basis of the collected pottery. Dense scatters of postholes, in association with fireplaces and larger pits, attest to the probable presence of areesh structures or anyhow perishable material dwellings (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. View of the lower floor reached in Trench 1 looking west, showing the dense pattern of postholes and pits. (©IAMUQ/M. Degli Esposti)

Close to the northern footings of the mound, Trenches 2 and 3 both targeted a stone and mudbrick wall, SU 19.012, slightly curving along a northwest/southeast direction, which had been partially exposed in 1990 (Potts, 1991: 36-37, distinguished as Locus 40). The remaining earthen baulks, mostly collapsed, were removed and a larger area was excavated. This led to the discovery of a short flight of

stairs made of stones which linked the upper area beyond the wall – supposedly a large terrace occupied by other areesh structures or tents (see Potts, 1991: 36) – with the lower flat land to the north of it (Fig. 3).

A deep test pit excavated just against SU 19.012's northern face confirmed the presence of anthropogenic layers below it. On the basis of a first sorting out of the pottery, these layers can be dated to the Wadi Suq period and earlier. The floors and more ephemeral surfaces discovered abutting against wall 19.012's northern face can, instead, be dated to the Late Bronze Age and later, reaching at least the Iron Age III period (c. 600-300 BC). Wall 19.012 itself must, therefore, be dated to a non-initial moment within the Wadi Suq period or to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (overall, a date between 1500 and 1300 seems plausible at the moment).

More unexpected were the results of Trench 4, located more to the south and east along the mound's eastern slope. Here, a series of particularly massive walls were unearthed, witnessing to at least two building phases (Fig. 4). The thickness of the second phase's walls, also obtained with the incorporation of the earlier structure, indicates that they cannot be considered as part of a residential structure but more likely belong to some sort of fortification. A date for

this structure is, so far, difficult to suggest, as only contexts related to its collapse and to later post-depositional events were excavated. The structure of some of the walls, however, strongly differs from the majority of other walls visible at the site, and pottery dating to the Late Pre-Islamic period and with specific parallels at Ed-Dur was found. This large building should, therefore, be connected to a late occupation at the site, although further work is necessary to precise its date and nature.

Over the next seasons, further excavation is envisaged in the mentioned trenches alongside the excavation of new ones, while additional test pits will investigate the deeper stratigraphy in areas further away from the proper mound. As part of the ARP scope, archaeological investigation will be paired with the geomorphological study of the sediments, specifically focused on the reconstruction of the ancient environment and on the evolution of the coastline and modern sabkha in particular. The data from Tell Abraq and the surrounding area will also be considered alongside those collected at the nearby site of Abraq 2, where the Archaeology Department of Umm al-Quwain has been working since 2018, bringing to light other structures that can be so far dated to the 2nd and 1st millennium BC.



Figure 3. Bird-eye view of Trenches 2+3 with the old 1990's trench in the background. Trench 1 is visible in the centre left. (©IAMUQ/F. Borgi)





Figure 4. Overhead view of Trench 4 at the end of the season (©IAMUQ/F. Borgi)

The works of the ARP and of the IAMUQ are made possible by the great support of the DTA of the Government of Umm al-Quwain. We would like to thank Mrs. Alia Mohammed Rashid Al Ghafli, General Manager of the DTA, and Mrs. Rania Hussein Kanouma, Head of the Archaeology Department, for all the efforts placed in the organization of the fieldwork and of our stay in Umm al-Quwain. Mr. Meqdad Aboelgreed must be thanked for his help on the field during the whole season. Our most warm-hearted gratitude goes to H.H. Majid bin Rashid al Mualla, Chairman of the DTA, who welcomed us in Umm al-Quwain and showed a great interest in the project.

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## The Hili 14 Archaeological Excavation and Survey Project

By Ali Abdu Rahman Al Meqbali, Abdullah Khalfan Al Kaabi, Dia Al Twalbah, Saeed Al Meqbali, Hamed Bin Fadel, Peter Spencer & Dominic Tomasi

In October 2018 the Department for Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi (DCT) initiated the first season of the Hili 14 Archaeological Excavation and Survey Project, a comprehensive investigation into the archaeological site of Hili 14 and its spatial and chronological relationship with known sites of interest within the Hili Archaeological Park, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi Emirate, UAE. Hili 14 is a core component of the Al Ain UNESCO World Heritage Site, situated within the northern extent of Al Ain it forms one of several important Bronze Age and Iron Age period sites within the local area and is an integral part of the rich historical landscape of the Al Ain Region.

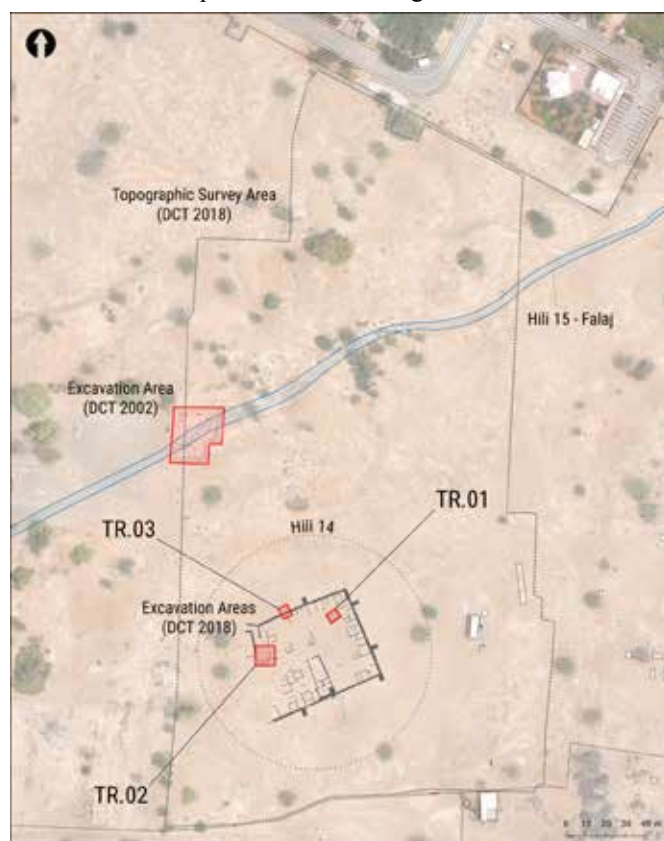


Figure 1. Location of Hili 14 and excavation areas.

Whilst Hili 14 is one of the largest known Iron Age fortified settlements in Abu Dhabi, little prior archaeological investigation has been undertaken. Fieldwork conducted by the French Archaeological Mission in the 1980's (Boucharlat & Lombard 1985) primarily focused upon delimiting the sites external boundaries and internal layout. An initial survey and evaluation confirmed the presence of well-preserved mud-brick structures and a rich artefactual assemblage primarily relating to the Iron Age II period - which when taken with the sites unique morphology was concluded to possibly indicate an economic and/or administrative role with Hili 14 possibly functioning as a

kind of caravanserai or Bayt al-falaj (administrative building associated with falaj agriculture).

To expand upon this initial assessment the DCT has developed a holistic investigative approach that will incorporate archaeological excavation, extensive survey and a framework of evaluations aimed at providing palaeo-environmental and geo-archaeological evidence pertaining to the development of both the site and its immediate surrounding landscape. Whilst the project has adopted a modular approach to its activities incorporating monthly and annual reviews of its aims, objectives and associated methodologies the initial aims are as follows:

- To supplement the original site plan with a detailed metric survey of the surface archaeological remains to define the spatial morphology of the site, its full extent and any possible satellite structures.
- Using said survey to acquire a robust framework of artefactual, ecofactual, and stratigraphic evidence pertaining to the establishment, inhabitation and eventual abandonment of the Hili 14 complex through the excavation of targeted trenches.
- To use said framework of evidence to explore and investigate the chronological and structural development of the Hili 14 complex, identifying key phases where possible.
- Where possible obtain material for the acquisition of

absolute dating evidence for the site through the application of a suitable sampling strategy within secure contexts.

- To undertake a detailed topographic survey of the site and its immediate environs including the site of Hili 15 situated to the north.
- To undertake a topographic analysis of said survey data to identify; any possible spatial correlation between the two sites, and outlying satellite structures and/or archaeological remains, and to provide a framework of geospatial data suitable for the future investigation and management of the site.

### Results

The 2018 season concluded with the excavation of three trenches targeting key structural elements of the site. Trench 1 focused upon structural unit 13 situated within the north-eastern extent of the site which had been highlighted as differing in form and orientation from other known structures. Trench 2 focused upon a complex of structural features possibly associated with an entrance situated in the north-western extent of the site and Trench 3 focused upon the relationship between the external surrounding perimeter/defensive wall of the site, its adjoining internal structural elements, and the depositional sequence of overlying aeolian and alluvial deposition.

Excavation of the three trenches revealed the underlying



Figure 2. Overview of the excavations at Hili 14



mud-brick architecture to be of excellent preservation with a variety of architectural features including windows, doorways and floor surfaces remaining intact. Excavation of vertical sections identified that, following the abandonment of the site it had been subjected to several episodic rainfall events resulting the erosion and re-deposition of the upper wall extents which had subsequently preserved and protected the internal fabric of the structural units and their associated material assemblages. These initial deposits were subsequently sealed by a sequence of alternating aeolian and alluvial deposits which provided a sparse assemblage of pottery.

Removal of the re-deposited mudbrick fabric identified a rich assemblage of Iron Age II period pottery with the acquisition of material suitable for radiocarbon dating from several secure contexts, whilst careful excavation enabled the architectural structure of the perimeter/defensive wall to be defined and an initial phasing of structural elements identified to be undertaken.

The topographic survey resulted in a 0.5m resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of the site. The survey identified a number of features of archaeological interest within the immediate surroundings of Hili 14 including several possible structures associated with dense surface pottery scatters. Analysis of the DEM enabled the probable former route of the Hili 15 falaj to be traced highlighting the conjunction

between the orientation of Hili 14 and the former falaj system whilst identifying Hili 14 as being built upon a natural promontory within the surrounding area. In terms of Heritage Management the DEM identified extensive fluvial erosion of the sites central and western extents and the location of the former French evaluation trenches.

#### **2019 Season aims**

The 2019 season has built upon the initial results of 2018 the initial evaluation of the site has been expanded into several excavation areas targeting entire structural units with a focus upon the detailed metric survey of individual structures and their internal architectural components. The excavation of sub-sections within these areas to the basal stratigraphic unit has provided a rich assemblage of contextual and artefactual evidence pertaining to the establishment, usage and abandonment of the site and a robust scheme of test-pitting is planned to further elucidate the relationship between Hili 14, Hili 15 and the possible satellite structures identified during the topographic survey.

The Initial DEM has been expanded and updated through the application of UAV derived photogrammetry to a 0.25m resolution Digital Surface and Terrain Model (DSM, DTM) whilst a review of existing satellite derived topographic data is helping characterize the underlying topography of Hili Archaeological Park and the wider landscape.

## RESEARCH NOTICES

### **Juggling languages and scripts in North-West Arabia between c. 500 BC and AD 300** by Michael C.A. Macdonald

In the second half of the first millennium BC and the first few centuries AD northern and central Arabia saw the development of numerous indigenous alphabets both in the oases and among the nomads. These were part of the South Semitic script family which included Ancient South Arabian and, later, Ethiopic and was unique to ancient Arabia and the areas immediately adjacent to it. But other, imported, languages and scripts were also used there, most notably various forms of Aramaic but also Minaic in the Minaean trading colony in Dadan (modern al-‘Ulā).

Each of the three major oases in north-west Arabia, Dadan, Taymā’, and Dūmah (al-Jawf) had its own language and script. In Dadan almost 2000 formal inscriptions and graffiti in Dadanitic, the local language and script, have been found in and around the oasis. In Taymā’, just under 480 graffiti have been found in Taymanitic but no formal inscriptions; while only 23 graffiti are known so far in Dumaitic, the script used at Dūmah.

Given that they had their own languages and scripts, one might expect that the populations of Taymā’ and Dadan

would use them when carving inscriptions and graffiti abroad, but this does not seem to have happened. We find virtually no inscriptions in Taymanitic or Dadanitic outside the environs of their oases, despite the fact that several Taymanitic graffiti refer to wars with Dadan, whose Lihyanite rulers eventually conquered and ruled Taymā’.

In the mid sixth century BC, Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon (r. 556–39 BC), conquered six oases in north-west Arabia and settled in Taymā’ for ten years of his seventeen-year reign (552–43 BC, Beaulieu 1989: 149–203). He brought with him the Babylonian imperial bureaucracy which used Aramaic, rather than Akkadian, as the language in which it ruled Babylon's vast empire. This was because Aramaic was already the lingua franca of the Middle East, and so could be understood very widely (Gzella 2015: 102–08). Indeed we have a graffiti in Aramaic near Taymā’ by one of Nabonidus' officials (Macdonald forthcoming).

We also have three other graffiti by Babylonian officials accompanying the king but these are in the local language and script, Taymanitic (Hayajneh 2001). To us, it seems very curious that royal officials of a mighty empire would carve graffiti at all — and they really are graffiti not official propaganda inscriptions — but to do so in the local language and script of a faraway oasis seems even more extraordinary.



Figure. 1: From top to bottom: Inscriptions in Dadanitic (JSLih 42), Taymanitic (JSTham 513) and Dumaitic (WTI 23)

However, as we shall see, they were not alone in doing so.

Since Taymā' was an important trading station between South Arabia, the Levant and Mesopotamia, many of its merchants may well have known some Aramaic before Nabonidus' arrival. But his ten-year sojourn there with all his officials no doubt increased its currency. The use of Aramaic as the official language of imperial administration continued under the Achaemenid empire (538–330 BC) which succeeded Nabonidus and lasted until Alexander the Great's conquests. During this period we find official inscriptions in Taymā' carved in Achaemenid Official Aramaic. Gradually, this seems to have displaced the local language and script, at least for inscriptions and tombstones, though unfortunately we cannot know whether it did so in speech as well.

Sometime after Nabonidus' departure, and possibly after the Macedonian conquest of the Achaemenid empire, the tribe of Lihyān, which ruled the rival oasis of Dadan, conquered Taymā' and installed its governors there. As mentioned above, within Dadan and its environs Dadanitic was clearly the language of both the government and the people and Aramaic inscriptions are extremely rare, before its conquest by the Nabataeans at the end of the first century BC. In Taymā', however, all the inscriptions set up under Lihyanite rule are in Aramaic and not a single one found so far is in Dadanitic (see Macdonald 2020 and Macdonald and Al-Najem 2020).

In addition, on the rock faces around Taymā' there are four graffiti by two kings of Lihyān, none of which are in Dadanitic, and not even in the Achaemenid Official Aramaic script, but in the local "Taymā' Aramaic" script which developed after the fall of the Achaemenid state and the



Figure. 2: One of three graffiti in Taymanitic by Babylonian court officials who came to Taymā' with Nabonidus (Esk 169. Photograph: Epigraphy and Landscape in the Hinterland of Taymā' project [ELHT], 2015)

consequent end of its regularising effect on the Aramaic language and script (see Gzella 2015: 212–80). Perhaps, like the Babylonian officials, these Lihyanite rulers of Dadan wanted to be understood by the local population, which had now switched from Taymanitic to Aramaic as its written language. But, like the Babylonians, these were conquerors, not immigrants, and one might assume that — like the Greeks and Romans — they would have expected the conquered to learn their language. Instead, however, they seem to have written to be understood by the locals, even in their graffiti.

In Dadan itself there was a Minaean trading colony from South Arabia whose members have left almost fifty formal Minaic inscriptions as well as numerous graffiti (Rossi 2014: 113, 117). However, we also find formal inscriptions by Minaeans in the language and script of the host community, Dadanitic. Some of these are by priests and priestesses of Wadd, the chief deity of the Minaeans, and record that they took part in the religious ceremonies of the chief god of Dadan, Dū-gābit (e.g. JSLih 49, AH 199). At first sight, it may seem curious for the priest/priestess of one god to take part in the worship of another, but this is because we are looking at it through monotheistic eyes. To a polytheist it is perfectly normal to appease the deities of the place you are in and doing so shows no disrespect to the deity (or deities) you serve. Their inscriptions, which one might think would be in their own language, Minaic, are actually in Dadanitic and we would not have known that the authors were Minaeans had they not identified themselves as priest/priestess of Wadd.

There is even one formal inscription (AHUD) which is a curious hybrid being in the Dadanitic language but the Minaic script (Kootstra 2018: 22). The author belonged to the 'mrt' lineage group some members of which produced





Figure 3: Graffito in Aramaic by Shahr king of Lihyān (Al-Theeb 2014, no. 1. Photograph: ELHT 2015)

Minaic and others Dadanitic inscriptions. It is possible that this author was not able to find a Dadanite scribe and so made do with a Minaean one who simply wrote down the dictated Dadanitic text in the script with which he was familiar, Minaic.

In the Nabataean city of Ḥegrā (modern Madā'in Šāliḥ) in north-west Saudi Arabia, more than 160 years after the Roman annexation of Nabataea in AD 106, a man called Ka'bū commissioned a memorial inscription on a rock face above the simple grave of his mother (JSNab 17). Ka'bū, or the scribe he employed, was clearly an Arabic speaker because although the text is in the Nabataean Aramaic script many of the words and phrases are Arabic. But, touchingly, beside the nine-line Nabataean text there is a single line carved vertically in a script of the North Arabian nomads called Thamudic D, simply giving his mother's name and patronym (JSTham 1, and see Nehmé 2015, ii: 85–86). A similar example of this can be found in a cave tomb at Dayr al-Kahf in north-eastern Jordan. Here, an Aramaic text around three of the walls just below the ceiling declares that the tomb was made by the sons of Aws, but on each sarcophagus the deceased's name and patronym have been carved in Safaitic, the script used by the local nomads (Macdonald 2006: 285–94). In both cases, Aramaic is used for the public announcement, but the identities of the deceased are represented by the everyday scripts they used.

It is ironic that while the Nabataeans, at least those in southern Jordan and north-west Arabia, spoke Arabic, they regarded it as an "unwritten" language and so had to learn Aramaic in order to write. Yet their nomadic neighbours in what is now southern Syria, eastern Jordan and north-west Saudi Arabia, spoke Arabic and wrote it in various South Semitic scripts. Possibly the Nabataeans felt it *infra dig.* to use a script they associated with nomads and preferred to write in what had for centuries been the lingua franca of the Near East. It is impossible to know. It was only long after the fall of the Nabataean kingdom, and the apparent disappearance of the literate nomads and their scripts, that writers in north-west Arabia began to use the Nabataean



Figure 4. Epitaph at Ḥegrā dated to AD 267 in Nabataean Aramaic but with many Arabic words and phrases (JSNab 17), with a summary in one of the scripts of the nomads (JSTham 1). (Photograph by Laïla Nehmé).

Aramaic script to write their spoken language, Arabic, ensuring that the script would continue to develop to this day as what we think of as the "Arabic script" (Macdonald 2008: 219–20, Nehmé 2010; 2017: 75–8).

#### Sigla

- AH Inscriptions in Abū 'l-Ḥasan 1997.
- AHUD Inscription in Abū 'l-Ḥasan 2005.
- Esk Inscriptions in Eskoubi 1999.
- JSLih Dadanitic inscriptions in Jausen and Savignac 1909–14.
- JSNab Nabataean inscriptions in Jausen and Savignac 1909–14.
- JSTham Thamudic inscriptions in Jausen and Savignac 1909–14.
- WTI Dumaitic and Thamudic inscriptions in Winnett and Reed 1970.

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## Traditional Star Knowledge in Rustaq, Oman

by Harriet Nash

For millennia, agricultural production in the north of Oman has depended on groundwater channelled to fields by gravity flow systems called aflāj (s. falaj) and despite the spread of pumped wells since the 1980s, there are still c. 3000 such systems in operation. The aflāj are managed and shared by the community, requiring a high degree of co-operation and social cohesion, and the water and crops grown, the most important being the date palm, once provided practically all material needs. People either own or rent water shares: at the beginning of the share, they will move sluices in the channels to direct the water to their fields. The water in the falaj channels runs continuously and an individual share could be at any time of day or night, traditionally timed mainly by the sun and stars.

Many communities keep records of ownership of water shares, but the method of timing is rarely written down. Since starting to research Oman's traditional star knowledge in 2006, I had only come across only one manuscript, written in the early 1900s and describing star use in Al Hamra. Then in 2018 Derek Kennett was given some photocopied pages of a manuscript from Rustaq (eg Fig 1). It was incomplete, but contained lists of stars once used on Falaj al Hammām, whose source is a hot spring renowned for its healing powers.

With a grant from the Anglo-Omani Society, I went to Oman in November 2018 to find out more about the manuscript. Helped by Wadha Al-Shukaili, an archaeologist and historian who used to live in Rustaq, we met the elders concerned with managing the falaj. It appears that the manuscript was written in Rustaq, then taken to the area of Al Hamra by a woman marrying someone there, and later (apparently incomplete) returned by her brothers. I eventually found the original in Misfat Al Abryeen, kept by Walid Muhammad Al Abri who had inherited it from his father.

Although some pages or chunks of pages were missing, the substance is quite repetitive since it was based on two earlier sources and there are two lists of stars, so it was possible to make sense of the whole. The schedule is based on the rise of 27 main stars (Figure 1). Other stars were watched from the Shaweer mosque, rising above the horizon in the east or



setting below it in the west giving time divisions between the main stars. In most places both day and night are divided into 24 athars, which vary in length with the season, and an athar has 24 qiyās.



Figure 1: A page from the manuscript giving the names of the twenty seven main stars used.

As an example, the schedule from Al Thurrayā (the Pleiades) to Al Kūsa, also known as Al Dabrān (almost certainly Aldebaran) follows:

- at the rise of Al Thurrayā, the 6th star of Banāt Na'sh (the Plough) sets on Jabal Al Şafra
- after 3 qiyās the 7th star of Banāt Na'sh sets on Jabal Al Şafra
- after 9 qiyās a star sets at the centre of Qarn Al Kasfa
- after 18 qiyās, Al Ghafr (possibly Alphecca) sets on the south side of Qarn Al Kasfa
- after 1 athar, the star following Al Ghafr sets
- after 1 athar and 6 qiyās the following star sets
- after 1 ½ athars the following star sets.
- 

The people responsible for the division of water shares on Falaj Al Hammām gave detailed descriptions of use of the sundial and the clock now used at night. The sundial is still used by all farmers and is similar to many others in the country, with lines on the ground marking time divisions. Here the athar numbers are given on a wall to help people get it right and I observed farm hands from the Indian subcontinent being taught how to use it. The night clock (Fig. 2) has a schedule for different seasons and as with the sundial, it is imperative for people to come to the sundial or



Figure 2: The night clock and schedule for Falaj Al Hammām

clock to check the start time of their water share before going to water their fields.

The use of watches became common in Oman following the accession of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos in 1970, as the country became more open to modernisation. We found that star use in Rustaq stopped in the time of Said bin Taimur, in the 1950s or 1960s, at least one decade earlier than most other places. This meant that practically everyone who had watched stars had died, but Saleem Humaid Al Hattali, blind and over 90 years old, remembered some of them, the place they were watched from and points on the horizon used as markers. He described as much as he could to his nephew, Talib Al Rumhi. Talib and his nephew Ali then took me to the mosque and with the information provided by Saleem, we managed to identify most of the landmarks in the document, some shown in Figure 3. Qarn Al Kasfa, an isolated hill lying directly north-west of the mosque, is in the centre of the view and is mentioned most often.

Although star use is extinct, in other respects, as elsewhere in Oman, traditional falaj management continues almost unchanged, a testament to a system that is fully sustainable and accepted by all.



Figure 3: Part of the horizon formerly used for watching stars.

## The relevance of early Arabic poetry for Quranic studies and debates it arouses

by Maxim Yosefi

Pre-Islamic odes, composed and transmitted orally, were put into writing during the *tadwīn* movement (ca. 750-800 CE), when the poems were compiled and collected, and their context was reconstructed, based on the oral transmission of the Bedouin. Retrieving early poetry, philologists aimed at reconstructing the ideal, pure language of the desert Arabs in which the Quran was revealed. Therefore, the standard of reference they created was used, amongst others, for interpreting the Scripture. The relevance of early Arabic poetry for this purpose was proven not once by medieval exegetes as well as by contemporary scholars in the field of Islamic studies. Thomas Bauer's article "The relevance of early Arabic poetry for Qur'anic studies including observations on *kull* and on Q 22:27, 26:225, and 52:31" provides an excellent example of this capacity. In particular, poetry has allowed the scholar to appropriately interpret the last verses of the Sura of the Poets, in which the poets are accused of "wandering in every valley" and "saying that which they do not do" (Q 26:225-6). As Bauer demonstrates using early poetry, in verse 225 the Quran ironically quotes a conventional poetic expression in order to point that the poets use to boast of what they actually never do. According to his reading, the verses would be translated as follows: "Don't you know that they (poets) 'die from thirst in all kinds of valleys,' and that they do not do what they say they do". This reading is very much on the mark and contributes to resolving the enigma of the Sura. At the same time, its argumentation encourages further discussion on the history and culture of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabia.

Firstly, in Bauer's opinion (2010: 729), by turning back against the poets a popular theme of poetry, the Quran "warns people against following the poets in the value system of the *murū'a* which they represent". Thus, the scholar seems to admit that the *dīn* ('religion' represented in the Quran) rejects the *murū'a*/*muruwwa* – the norms of manly pride articulated in tribal Arabic poetry. This encourages continuation of the old discussion on the relationship between *muruwwa* and *dīn*. Although Goldziher

(1966-i: 16, 25) establishes some contrast between these concepts, the absolute majority of those who treated the relationship between them later (Farès 1932: 190-3; Lecomte 1965: 449-50; Izutsu 2002: 74-104; Bravmann 1972: 2; Rezvan 1988: 38-41; Caton 1990: 26-30 etc.) demonstrate that *dīn* did not reject *muruwwa*, but rather adopted it by modifying its interpretation and transforming the pre-Islamic values into religious precepts. I would rather admit that the warning does not target the pre-Islamic values as such. Indeed, the Quran opposes certain practices related to *muruwwa* (such as drinking and vendetta), but there could be nothing reprehensible in endurance, bravery and generosity and, thus, in *muruwwa* per se. If so, poets are accused not of promoting false values, but of the literary strategies they employ. Without opposing the value system of *muruwwa*, the Quran warns not to go astray by following those who obviously do not deserve credence as they articulate ideals without fulfilling them.

Secondly, to argue that, in the Quranic conception, poets describe fictive hardships only to glorify "the deceitful ideal of the virtue of the *murū'a*", Bauer claims that, as against poetic "dying in all those *wādīs*", in fact, it was possible to travel across Arabia without risk of dying from thirst. This argument also encourages discussion. Even if there were routes allowing travels across pre-Islamic Arabia without risk of dying from thirst, travelling alone was never safe and easy. One could lose his way or encounter an ambush. A man who was ready to take upon himself risk-bearing missions justly boasted of it as part of his *muruwwa*. The fact that there could be poetic formulas for employing this motive does not mean that Bedouin poets mostly described fictive hardships only to glorify the deceitful ideal. For instance, Ṭarafa (d. 569 AD), who does not describe in his *mu'allaqa* any sufferings endured, nevertheless, mentions that, when he sets off on his journey, his companion says about a dangerous travel through the desert: "Would I might ransom you, and be ransomed, from it" (*a-lā laytanī afdīka minhā wa-aftadī*) (Ṭarafa 2002: 23).

Finally, one of the important presumptions of the article to encourage further discussion is that, in the late *Jāhiliyya*, in tribal society, poetry, being a matter for a narrow and high



stratum of aristocrats, experts and enthusiasts, “could not be appreciated by the common folk” (Bauer 2010: 722-3). Even if we would disbelieve numerous medieval appraisals of the high significance of tribal poetry in the Jāhiliyya, this presumption would run counter to the last-century anthropologic data from Arab tribal society pointing to the extreme significance of poetry for the common folk. This presumption, moreover, would not explain how the term *shā’ir* (‘poet’) could have come to mean “a liar” at the popular level (the fact reflected in the attitude of the Meccan disbelievers who refer to Muhammad as *shā’ir* to derogate and debase him). Even if there was some poetry appreciated merely by connoisseurs and tribal aristocracy, why would usual pre-Islamic tribesmen equal it to mendacity? And even if there was such an “elitist” poetry, moreover, there must have been also practical poetry, appreciated for effectiveness – poetry that served the needs of the usual tribesmen. It does not seem reasonable, therefore, that pagan tribesmen in Mecca would accuse one as ‘liar’ only for his exceptional ability of expression in verse.

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## RESTORING TAIZ MUSEUM, YEMEN

### World Monuments Fund: The restoration of Taiz’s National Museum, Yemen

World Monuments Fund was founded in 1966 in response to threats to extraordinary heritage across the world. Since then we have been involved in conserving heritage in 100 countries in over 800 projects. World Monuments Fund, in collaboration with Yemen’s General Organisation for Antiquities and Museums (GOAM), was recently awarded a grant from the British Council’s Cultural Protection Fund to support conservation skills training, post-conflict planning and physical restoration in the historic city of Taiz.

Taiz is the third largest city in Yemen and the cities rich historic fabric includes many fine, elaborately decorated multi-storey houses, and several Ottoman palaces. One of the palaces, the former royal residence of the Imam Ahmad Hamid al-Din ruler of the Kingdom of Yemen, officially opened as the National Museum in 1967. The museum displayed objects and memorabilia of the Imam, such as ancient weapons and rare manuscripts and books. It is a very fine building, with elaborate decoration, wood and brickwork, stained glass and wonderful *mashrabiya* balconies. In February 2016 the city of Taiz was surrounded, and many of the historic buildings damaged through shelling; The National Museum was badly damaged and its

collection of manuscripts was destroyed. Both the war and its economic impact have severely impacted the historic environment, and there has been little opportunity until now to properly assess the situation and to carry out repairs and maintenance.

The restoration of the National Museum project has always been in two parts, firstly training and professional support and then secondly applying that training to restore the building. GOAM selected a team of five for training plus a local coordinator from the University As international experts could not get into Yemen the training was conducted in Kuwait. Experts included a conservation architect and a conservation structural engineer. The workshops focused the professional GOAM team the most up to date techniques, supporting them with advice and helping them to draw up plans and a programme of work for the restoration of the palace.

On returning from Kuwait, the team firstly carried out a damage assessment of the buildings, and then in the spring of 2019 they began work on the Palace. Since then the scaffolding has gone up and the team have used a range of traditional techniques to completely restore the facades, roof and exterior. Work was completed at the end of November, the external envelope of the façades and roof of the Imam Palace has been restored and the results are stunning,



bringing a much cherished building back into life, and demonstrating that it is possible to achieve extraordinary things even under the most difficult circumstances.

Work continues on the National museum and it hoped that funds can now be raised to conserve the interior of the building. The hope is to continue the advanced training with the GOAM team and completes the restoration of the interiors. The end result will be a space for the people of Taiz to use and celebrate their important and fascinating history.



Restoration work being undertaken at the Taiz's National Museum



The Taiz's National Museum after restoration

## NEW PUBLICATIONS ON ARABIA

Anthony, S. 2020. *Muhammad and the Empires of Faith: The Making of the Prophet of Islam*. University of California Press. ISBN: 978-0520340411

Brubaker, D.A. 2019. *Corrections in Early Qur'an Manuscripts: Twenty Examples*. Think and Tell. ISBN: 978-1949123036

Brusgaard, N.O. 2019. *Carving Interactions: Rock Art in the Nomadic Landscape of the Black Desert, North-Eastern*

*Jordan*. Oxford: Archaeopress. ISBN 978-1789693119.

Dennell, R. 2020. *From Arabia to the Pacific: How our Species Colonised Asia*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0367482411

Flaskerud, I. & Natvig, R.J. (Eds.) 2019 *Muslim Pilgrimage in Europe*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0367880408

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## AWARDS AND PRIZES

### **Aga Khan Award for Architecture**

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) was established by His Highness the Aga Khan in 1977 to identify and encourage building concepts that successfully address the needs and aspirations of communities in which Muslims have a significant presence. The Award recognises examples of architectural excellence in the fields of contemporary design, social housing, community improvement and development, historic preservation, reuse and area conservation, as well as landscape design and improvement of the environment. Since the Award was launched 43 years ago, 122 projects have received the award and more than 9,000 building projects have been documented. The Award is given every three years to projects that set new standards of excellence in architecture, planning practices, historic preservation and landscape architecture. The book, *Architecture in Dialogue*, edited by Andres Lepik, includes descriptions and illustrations of the 20 projects shortlisted for this year's award, including the six winning projects. The 2019 winners of the Award include

#### **Revitalisation of Muharraq (Bahrain)**

The Project, which highlights the World Heritage site's pearling history, was first initiated as a series of restoration and reuse projects. The project evolved into a comprehensive programme that aimed to re-balance the city's demographic

makeup by creating public spaces, providing community and cultural venues, and improving the overall environment.

#### **Wasit Wetland Centre (UAE)**

Wasit Wetland Centre, in Sharjah, is a design that transformed a wasteland into a wetland and functioned as a catalyst for biodiversity and environmental education. While its indigenous ecosystem has been restored, it has also proven to be a popular place for visitors to appreciate and learn about their natural environment

More information on all six winners is available at: [www.akdn.org/aga-khan-award-architecture-2019-winners](http://www.akdn.org/aga-khan-award-architecture-2019-winners)

### **The British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize in Middle Eastern Studies**

The British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize was founded thanks to an endowment of the Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Foundation. In each of the years since the prize commenced, it has attracted around 50 nominations from some 20 publishers. The prize is awarded for the best scholarly work on the Middle East each year. Normally, the chronological remit of the prize will be from the rise of Islam until the present day, but outstanding scholarly entries from the pre-Islamic era may also be considered. A prize or prizes will be awarded each year to the value of up to £10,000 for

the best scholarly work in English on the Middle East which has been published in its first edition in the United Kingdom.

The 2019 winner was Şevket Pamuk for his book *Uneven Centuries: Economic Development of Turkey Since 1820*. This work was described as ‘extraordinary’, and one which ‘only a small handful of scholars would be qualified to attempt, much less master, given the chronological and subject range it covers’. In its broader narrative, the author masterfully reviews and synthesizes an extremely wide body of secondary literature, covering everything from international finance in the nineteenth century, to the history of education and health care and the ebbs and flows of Ottoman and Turkish politics and contemporary social change. The ability of the author to introduce his own first-hand contributions to long-term economic indicators and integrate this seamlessly into the narrative allows for a unique comparative framework over time and place which helps situate Turkey’s economic performance alongside that of the rest of the world. More information at: <http://www.bkfsprize.co.uk/>

### **The International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF)**

The International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) aims to reward excellence in contemporary Arabic creative writing and to encourage the readership of high quality Arabic literature internationally through the translation and publication of winning and shortlisted novels in other major languages. Submissions open on 1 April and must be received by 30 June. The winner announcement takes place at a gala ceremony in Abu Dhabi in spring. The shortlisted authors each receive \$10,000 US. The winning author goes on to receive a further \$50,000 US, with a commitment that IPAF will meet the cost of translation of the winning novel into English to help underwrite its publication for an English speaking readership

The winner of the 2019 IPAF was the Lebanese novelist Hoda Barakat. Her novel *The Night Mail* tells the stories of letter writers. The letters are lost, like those who have penned them, but each is linked to another and their fates are woven together, like those of their owners. The writers are foreigners, either immigrants by choice or forced by circumstance to leave their countries; exiled and homeless, orphans of their countries with fractured destinies. There are no certainties in *The Night Mail*. The killer is not a criminal, nor is the prostitute a whore. It is — like the times we live in — a realm of deep questioning and ambiguity, where boundaries have been erased, and old places and homes lost forever. The 2020 shortlist of authors is available at <https://www.arabicfiction.org/en>

### **Ithra Art Prize 2020**

Launched in 2017 by the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) in collaboration with Art Dubai, the Prize is awarded to emerging Saudi and Saudi-based talent in

contemporary art as a means to fund, promote and offer Saudi artists a global platform.

The winner of the third edition of the Ithra Art Prize is Saudi-based Fahad bin Naif, for his proposed installation *Rakhm*, meaning ‘incubation’ in Arabic. Bin Naif’s installation *Rakhm* aims to conceptually preserve a nursery as both an urban typology and its ‘incubatees’ as an environmental micro-economy. The title of the installation mirrors both the sensitivity and urgency of the content, safely and carefully incubating an intelligent green infrastructure. *Rakhm* is a Polytunnel nursery that mimics the existing urban nurseries in the Kingdom with endemic plants and flowers instead of conventional foreign houseplants. Unlike most nurseries, however, the viewer can only experience the exterior of the nursery, which mirrors the general local approach to xeriscaping wherein local foliage is not an environmental or aesthetic priority. The experience of the viewer from the outside also highlights the notion that contextually there is very little interaction between local human inhabitants and local plant-life and the importance on an environmental level of changing this narrative. More information at: <https://www.artdubai.ae/ithra-art-prize-2020/>

### **Jameel Prize 5**

The Jameel Prize is an international award for contemporary art and design inspired by Islamic tradition. This is the 10th year of the biennial prize, which began in 2009 as a pioneering platform showcasing the rich intersection of contemporary forms with traditional Islamic designs and concepts. Spread across five galleries in Jameel Arts Centre, the fifth edition of the Jameel Prize brings together works in painting, architecture, fashion and drawing as well as a large-scale multimedia installation. The Jameel Prize 5 shortlisted artists and designers were Kamrooz Aram, naqsh collective, Hayv Kahraman, Hala Kaiksoy, Mehdi Moutashar, Younes Rahmoun, Wardha Shabbir and Marina Tabassum. Mehdi Moutashar and Marina Tabassum were announced as first ever joint winners of Jameel Prize 5. Moutashar received the award for his bold work of minimalist abstraction rooted in Islamic geometry, and Tabassum for her visionary *Bait ur Rouf* mosque built in 2012 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

### **The Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize**

The Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize was established jointly in 1986 by the Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund and BRISMES in memory of Dr Leigh Douglas who was killed in Beirut in 1986. The prize is awarded annually to the writer of the best PhD dissertation on a Middle Eastern topic in the Social Sciences or Humanities awarded by a British University in the previous calendar year. The deadline for submission of entries is 31st January. The current value of the prize is £600 for the winner and £150 for the runner up. More information at <http://www.brismes.ac.uk/student-area/leigh-douglas-memorial-prize>



## **The Saif Ghobash–Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation**

The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize aims to raise the profile of contemporary Arabic literature as well as honouring the important work of individual translators in bringing the work of established and emerging Arab writers to the attention of the wider world. The prize is administered by the Society of Authors in the United Kingdom and awarded annually at a joint ceremony hosted by the Society and the TLS and supported by Arts Council England.

The 2019 winner was Leri Price for her translation of the novel *Death is Hard Work* by Khaled Khalifa. The Leri Price deserves the highest commendation for her achievement in conveying the vividness and the intense style of Khaled Khalifa's compelling novel about survival and humanity in

modern-day Syria in a subtle translation that is both sharp and unobtrusive. Price was successful in dealing with the intricacies and nuances of a narrative that takes us into a world of chaos, thrill and tragedy, a world imbued with the absurd and the horrific. The judges noted particularly that the translation succeeded in conveying all aspects of the author's enthralling text, in which lyrical prose combines with the forensic nature of reportage, in a seamless and smooth manner. *Death is Hard Work* a beautifully and tightly written novel and a strong depiction of the conflict in Syria through the quest of three siblings to honour the last wishes of their deceased father that he be buried in his home village, across the country through war and torment. More information at <http://www.banipaltrust.org.uk/prize/>

## **AVAILABLE GRANTS**

### **American Institute for Yemeni Studies**

The American Institute for Yemeni Studies annually holds two competitions for fellowship programs supporting research on Yemen, one for U.S. citizens, presently limited to venues other than Yemen, and one for citizens of the Republic of Yemen. Both are funded by grants from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. For US scholars, AIYS can only accept applications for research on Yemen in venues other than Yemen and the United States. For the same reason, AIYS cannot accept applications for intensive Arabic study. More information is available at : <http://www.aiys.org/previous-fellows.html>

### **The Anglo-Omani Society**

The Anglo-Omani Society (AOS) is a charitable organisation working with the objective of preserving the longstanding friendship between Britain and Oman. The Society was formed in January 1976 with HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said as the Society's Patron and HE The Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman in London as its President. The Anglo-Omani Society has provided funding through their Grants Scheme to several projects in both the UK and Oman.

*AOS Grants.* The Trustees of The Anglo-Omani Society accept applications for activities that contribute towards the Society's charitable objectives. These are specifically restricted to the following:

- To advance the education of the British public by the promotion of learning and a wider knowledge about Oman; its people, history, geography, economy, literature, art, music, antiquities, languages, cultures, religions, beliefs and customs by arranging lectures, seminars and meetings, which may be open to the public; and by assisting individuals and organisations by providing bursaries, scholarships, awards, and financial and logistical support.
- To advance the education of Omani nationals about the

United Kingdom and its people, history, geography, economy, literature, art, music, heritage, the English language, cultures, religions, beliefs, customs, industry and commerce by arranging lectures and meetings, which may be open to the public; and by assisting individuals and organisations by providing bursaries, awards, scholarships, training, apprenticeships and financial and logistical support in the United Kingdom and Oman.

For more information: <https://www.ao-soc.org/grant-application>

*Arabic Language Scheme.* The Anglo-Omani Society, with generous support from the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is pleased to announce 10 full scholarships for a period of intensive language study in Oman. The scheme takes place at Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers, located in Manah, about 20 minutes from the city of Nizwa. The programme includes full board at the student hostel attached to the college in Manah. There are 5 hours of tuition per day, focused mainly on Modern Standard Arabic, but also including classes and practical language exchange in Omani dialect. The course this year will run from 16th August for 6 weeks. For more information: <https://www.ao-soc.org/online-arabic-language-scheme>

*Gap Year Scheme.* The Gap Year Scheme is based at The Sultan's School in Muscat and is open to British nationals, who are either school leavers or who plan a gap year between graduation and first employment. The scheme offers generous benefits and a memorable experience. Each year a group of up to four students goes to the school for a period of three months between September - December and January - April. The scheme provides the opportunity to become part of the school community, to take part in excursions and to contribute to school life according to the talents and interests of the individual – whether as a classroom assistant, in the

CAS programme of the International Baccalaureate or in extracurricular activities such as sport and music. For more information [www.ao-soc.org/gap-year-scheme](http://www.ao-soc.org/gap-year-scheme)

### **Barakat Trust**

The Trust awards a number of scholarships and grants to students and scholars of Islamic art history, architecture and archaeology including conservation and post-doctoral fellowships. Grants have covered conservation programmes, documentation of archives, events, exhibitions and museums, lectures, colloquia and conferences, scholarships towards a Master of Studies course in Islamic Art History and Architecture at the University of Oxford, scholarships and grants for post-graduate and post-doctoral study and research fellowships, travel and field trips, archaeological projects, and prizes to students at accredited schools and universities. The Barakat Trust does not support the applied arts. The closing date for applications is 31st March each year. Further information on the grants can be found at <https://barakat.org/grants/>

### **Beatrice de Cardi Awards**

The awards are endowed through a bequest from Beatrice de Cardi FSA. Beatrice de Cardi undertook pioneering fieldwork and research in the Arabian Gulf and Pakistan. Over the course of a long and distinguished career she was President of the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia, and the first Secretary of the Council for British Archaeology. The awards are for the furtherance of archaeological research by field survey, excavation and the publication of the fieldwork in the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the Pakistan province of Balochistan. Applications will be accepted for: projects where the Society will be the main or a significant financial contributor or support for definable objectives with specific, measurable outcomes within larger projects funded from a range of sources (but not simply 'topping up' applications to major funding bodies). Awards are made on an annual basis with possible renewal for up to two further years. A new application is required each year and no project will be funded for more than three years. Awards are for £5,000 to £15,000 and the deadline for applications is 15 January annually. For more information: <https://www.sal.org.uk/grants/grants-programmes/beatrice-de-cardi-awards/>

### **British Academy**

The British Academy offers a number of academic, research and travel fellowships and other grants including skills acquisition awards and professorships. They are all offered for postdoctoral research in the humanities and social sciences. For full details visit the British Academy website: <http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/>

### **British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BISI)**

*BISI Pilot Project Grants.* The Institute welcomes funding applications for pilot projects in all fields of the arts, humanities or social sciences, concerned with any time period

from prehistory to the present day. BISI can only fund direct costs such as equipment, travel expenses, and consultancy fees, up to a total of £8,000. It cannot pay institutional overheads, salary costs, PhD studentships, or other normal living costs. For more information: [www.bisi.ac.uk/content/pilot-project-grants](http://www.bisi.ac.uk/content/pilot-project-grants)

*BISI Research and Conference Grants.* BISI provides funding to support research and conferences that focus principally on the lands and peoples of Iraq. We welcome applications from the full range of arts, humanities and social sciences subjects, and topics may cover any time period from prehistory to the medieval period to the present. BISI can only fund direct costs such as equipment, travel expenses, and consultancy fees, normally up to a total of £4,000 - although more substantial awards may exceptionally be made. BISI cannot pay institutional overheads, salary costs, PhD studentships, or other normal living costs. For more information: [www.bisi.ac.uk/content/research-and-conference-grants](http://www.bisi.ac.uk/content/research-and-conference-grants)

*Outreach Grants.* BISI Outreach Grants are offered to support public engagement projects that promote a greater understanding of Iraq's history, society and culture. Past activities that have received funding through the scheme have ranged from lectures and publications to arts projects. Applicants can apply for grants up to £1,000. The amount you request must be justified by an itemised budget. Grants can only fund expenses such as travel, venue, equipment, consultancy and publicity costs. They cannot be used to pay for wages. For more information: [www.bisi.ac.uk/content/outreach-grants](http://www.bisi.ac.uk/content/outreach-grants)

*The BISI - Nahrein Visiting Scholarship Scheme.* The scheme aims to enhance the capacity of Iraqi scholars to engage in the sustainable development of Iraq's cultural heritage. It enables academics, cultural heritage professionals, and NGO workers from Iraq to visit the UK for 1-2 months for training and research. For more information: [www.bisi.ac.uk/content/visiting-iraqi-scholarships-scheme](http://www.bisi.ac.uk/content/visiting-iraqi-scholarships-scheme)

### **British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS)**

Applications for the *BIPS Research and Travel Grant Awards* are invited. These grants are to assist scholars wishing to pursue research in the area of arts, humanities and social science research, relating to the Persianate world, particularly Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Transcaucasia, Iraq, the Persian Gulf littoral and South Asia. Subject areas include, but are not limited to: Art, Anthropology, Archaeology, Classics, Cultural Studies, History, Language, Literature, Politics, Religious Studies, and Sociology. Scholars who apply must be attached to a UK Higher Educational Institution (university, museum or similar). Most of the grant funds are set aside for collaborative research projects and we are currently seeking to attract applications from scholars under three "umbrella" programmes:

ANCIENT IRAN: Objects of Empire: Imperial Elites and Material Cultures of Ancient Iran. (Programme Director: Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, Cardiff University [Llewellyn-JonesL@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Llewellyn-JonesL@cardiff.ac.uk))

MEDIEVAL IRAN: Persianisation and Persianate Cosmopolises (Programme Director: Professor Andrew Peacock, University of St Andrews [acsp@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:acsp@st-andrews.ac.uk))

MODERN IRAN: Iran and the International in the Modern Period (Programme Director: Dr Shabnam Holliday, University of Plymouth [shabnam.holliday@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:shabnam.holliday@plymouth.ac.uk))

If you are interested in finding out more about any of these projects, please contact the Programme Directors. Grants are awarded mainly to cover post-doctoral research within Iran and the wider Persian World, but grants may also be available to those who wish to study similar material outside Iran. We offer a limited number of travel grants to students but these funds are NOT available for course work nor will college or university fees be paid. For more information see: <https://www.bips.ac.uk/bips-april-2020-21-grants/>

#### **British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES)**

BRISMES administers several scholarships and prizes each year:

*MA Scholarship.* BRISMES offers an annual Master's scholarship for taught Master's study at a UK institution. The Master's programme can be in any discipline but should include a majority component specifically relating to the Middle East. Preference will be given to candidates resident in the European Union, and to institutions who are members of BRISMES. For Master's programmes commencing October 2014, the award will amount to £1,200. The names of the winner and the institution will be publicised in the BRISMES Newsletter and website. Applications for October must reach the BRISMES Office by 31st March. The decision by BRISMES Council will be announced as soon as possible thereafter. For information, please contact: [administrator@brismes.org](mailto:administrator@brismes.org).

*Research Student Awards.* For research students based in the UK working on a Middle Eastern studies topic. The annually available ceiling of £1,000 will either be given as a single award or divided (max. three).

*Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Foundation BRISMES Scholarships.* The purpose of the scholarships is to encourage more people to pursue postgraduate studies in disciplines related to the Middle East in British universities. The scholarships will be for one academic year. The value of each scholarship will be £2,000. Two scholarships will be awarded. Applications should be made to the BRISMES Administrative office. The deadline for each round is 31st March. The applicants have to be registered at any UK university, be a paid-up member of BRISMES (Student

membership suffices), submit an application of 600–1000 words by email to the BRISMES research committee and obtain a brief supporting statement from their supervisor. The announcement of the award will be made in June and published in the July edition of the BRISMES newsletter.

For full details, deadlines and conditions of all the above see the website: <http://www.brismes.ac.uk/student-area/the-abdullah-mubarak-brismes-scholarship> or email [dministrator@brismes.org](mailto:dministrator@brismes.org)

#### **British-Yemeni Society Annual Academic Grant**

As part of its educational mission, the British–Yemeni Society offers a £500 grant annually to assist with academic study related to Yemen. Applications are invited from anyone carrying out research in, or on Yemen, at a British or Yemeni University. Applicants' nationality is irrelevant. Applications may be made to assist with study in any subject or field, so long as it is concerned with Yemen, and is for a specific qualification (e.g. BA, MA, PhD etc.). Post-doctoral researchers may apply, but will only be considered should no more junior applicant approach the Committee. Applications must follow normal academic procedures, i.e. a 300-word abstract, supported by a recommendation from the applicant's supervisor. Applications to the Secretary are normally expected by the 31st May each year. Due to the variability in the number of applications received every year, interested parties are encouraged to contact the Secretary in the first instance, even after the annual deadline. The BYS Committee will consider the applications and award the grant at its Annual General Meeting that usually takes place in June. The decision of the Committee is final. As a condition of the grant, successful applicants will be required to make an acknowledgement of the grant in their thesis or dissertation. They will also be expected to make a presentation to the Society and contribute an article to the BYS Journal on the results of the research assisted by the grant. Any questions should be addressed to the Secretary of the Society, Ibrahim Zanta, at the e-mail: [sec@b-ys.org.uk](mailto:sec@b-ys.org.uk).

#### **Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL)**

*CBRL Fellowships.* CBRL offers Visiting Research Fellowships and Post-Doctoral Fellowships tenable at the CBRL Kenyon Institute, CBRL British Institute in Amman and Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI), see the guidance document for further details. Non-stipendary Honorary Fellowships are also available. The call for Fellowship applications is currently closed, we will have more opportunities for funding in October.

*Visiting Research Fellowships.* To enable established scholars in university posts to spend time in the Levant region to conduct primary research, develop contacts, give lectures, and write up project results/publications derived from a thesis/research. The number of fellowships awarded annually varies. For more information see: <http://cbrl.ac.uk/funding-and-jobs/fellowships>



*Post-Doctoral Fellowships.* To enable early career postdoctoral candidates within seven years of the award of PhD to spend time in the Levant region to conduct primary research, develop contacts, give lectures, and write up project results/publications derived from a thesis/research. For more information see: <http://cbri.ac.uk/funding-and-jobs/fellowships>

*CBRL Travel Grants* cover costs of travel and subsistence for students, academics and researchers undertaking reconnaissance tours or smaller research projects in the countries of the Levant. Awards are available for both PhD students and post-doctorate applicants of a value up to £800. Applicants must be either a British Citizen, or ordinarily resident in the UK, or registered for a degree at a UK university. For more information see: <http://cbri.ac.uk/funding-and-jobs/travel-grants>

### **The Emirates Natural History Group (ENHG)**

The ENHG, the oldest NGO in the UAE dealing with archaeology and natural history, has previously provided several grants for relevant research and excavations including bird studies and funding an archaeological excavation at a Neolithic site at Abu Dhabi International Airport.

*Annual Awards:* The Abu Dhabi Natural History Group gives two awards each year. Nominations for both awards can be made by members of any of the UAE's three natural history groups, in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Al-Ain. Nominees, however, need not be members of any of the Groups, although serving officers of the Abu Dhabi ENHG (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary) are not eligible. The winners are selected by the committee of the Abu Dhabi ENHG early each year. The winners are usually announced at the Inter Emirates Weekend (IEW). Nominations may be sent by post to The Chairman, ENHG, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, by 15th December each year. *Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Award for Natural History:* This award is intended to acknowledge the contributions made by an individual, primarily through original research and publication, to the scientific study of the archaeology, history and natural history of the UAE. This award is in place of the Jashanmal Award that was presented for several years after the introduction of the ENHG in the UAE. The Award consists of an inscribed silver dhow and a cash sum. Website: [www.enhg.org/AbuDhabi/AnnualAwards.aspx](http://www.enhg.org/AbuDhabi/AnnualAwards.aspx)

### **Doha Institute for Graduate Studies**

Scholarships are offered for high-achieving students from anywhere in the world. Proficiency in both Arabic and English is required. Students who graduated in recent years, or who are now studying for their bachelor's degree in their final year, are eligible to apply for admission for the coming academic year. Places are available in Politics and IR; Sociology & Anthropology; Media & Cultural Studies; Legal Studies; Comparative Literature; History; Philosophy;

and Arabic Language & Linguistics.

Information: <https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/EN/Research/Funding/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Gerald Averary Wainwright Fund for Near Eastern Archaeology**

The Fund aims to encourage the study of non-classical archaeology and the general history of the countries of the Middle East.

*The Wainwright Digital Poster Prize* aims to stimulate and reward interest in the history and archaeology of the Ancient Near East in young people of secondary school age. The Wainwright Digital Poster can explore any aspect of the history or archaeology of the ancient Near East. The winner of the Prize receives £250 to spend on books of his or her choice, with the winner of the Junior Award (under 16) receiving £100. The winning entries will be posted on the Fund's website. More information at: <http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/wainwright/index.php/en/essay-prize>

*Wainwright Fund Research Grant* are intended to encourage the study of the non-classical archaeology and general history as deduced from comparative archaeology (excluding language, literature or philology) of the following countries: Asia Minor, Armenia, Caucasia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Arabia, Abyssinia, the Sudan to West Africa, the Sahara, Cyrenaica, Tripoli, Tunisia and its islands, Algeria, Morocco. More information at: <http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/wainwright/index.php/en/research-grants>

### **The International Association for the Study of Arabia**

Through a generous donation, the IASA has recently been able to offer a greater number of research grants to worthy scholars. The main objective of the research must fit within the scope of the IASA's aims, and applications must be linked to clear and achievable plans for immediate research. The number of awards made each year will depend on the strength of applications. *Main Research Grants* up to £4,000 and *Small Research Grants* up to £1,000 are awarded. It is expected that grants of a combined value of up to about £8,000 will normally be awarded each year.

Terms and conditions can be found on our website, but also see the IASA News Section of the Bulletin for more information: [www.theiasa.com/research/grants/](http://www.theiasa.com/research/grants/)

### **The Islamic Manuscript Association annual grant scheme**

The Islamic Manuscript Association Grant Scheme was established to further the aims of the Association by supporting the projects and research of its members in the field of Islamic manuscripts. The Grant Scheme is among the major ongoing activities of the Association, and is one of the main ways in which the Association is able to actively benefit its members' work with manuscript collections around the world. The maximum available grant is £5000 per project, and a number of awards are made annually.

<http://www.islamicmanuscript.org/grants/grantscheme.aspx>

### **International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF)**

The International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) is one of the most prestigious and important literary prizes in the Arab world. Its aim is to reward excellence in contemporary Arabic creative writing and to encourage the readership of high quality Arabic literature internationally through the translation and publication of winning and shortlisted novels in other major languages. For further details, see: [www.arabicfiction.org/](http://www.arabicfiction.org/).

### **Jusoor Scholarship**

St Antony's College, in partnership with Jusoor, are offering a one year scholarship for entry in 2020 to a student who is a Syrian citizen or a stateless person normally residing in Syria to study for a one-year Master's degree at St Antony's College at the University of Oxford. Jusoor is an NGO of Syrian expatriates supporting the country's development and helping Syrian youth realize their potential through various programs and initiatives in the fields of Education, Career, and Global Community Engagement. The scholarship is open to applicants who are Syrian citizens or Palestinian refugees in Syria (Palestinians with a Syrian Travel Document), who are currently living in Syria or abroad, and who have applied for a one-year full-time Master's degree in any subject offered at St Antony's College except the MBA. Preference will be given to students who have not already completed a Master's degree. 100% of university and college fees, and an annual grant for living costs of £14,553 for 12 month courses and £10,915 for 9 month courses. The stipend for courses with different durations will be adjusted accordingly. For more information: <https://jusoor.syria.com/jusoor-oxford-scholarship/>

### **Jameel Scholarships**

With the help of a very generous gift to the University, the Jameel Scholarships have been established to enable the very best students to come to Cardiff – those who have the intellect and determination to apply their knowledge for the benefit of Muslim communities in the UK, and to promote better understanding of Islam in wider society. *Three full-funded scholarships* are available for September 2020 for students studying the MA in Islam in Contemporary Britain. Each scholarship comprises full UK/EU tuition fees, £15,000 stipend and £1,000 towards research costs. More information at: <https://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/islamukcentre/jameel-scholarships/>

### **Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund**

The fund was established with donations from Leigh Douglas's family and friends to support continued scholarship on the Middle East. It is a charity, and has distributed more than £18,000 since 1990 to assist scholars and experts pursuing research, mostly on Yemen, in fields as varied as archaeology, social anthropology, folk

tales, history, geography, linguistics, public health, and marine archaeology. Small grants have enabled scholars to travel, conduct field research or attend conferences, which otherwise would not have been possible. Grants include:

*The Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize.* This is awarded annually to the writer of the best PhD dissertation on a Middle Eastern topic in the Social Sciences or Humanities. The current value of the prize is £600 for the winner and £150 for the runner up. Anyone wishing to submit his/her dissertation for consideration should send a copy, together with an accompanying letter or recommendation from their supervisor to Professor Charles Tripp, S.O.A.S., Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1X 0XG, UK. The deadline for submission of entries is 31 January. [www.brismes.ac.uk/student-area/leigh-douglas-memorial-prize](http://www.brismes.ac.uk/student-area/leigh-douglas-memorial-prize)

*Grants for Yemeni Studies.* Each year the Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund offers two or three small grants (in the region of £300) to assist scholars of any nationality whose research involves the study of Yemeni history, culture, economics, politics or society. Applications should include a brief curriculum vitae, an outline of the relevant research project and a letter of reference. There are two annual deadlines for applications: 1 November and 1 May. Further enquiries and applications should be sent by post to Dr Venetia Porter, Department of the Middle East, The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3DG, United Kingdom. Email: [venetia@trippiyasa.demon.co.uk](mailto:venetia@trippiyasa.demon.co.uk). For further information on Leigh Douglas and the Fund's work see [www.brismes.ac.uk/student-area/leigh-douglas-memorial-prize](http://www.brismes.ac.uk/student-area/leigh-douglas-memorial-prize)

### **The Nahrein Network**

The Nahrein Network fosters the sustainable development of antiquity, cultural heritage and the humanities in Iraq and its neighbours. We support interdisciplinary research to enable universities, museums, and community groups to better serve local, post-conflict needs.

*Research Grant Awards* support interdisciplinary research on themes relating to one or more of the Nahrein Network's five aims. The *Joint Visiting Scholarships Scheme* aims to enhance the capacity of Iraqi, Iranian, Lebanese and Turkish scholars to engage in the sustainable development of cultural heritage. It enables academics, cultural heritage professionals, and NGO workers to visit the UK for 1-2 months for training and research. More information at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/nahrein>

### **Palestine Exploration Fund**

The PEF awards small grants to students and others pursuing research into topics relevant to its general aims. The deadline is around the 27 February. Please address applications to the Grants Manager, Palestine Exploration Fund, 2 Hinde Mews, Marylebone Lane, London W1U 2AA. Enquiries can be addressed to the Executive Secretary. Email [ExecSec@pef](mailto:ExecSec@pef).

org.uk. Further details and application forms can be found at: [www.pef.org.uk/grants/](http://www.pef.org.uk/grants/)

### **Qasid Arabic Institute in conjunction with the Council for British Research in the Levant**

The Qasid Institute has developed a reputation as one of the best private intensive Arabic-language programmes in the Middle East with teaching methods specifically designed for foreign students. Two scholarships are normally offered for the summer or for the autumn session.

The Qasid Arabic Institute encourages applicants to apply early and to be as clear and accurate as possible in outlining their financial situation. As a rule, the financial aid committee will give preference to those who have clearly explored every alternate avenue of funding and have demonstrated an effort to meet tuition costs as much as possible. In other words, listing a lower income base will not necessarily bring more funding or improve the likelihood of receiving an award. Please note that the specific academic quarter (or quarters) and the total number of quarters for which financial aid is provided will vary for each student relative to their individual situations. Qasid reserves the right to rescind its commitments to a given financial aid offer in the event of a recipient violating institutional policies, performing below minimum academic standards, or if any changes occur to the conditions that they have stated in the application under which they received their financial aid offer. For more information: <https://www.qasid.com/admissions/financial-aid-application/> and <http://cbri.org.uk/british-institute-amman> for more information.

### **Al Qasimi Foundation**

The Al Qasimi Foundation's Doctoral Research Grants encourage scholars from a wide range of disciplines and professional fields to undertake research toward informing policymaking in the United Arab Emirates. The Grants are open to PhD students from all nationalities studying at an accredited university in the United Arab Emirates or abroad. Doctoral Research Grants financially support PhD candidates in the research phase of their dissertations. Currently, two awards are available each year for applied research projects that have Ras Al Khaimah as a primary site for data gathering and analysis. The Grant covers all student expenses associated with their field research in the United Arab Emirates, including return airfares, furnished accommodation for up to 12 months, a stipend to cover living costs, and research support. Recipients are expected to produce one to two working papers as part of the Grant and make at least one presentation to the local research community. For more information: <http://www.alqasimifoundation.com/en/what-we-do-13/2/doctoral-research-grants>

### **Royal Asiatic Society**

The Society offers several prizes for outstanding research in Asian studies, including the *Professor Mary Boyce Prize*

(£250) for an article relating to the study of religion in Asia, and the *Sir George Staunton Prize* (£250) for an article by a young scholar, both for articles submitted to the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. The Society introduces five life fellowships per calendar year starting from January 2014 at the rate of £1500. For more information contact Alison Ohta, Curator, Royal Asiatic Society, 14 Stephenson Way, London W1 2HD. Tel: +44(0)2073884539; Email [ao@royalasiaticsociety.org](mailto:ao@royalasiaticsociety.org). More information can also be found on: <https://royalasiaticsociety.org/the-societys-prizes-and-awards/>

### **Sir William Luce Fellowship**

The Fellowship is awarded annually to a scholar working on those parts of the Middle East to which Sir William Luce devoted his working life (chiefly Sudan and Arabia). The Fund welcomes applications for the position of Sir William Luce Fellow which is hosted by Durham University during Epiphany term (January – 13 March). The Fellowship, tenable jointly in the Institute for Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies and Trevelyan College, will entitle the holder to full access to departmental and other University facilities. The Fellow is expected to deliver 'The Sir William Luce Lecture', which will form the basis of a paper to be published in the Durham Middle East Papers series.

Applicants should send a CV, an outline of their proposed research and contact details for two referees by 30 April to: The Secretary, Sir William Luce Memorial fund, Durham University Library, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RN, UK. Tel. +44 (0)191 334 1218. Email: [Luce.fund@durham.ac.uk](mailto:Luce.fund@durham.ac.uk). For further information see: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/sgia/imeis/lucefund/>

### **SOAS Scholarships and Studentships**

The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, offers numerous scholarships with relevance to Arabian studies. For further information see [www.soas.ac.uk/registry/scholarships/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/scholarships/) or contact: The Scholarships Officer, Registry, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG, UK. Email: [scholarships@soas.ac.uk](mailto:scholarships@soas.ac.uk)

### **Soudavar Memorial Foundation**

The Soudavar Memorial Foundation's scholarships are highly competitive and awarded on merit to students who possess outstanding academic credentials and demonstrate exceptional leadership potential. We take great pride in their achievements past and present as they continue to enrich our understanding and knowledge of the Iranian World at prestigious institutions across the globe. <http://soudavar.org/scholarships/>

### **Thesiger-Oman Fellowships**

By the kind generosity of His Majesty Qaboos bin Said Al-Said, Sultan of Oman, the Royal Geographical Society offers one annual fellowship of up to £8,000 for geographical research in the arid and semi-arid regions of the world, as a



memorial to Sir Wilfred Thesiger. The fellowship will focus either on the physical aspects or on the human dimension of arid environments. The fellowship funds a researcher with an outstanding research proposal, including periods of arid environment fieldwork. To reflect Thesiger's interests, research within the Middle East and other arid regions he visited will be given priority, but applications for work in the

world's other arid regions is also welcomed. The deadline is 23 November each year. For more information see: <https://www.rgs.org/in-the-field/in-the-field-grants/research-grants/thesiger-oman-fellowship/>

## CONFERENCES & EVENTS

### Completed in 2019/20

#### Opening of Hisn Khor Fakkan Museum, Sharjah

In April 2019 His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah opened Hisn Khor Fakkan Museum. The museum is a collaboration between Sharjah Archaeology Authority, Sharjah Department of Town Planning and Sharjah Museums Authority.

The fort was rebuilt adjacent to its original location to showcase the rich history of Sharjah's east coast through archaeology. Since archaeological excavations began in this area several decades ago important finds from Dibba Al-Hisn, Khor Fakkan, Kalba, Wadi Al Hilo and Wadi Shi have been discovered. On display are unique artefacts, dating from the Bronze Age to the modern era including a 19th century inscription that records a local battle.

There are four galleries that present the local archaeology, and three galleries that focus on the function of the fort. Gallery One introduces the east coast area, its natural resources and position on the Indian Ocean and begins the archaeological story with the Bronze Age sites of the area, including copper extraction and smelting in Wadi Al Hilo, a burial site at Al Traif, Kalba, a settlement at Basateen Hunainah, Kalba and the hillside village at Khor Fakkan. This gallery is also houses rock art including an Umm al-Nar ashlar stone with the carving of a standing figure.

Gallery Two presents Iron Age copper smelting from Kalba and pre-Islamic settlement and burial sites at the port of Dibba Al-Hisn with its links to the Greek and Roman worlds and Mesopotamia as demonstrated by Alexander the Great style coinage, Roman glass, pottery and intaglios and glazed ceramics from Mesopotamia.

The Islamic period up to the early 1500s and the devastating arrival of Alphonso De Albuquerque in Khor Fakkan in 1507 is covered in Gallery Three. Finds here illustrate the trading links with China, Burma, Thailand, Iraq, Persia and Yemen through a variety of ceramics found in Khor Fakkan and Dibba Al Hisn.



The new museum at Khor Fakkan

Gallery Four brings the visitor up to date with finds from the 1500s onwards until the first half of the 20th century. Trade links are again demonstrated through ceramics from China and Thailand alongside locally produced ceramics that include an incense burner. This gallery also displays a large rock with an inscription from 1843 that describes a battle and the repossessing of Khor Fakkan by the Sheikh Sultan bin Saqr Al Qasmi I.

Displays in the northern tower present weapons and the system of surveillance and defence around the town of Khor Fakkan. Visitors can climb a narrow staircase to the first floor to view local watchtowers on the surrounding hills, the natural harbour and local souq.

Other traditional features of the fort include a medbasa or date press and small kitchen courtyard with a fresh water well. One room has been made into a majlis for visitors where they can rest and drink Arabic coffee and tea. This room provides a history of the fort that was built in 1910 by Sheikh Saeed bin Hamad Al Qasimi. Before its demolition in 1985 it had served as a police station, prison, post office and utilities office.

#### The Splendid Archaeology of Kuwait

16 October 2019 to 16 April 2020  
Sharjah Archaeology Museum

The exhibition was organised by Sharjah Archaeology Museum, in cooperation with the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, (KNCCAL), and included a rare collection of artefacts discovered from a number of major sites in Kuwait and normally displayed at the Kuwait

National Museum. The artefacts date from between the 6th millennium BC to the end of the 1st century AD. As an introduction to the exhibition, the visitor was given a brief history of archaeological discoveries in Kuwait. The exhibition then presented three archaeological periods that preceded the emergence of Islam.

Even before official excavations took place, Kuwaiti citizens had found artefacts while reusing stones collected from the archaeological sites of Failaka Island to build houses during the 20th century. These discoveries resulted in the first archaeological excavation expedition led by the Danish mission in 1957. Their first season took place in 1958 when they conducted a survey of the mainland of Kuwait and began excavations on Failaka Island. During the following decades, the work of local and foreign archaeological missions continued with Italian, Slovak, Georgian, Polish, French and Jordanian expeditions, as well as a joint excavation team from the Gulf Cooperation Countries. The Kuwaiti Archaeology team has also conducted extensive surveys of mainland Kuwait and its islands. It was clear from the various excavations that human activity has taken place in Kuwait continuously from at least the 6th millennium BC. Settlement sites with evidence of daily life have been found in various parts of the country, including the islands whose location on sea trade routes were important for the stability of the population.

Archaeological sites discovered so far include residential settlements, cemeteries, places of worship, workshops and temporary campsites, many of which are full of goods and materials that were used, produced and imported throughout the various eras. These discoveries have highlighted the ancient and extensive links between the peoples of Kuwait with the coasts of the Arabian Peninsula, Mesopotamia, The Levant and the Land of Sindh. These influences have in turn, left their mark on the political, social and economic formation of local communities.

### **The Neolithic period (6000 BC - 2150 BC)**

The most important sites that date back to the Stone Age are located in both the south and north of Kuwait. The most important of these is Al Subiya situated on the north side of bay of Kuwait where small settlements consisted of buildings made of a number of adjacent rooms whose foundations were built of sandstone, while the walls were possibly made from tree branches. It is believed that settlement continued at these sites until the middle of the 4th millennium BC.

These settlements belong to the Ubaid Period that flourished in southern Mesopotamia and was characterised by painted pottery; some of which is displayed in the exhibition. Also on display is jewellery from Al Subiya, included a perforated pearl bead, confirming the practice of pearl diving since the Neolithic period along with fishing gear and net weights and a fragment of pottery bearing a drawing of a boat with two masts, indicating the importance of the sea and boats for

everyday life and commercial exchange.

### **The Bronze Age (2150 BC – 1200 BC)**

The beginning of the Bronze Age witnessed the growth of larger settlements referred to as Bronze Age Villages. These sites benefitted from the pre-existing sea trade route that passed through the Arabian Gulf from Mesopotamia in the north, to Dilmun (Bahrain and the eastern region of the Gulf) and Magan (the coasts of the present-day United Arab Emirates) in the south and all the way onto the Land of Sindh (Pakistan). Sites from this era have been found on Failaka, Umm Al Namil and Al Shuwaikh (Akkaz) Islands and on the northern side of Kuwait Bay. Bronze daggers, arrows and fishhooks made in the workshops of Failaka Island from copper imported from Magan are displayed in the exhibition.

Due to the proximity of Kuwait with the Dilmun civilisation in Bahrain cultural influences are apparent in the local archaeological record. An example of this is the use of seals by merchants. Artefacts presented on display include the regional-style seals discovered in Kuwait that are similar to those found in Bahrain in terms of their round shape and ornamental themes plus a number of cylindrical seals from Mesopotamia and an Egyptian scarab seal. Other regional influences and arts are illustrated through the display of soft stone utensils and human figurines.

### **Hellenistic Period Onwards (350 BC – AD 100)**

The historian Arian, who wrote about the life of Alexander the Great, recorded that Alexander sent expeditions to the Gulf coast and its islands. Failaka was an important stop as mentioned in a report sent to Alexander, noting that the island had a temple to the god Artemis and that sacred gazelles were grazing in the area protecting the gods. In addition Pliny also recorded that Alexander had named the island Ikarus, after an island in the Aegean Sea. Kuwait thus became part of the Greek civilisation and the Seleucid Empire. Failaka remained known as Ikarus throughout the Hellenistic Period.

Artefacts in the exhibition demonstrate the influences of the Hellenistic Period on Failaka. These include coins imitating the style of Alexander the Great coinage, a beautiful stone statue of a dolphin, symbolic in Greek art and beliefs and a stone with a Greek votive inscription from the 4th century BC that reads “Soteles citizen of Athens and the soldiers (dedicated this) to Zeus Soter (the saviour), to Poseidon and Artemis (the saviours)”.

### **No god but God: The Art of Islam**

October 2019 - April 2020

AGSA, Adelaide

No god but God: The art of Islam is the Gallery's first major display of Islamic art to encompass a geographical span extending from Morocco to Australia. The display includes a range of works from the ninth century to the contemporary

era. Among them are some of the earliest works of Islamic art to enter the collection, from a bequest by Sir Samuel Way in 1916, to the most recent, Portrait of Emperor Akbar, acquired more than 100 years later.

### **The Decorated Word: Writing and Picturing in Islamic Calligraphy**

April - November 2019

The MET, New York

Calligraphy is a key achievement of Islamic civilization and arguably the most characteristic expression of the Islamic spirit. Throughout the Islamic world, calligraphy embellishes the surfaces of objects large and small—from architecture to items of daily use—in styles that range from the elegant, refined, and eminently readable to the decorative, abstract, and barely legible. No other culture has explored the decorative and creative possibilities of the written word as extensively.

This exhibition examined the interplay between writing and picturing in Islamic calligraphy and explores the inherent tension between textual design, decoration, readability, and verbal clarity in some four dozen examples of Islamic calligraphy from The Met collection. These works, created between the ninth century and the present, included works on paper and parchment; ceramics; metalwork and coins; and a carpet. The presentation included a selection of modern and contemporary works by artists from Iran and Pakistan who use the written word as their primary mode of artistic expression.

### **Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World, 1950s–1980s**

January - April 2020

Grey Art Gallery, New York

Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World, 1950s–1980s explored the development of abstraction in the Arab world via paintings, sculpture, and works on paper dating from the 1950s through the 1980s. By looking critically at the history and historiography of mid-20th century abstraction, the exhibition considered art from North Africa and West Asia as integral to the discourse on global modernism. At its heart, the project raised a fundamental art historical question: How do we study abstraction across different contexts and what models of analysis do we use?

Examining how and why artists investigated the expressive capacities of line, colour, and texture, Taking Shape highlighted a number of abstract movements that developed in North Africa and West Asia, as well as the Arab diaspora. Across these regions, individual artists and artist collectives grappled with issues of authenticity, national and regional identity, and the decolonization of culture. Drawn from the collection of the Barjeel Art Foundation based in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, the exhibition featured nearly 90

works by a diverse group of artists. The exhibition was curated and organized by Suheyla Takesh, Curator at the Barjeel Art Foundation, and Lynn Gumpert, Director of the Grey Art Gallery at New York University

### **ABOVE: Aerial Photography**

June - August 2019

Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi

Featuring images of the UAE, the Middle East and the USA, all taken from drones and aircraft ABOVE: Aerial Photography celebrated the art of aerial photography. From horse riders, to shots of the Dubai skyline, the collection showcased a huge range of amazing images. In addition to the stunning photographs, the exhibition also featured a public programme of talks, workshops and panel discussions.

### **Nasser Al Salem: Amma Baad**

July - August 2019

Delfina Foundation: London

Nasser Al Salem's first solo exhibition in the UK titled Amma Baad was curated by Maya El Khalil and presented as part of the Shubbak Festival. Nasser Al Salem uses his expanded conception of calligraphy to present a new series of works exploring the relationship between language, time and space. An exhibition of sculptural objects and works on paper Amma Baad continues the artist's expansive approach to the practice of Arabic calligraphy, both in terms of form and through his conceptual approach to the phrases with which he works. In this new series, Al Salem contemplates the Arabic phrase 'amma baad', an expression that proves difficult to translate into English. Often found in formal Arabic correspondence, the expression follows initial salutations and greetings, while preceding – and perhaps anticipating – the main subject or story to follow. It is a moment dense with expectations.

We live in times of exponential change, both in terms of our technological capabilities and the socio-political orders in which we are embedded. This has brought about a heightened sense of the simultaneity of events and altered our perception and understanding of place. The past and future are merging while the present is almost disappearing.

Through sculptural, print and hand-drawn renderings of 'amma baad', Al Salem takes a philosophical approach to this phrase, considering how it occupies a liminal space in the present, with its existence predicted on both that which precedes and follows it. Playing with scale and materials, the artist's manipulations of the text seek to challenge and expand our perceptions of time and space. Al Salem invites reflection on our current moment, as well as what might follow 'amma baad', and the agency we have in bringing potential futures into existence.



## Speculative Landscapes

September - December 2019

NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery

The exhibition brought together the work of four established UAE-based artists : Palestinian Areej Kaoud, Emirati Jumairy, Saudi-born Ayman Zedani and Raja'a Khalid and was curated by Maya Allison. The exhibition allowed the artists to explore the concept of environment, whether natural, artificial or visual, through the close study of their surroundings in the UAE. The exhibition took viewers into the imagined worlds of four UAE-based artists. Through close study of their surroundings in the UAE, each of the artists here reflect on our shared futures: Areej Kaoud, Ayman Zedani, Jumairy, and Raja'a Khalid. Collectively, the artists in the exhibition explore the very concept of environment (natural, artificial, virtual). Each raises a question: how do organisms – whether human or other – create, survive, and inhabit our natural, artificial, and virtual worlds?

The four artists in this exhibition developed their practice in the UAE, establishing a strong regional track record, as well as an emerging international presence. They share a speculative practice, extrapolating imagined worlds within existing ones. Each installation offered an imaginary journey derived from the artists' real-world observations of everyday life. In Khalid's performative installation, she invited viewers to embrace personal well-being as a commodifiable trend, while Kaoud's playground kept visitors on high alert to ever-present risk. In two very different landscape installations, Zedani and Jumairy each proposed worlds in which our natural bodies and the landscape around us manifest biological or artificial intelligence.

## Sheikha Alyazia bint Nahyan Al Nahyan: I Met a Traveller from an Antique Land

June – July 2019

Pi Artworks, London

Emirati artist Sheikha Alyazia bint Nahyan Al Nahyan's first ever solo exhibition in the UK, I Met a Traveller from an Antique Land was curated by Janet Rady. The exhibition consisted of 23 art pieces, which exemplified Sheikha Alyazia's love of connecting cultures and time periods. Alyazia's work pursues connections with ancient civilisations / customs and traditions with more modern mores, so bringing together the past and the present. The exhibition mixed verses of poetry specifically selected from a variety of well-known Arab and Western poets with her own works, to underpin her theme of connecting. Whether it is in her series Bon Voyage in which she links historical figures extracted from famous paintings with commercial airline posters, or in Carrom Station in Motion where she plays on the South Asian board game of carrom by taking chips from the game and synthesising them with the controls of a modern video game in mixed media paintings. Her

most intriguing series Mishmash Trails and Mishmash take us straight into the world of Indiana Jones – in Mishmash Trails we are asked to imagine treasure hunters looking for lost treasures encapsulated in cave like two dimensional marble formations, only to be put off by false trails, while the real treasure (ancient coins which Alyazia has reinterpreted and designed) lies buried elsewhere. Whilst in Mishmash, we see exactly that, the mishmashed coins with symbols which range from ancient Phoenician to modern Emirati to past Islamic, which Alyazia recreates in paint on the canvas, representing the blending of common identities.

## Qatar National Museum

Open daily

Doha, Qatar

The National Museum of Qatar opened to the public on 28 March 2019 and aims to give voice to the unique story of Qatar and its people from earliest times to the present day and onwards towards its future. Designed by French architect, Jean Nouvel, the museum makes a dramatic addition to the Doha landscape; with its curved disks, intersections, and cantilevered angles — all inspired by the local desert rose. This unique building embraces the newly restored Palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani. Designed to be both immersive and experiential, visitors can expect to encounter a rich environment to explore. Organised in three “chapters” — Beginnings, Life in Qatar, and The Modern History of Qatar, each theme is presented across eleven highly individual galleries. Spread over 1.5km, visitors journey through an exciting mix of all-encompassing environments and compelling storytelling that will engage all the senses.

## Furusiyya: The Art of Chivalry between East and West

February – May 2020

Louvre, Abu Dhabi

The exhibition displays objects of medieval chivalric culture from the Islamic and Christian worlds. The immersive presentation includes over 130 artefacts, from medieval armours, objects related to riding and battle, as well as illuminated manuscripts depicting chivalric scenes. Particular attention is paid to the values of the medieval Knights. Courage, faith, loyalty or honour can thus be seen as the anchor of a common culture, present in both Islamic East and Christian West. The exhibition is held in partnership with Musée de Cluny, musée national du Moyen Âge in Paris, and Agence France-Muséums.

Presented across three sections, artefacts on show originate from across the Middle East, including Iraq, Iran, Egypt and Syria, to the French and Germanic states in Europe, covering the period from the early 11th to the 16th century. The show will allow visitors to discover similarities of

knightly traditions in these different parts of the medieval world and spotlight the extraordinary cultural exchanges originating from key meeting points such as Southern Spain, Sicily and Syria. In keeping with the theme of Louvre Abu Dhabi's current cultural season Changing Societies, the exhibition highlights key artworks and artefacts across different times and cultures. The show aims to visualise how historic circumstances have contributed to their production or, in turn, how these works now act as a witness to historic changes in the cultures that produced them.

### **Museums in Arabia**

26th June - 28th June 2019

King's College London

The Museums in Arabia conference explored how different cultural, political, social and economic actors shape cultural practices within museums, arts and cultural heritage institutions within the rapidly developing and complex landscape of the Arabian Peninsula. With scholarly publications primarily focused on large-scale cultural institutions and their symbolic power; the unique operations and distinctive characteristics of Gulf museums and cultural institutions have been often overlooked. This conference attempted to shift the focus of academic debate towards grounded arts and cultural practices and their unique operations.

A keynote lecture titled *Collecting the Future: Why Museums Must Be Spaces of Decolonization and Active Reflection in the Arab World*, was delivered by Dr Nada Shabout, Professor of Art History and the Director of the Contemporary Arab and Muslim Cultural Studies Initiative (CAMCSI) at the University of North Texas. She talked about the need to question the rationales of the new museums that are built in the Arab Gulf region, especially considering the recent cultural and heritage destruction and continuous frictions. A second keynote lecturer was given by Dr Venetia Porter, Senior Curator for Islamic and Contemporary Middle East Art at the British Museum. She talked about the British Museum's International Training Programme for museum professionals within the Arab region.

### **Red Sea Conference 9: Networked Spaces**

2nd - 5th July 2019

Lyon France

Last July, Lyon (France) welcomed participants to the 9th edition of the Red Sea Conference, entitled "Networked Spaces: The Spatiality of networks in the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean". The conference focused on four major themes, islands and insularity, the Red Sea and Indian Ocean straits, dangerous areas and safe places: the solidity of networks in practice and sea, deserts, mountains: maintaining connections throughout discontinuous environments.

## **Forthcoming Events**

### **Seminar for Arabian Studies**

**Postponed until 14th -17th July 2021**

Casa Arabe, Cordoba, Spain

The Seminar for Arabian Studies 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). The Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies are published the following year in time for the next Seminar.

This is the first time that the Seminar has been held in Spain and only the second time that it has been held outside the UK. On this special occasion, there will be two special sessions to explore the cultural links that connect the two peninsulas: Iberian and Arabian.

#### **Special Session 1: Intellectual links: language, law, theology and culture in Jazirat al-'Arab and Jazirat al-Andalus.**

Al-Andalus was an integral part of the Islamic civilization that originated in the Hijaz in Arabia. There were of course important continuities from previous autochthonous and Mediterranean cultures in the Andalusian world, but Arabian cultural influence is probably one of its most important, and yet at the same time the one most ignored by scholars. In this Special Session we invite papers which discuss the intellectual and cultural links between Arabia and Al-Andalus, in law, literature and culture in its widest sense.

#### **Special Session 2: Comparison of cultural environmental adaptations in the Arabian and Iberian peninsulas.**

In this session we aim at discussing diversity in human adaptations to arid environments in the Arabian and Iberian Peninsula. These two peninsulas are both large land masses with a range of geographies and with rich cultural histories. Although they came closely into contact only from the Islamic period onwards they shared similarities in climate, land, and connectivity long before that. This session is intended to allow scholars to present on behavioural strategies developed to cope with the specifics of arid landscapes in both Arabia and Iberia from the early prehistory to modern times. There is particular interest in settlement dynamics, subsistence strategies as well as water control and management from an archaeological point of view, but contributions from other perspectives are also welcome.

<https://www.theiasa.com/2020-seminar/>

## **NRAA 8th International Conference: Omani-German Relations during the 19th and 20th Centuries**

**Postponed**

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Germany

The National Records and Archives Authority of the Sultanate of Oman announces a scholarly conference on Omani-German relations and the different aspects of these relations since the arrival of the Germans in East Africa and the Gulf, as well as the German role in historical, economic, social and cultural studies of Oman. The conference, organised in cooperation with Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Humboldt University of Berlin, Free University of Berlin and Oman Studies Centre in Germany at Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, aims at bringing together scholars from Oman, Germany and other countries.

Deadline for proposals: 16 September 2019.

Information: <https://nraa.gov.om/the-eighth-international-conference-omani-german-relations-during-the-19th-and-20th-centuries/?lang=en>

## **BRISMES 2020: Knowledge, Power and Middle Eastern Studies**

**Postponed until 2021**

University of Kent, Canterbury

The British Society for Middle Eastern Studies and the University of Kent's School of Politics and International Relations invite proposals for the 2020 Annual BRISMES Conference on the theme of Knowledge, Power and Middle Eastern Studies.

In light of growing calls in many different parts of the world to decolonize academia and knowledge production more broadly, the organizers of BRISMES 2020 encourage the submission of papers that critically engage with the implications of this movement for the field of Middle East Studies.

The colonial origins of the term Middle East and the historical imbrications of area studies with the exercise of colonial and imperialist power were highlighted many decades ago in the work of Edward Said, amongst others. More recently, the Arab uprisings provoked calls among some scholars and activists to fundamentally rethink prevalent approaches, derived from so-called universal paradigms, particularly in the social sciences. The conference invites participants to reflect on the concept of decoloniality and practice of decolonization of knowledge and pedagogy in relation to the study and teaching of the Middle East.

More information: <http://www.brismes.ac.uk/conference/>

## **Culture Made in Arabia: The Arabian Peninsula as a new major player on the Arab cultural scene**

October 31st - November 1st, 2020,

CEFAS / Sorbonne Abu Dhabi / New York University Abu Dhabi

Since the turn of the 21st century, the Arabian Peninsula has been both a major producer of cultural goods and a hub of cultural presentation, exchange and commerce. From book fairs to highly coveted literary and translation prizes, from upscale art galleries to ground-breaking museums, from literature to music and poetry, from "starchitecture" to the preservation of traditional material and intangible heritage, culture has become an asset and a stake in the growing influence of the Arabian Peninsula in the Arabic speaking world.

State-sponsored as well as private sector and individually driven endeavours have moved the Arabian Peninsula from the margins of contemporary Arabic culture towards the centre, where it competes for prestige and soft power with the traditional beacons of urban cultural hegemony, such as Egypt and the Levant. With the help of considerable capital and heavy investment in education and multimedia platforms, cultural productions are not only showcased for local consumption but also exported throughout the Arabic-speaking world. Works of literary fiction, poetry, theatre, music, cinema, television programs and fine arts, from high-end productions to commercial pop culture, thus shape a Khaleeji identity in contemporary Arabic culture.

This conference aims to stimulate discussion of the Arabian Peninsula as a new contender on the regional cultural scene, from state-led cultural policies to the development of a Khaleeji "pop culture", understood both as commercial entertainment and as the grassroots cultural forms produced by local youth and by diverse migrant communities. The deadline for proposals is April 15, 2020. Proposals should be between 250 and 350 words and sent to : Laure Assaf (Isa6@nyu.edu), Clio Chaveneau (clio.chaveneau@psuad.ac.ae), Frédéric Lagrange (frederic.lagrange@psuad.ac.ae)

## **Islamic Heritage 2020: 3rd International Conference on Islamic Heritage Architecture and Art**

9th–11th June 2020

Please note that following the recent events on the Coronavirus pandemic this conference will have a non-attending format. This conference aims to highlight the importance of Islamic heritage architecture and art to the world and its influence across different regions. The meeting will deal with the design of many types of buildings in Islamic countries, including not only the better known public buildings like mosques, mausolea, citadels and forts, but



also houses and gardens, engineering works such as bridges and dams, irrigation systems and many others which have also had a profound impact on society. Islamic architecture has enriched design with a wide variety of structural shapes, including among others, unique arches, a wide variety of vaults and domes which allow for new forms to be developed. The influence that these structural forms have in non-Islamic countries will be one of the themes of the conference.

There is much to learn from past experiences to arrive at solutions which are environmentally sound and sustainable in the long term. As conventional energy resources become scarce, the Islamic design heritage can offer invaluable lessons on how to deal in an efficient manner with cases of hard and extreme environments. Traditional architecture and urban environments in most Islamic countries are

now being eroded by overemphasis on a global type of architecture and city planning. As a consequence, many regions are losing their identity. The Conference will aim to review these developments in the light of what the classical Islamic urban designs and architectures have to offer modern society. An equally important part of the meeting will analyse the materials employed and the types of structural elements, particularly those unique to Islamic architecture. Associated topics of discussion will include music, textiles and ceramics, which are essential parts of the architectural fabric. Preserving that heritage also requires the development of appropriate conservation techniques in response to the different materials used and the ways structural forms work, including under extreme conditions, such as earthquakes. More information: [wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2020/islamic-heritage-2020](https://wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2020/islamic-heritage-2020)

## JOURNALS & MAGAZINES

### **Adumatu**

ISSN 1319-8947. Adumatu, PO Box 10071, Riyadh 11433, Saudi Arabia. Editors: Professor Adbul-Rahman Al-Ansary (ed.), Dr Khaleel Ibrahim Al-Muaikel and Dr. Abdullah Muhammad Al-Sharekh. Contact: [adumatu@alsudairy.org.sa](mailto:adumatu@alsudairy.org.sa)

### **Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy**

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/16000471>  
ISSN: 0905-7196. E-ISSN: 1600-0471. This journal serves as a forum for study in archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, and the early history of countries in the Arabian Peninsula. Editor: Bruno Overlaet and Peter Stein

### **Aram**

<http://poj.peeters-leuven.be/content.php>  
ISSN 0959-4213. E-ISSN 1783-1342. Published by the ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies. It presents contributions to its annual International Conference, together with the ARAM Newsletter.

### **Atlal: Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology**

ISSN 1319-8351. Ministry of Education for Antiquities and Museums, PO Box 3734, Riyadh 11481.

### **Banipal: Magazine of Modern Arabic Literature**

[www.banipal.co.uk/](http://www.banipal.co.uk/)  
A magazine of modern Arabic Literature.

### **Bulletin of the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia**

[www.thebfsa.org/content/bulletin](http://www.thebfsa.org/content/bulletin)  
Past and present issues of our very own Bulletin can now be found online.

### **Chroniques Yémenites**

<https://journals.openedition.org/cy/201>  
An annual review in French and Arabic, produced by the Centre français d'archéologie et de sciences sociales de Sanaa (CEFAS). The same website also covers Chroniques du Manuscrit au Yémen, which can also be downloaded free of charge. Email [cy@journals.org](mailto:cy@journals.org)

### **Current World Archaeology**

[www.archaeology.co.uk](http://www.archaeology.co.uk)  
Published six times a year.  
Email: [cwa@archaeology.co.uk](mailto:cwa@archaeology.co.uk)

### **Fauna of Arabia**

[www.libri.ch/App\\_Web/EN/services/faunaofarabia.aspx](http://www.libri.ch/App_Web/EN/services/faunaofarabia.aspx)  
A series on the terrestrial, limnetic and marine zoology of the Arabian Peninsula. It began as Fauna of Saudi Arabia but changed its name and remit in 1998. It can be ordered from Karger Libri AG, P.O. Box, CH-4009 Basel, Switzerland Tel. ++41-613061500. Email [journals@libri.ch](mailto:journals@libri.ch)

### **HAWWA Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World**

<https://brill.com/view/journals/haww/haww-overview.xml>  
Hawwa publishes articles from all disciplinary and comparative perspectives that concern women and gender issues in the Middle East and the Islamic world. These include Muslim and non-Muslim communities within the greater Middle East, and Muslim and Middle Eastern communities elsewhere in the world.

### **International Journal of Middle East Studies**

[www.jstor.org/journals/00207438.html](http://www.jstor.org/journals/00207438.html)  
IJMES is a quarterly journal that offers original research on politics, society and culture in the Middle East from the seventh century to the present day. It is published by

Cambridge University Press under the auspices of the Middle East Studies Association of North America. Editor: Beth Baron. Email [ijmes@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:ijmes@gc.cuny.edu)

### **Journal of Arabian Studies; Arabia, the Gulf and the Red Sea**

[www.tandfonline.com/rjab](http://www.tandfonline.com/rjab)

ISSN 2153-4764. Journal launched in 2011 based and published at the Centre for Gulf Studies, University of Exeter. Main Editor is James Onley [J.Onley@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:J.Onley@exeter.ac.uk)

### **Journal of the British-Yemeni Society**

[www.al-bab.com/bys/journal.htm](http://www.al-bab.com/bys/journal.htm)

ISSN 1356-0229. Contact the Honorary Secretary, British-Yemeni Society [sec@byys.org.uk](mailto:sec@byys.org.uk)

### **Journal of Near Eastern Studies**

[www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/jnes/current](http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/jnes/current)

ISSN 0022-2968. Based in Chicago, JNES has been devoted to an examination of the civilizations of the Near East for more than 120 years. Contact [jnes@uchicago.edu](mailto:jnes@uchicago.edu). Access to previous issues can be found through the JSTOR database.

### **Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient**

[www.brill.nl/jesh](http://www.brill.nl/jesh)

ISSN 0022-4995. E-ISSN: 1568-5209. JESHO contains studies extending our knowledge of the economic and social history of what was once labelled as the Orient: the Ancient Near East, the World of Islam, and South, Southeast, and East Asia. Contact: [jesho@let.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:jesho@let.leidenuniv.nl)

### **Journal of Oman Studies**

ISSN 0378-8180. Published by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, Sultanate of Oman, POB 668, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

### **Journal of Persianate Studies**

[www.brill.nl/jps](http://www.brill.nl/jps)

ISSN 1874-7094 and E-ISSN 1874-7167.

Edited by Sakd Amir Arjomand.

Order through: [marketing@brill.nl](mailto:marketing@brill.nl)

### **Levant**

<https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ylev20>

ISSN: 0075-8914; E-ISSN: 1756-3801. Levant is the international peer-reviewed journal of the Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL), a British Academy-sponsored institute with research centres in Amman and Jerusalem, but which also supports research in Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus. Contributions from a wide variety of areas, including anthropology, archaeology, geography, history, language and literature, political studies, religion, sociology and tourism, are encouraged. Editor: Graham Philip.

### **Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication.**

[www.brill.nl/mjcc](http://www.brill.nl/mjcc)

ISSN: 1873-9857 and E-ISSN: 1873-9865

Order through [marketing@brill.nl](mailto:marketing@brill.nl). MJCC provides a platform for diverse and interdisciplinary work, including original research papers from within and outside the Middle East, reviews and review articles, to investigate transformations in communication, culture and politics in the region.

### **Paléorient**

<https://www.persee.fr/collection/paleo>

ISSN 0153-9345. A multidisciplinary six-monthly CNRS journal with an international audience, devoted to a number of aspects of the prehistory and proto-history of south-western Asia, including Arabia. CNRS Editions, 15 rue Malebranche, F-75005 Paris. Further information email: [paleorient@mae.u-paris10.fr](mailto:paleorient@mae.u-paris10.fr)

### **Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies**

<https://www.theiasa.com/publications/proceedings-of-the-seminar-for-arabian-studies/>

The Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies is a peer-reviewed series which each July publishes papers read at the Seminar in the previous July. It is the prime source for the most recent research on the Arabian Peninsula within a wide range of disciplines and for the latest discoveries in the field.

### **Sandgrouse**

<https://www.osme.org/sandgrouse/>

Sandgrouse is published by the Ornithological Society of the Middle East the Caucuses and Central Asia and contains papers and short notes on the ornithology of the this region, provides bird and conservation news from the region and a comprehensive round up of bird sightings in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

### **Saudi Aramco World**

<https://www.aramcoworld.com/en-US/Home>

The oil company, Saudi Aramco distributes its magazine, Saudi Aramco World, to increase cross-cultural understanding and to broaden knowledge of the cultures, history and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their connections with the West. The bi-monthly magazine is distributed without charge, upon request. Saudi Aramco World, Box 469008, Escondido CA 92046 -9008.

### **Sekka Magazine**

<https://sekkamag.com/>

Sekka is the first online magazine and publication to be managed by Khaleejis and narrated primarily by the people of the Arabian Gulf Region. Established in 2017, and headquartered in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, Sekka is an online magazine that is dedicated to documenting the stories of the Arabian Gulf Region and the experiences of its people, and sharing them with the world.

### **Syria**

[www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/revue/syria](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/revue/syria)

E-ISSN 1957-701X. Syria is an annual journal, launched in 1920 by the French Institute of the Near East. It is dedicated to the history and archaeology of the Semitic Near East from Prehistory to the Islamic conquest.

**Tribulus, Journal of the Emirates Natural History Group**

[www.enhg.org/trib/tribpdf.htm](http://www.enhg.org/trib/tribpdf.htm)

ISSN 1019-6919. PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, UAE. This now appears annually, rather than bi-annually.

**Wildlife Middle East News**

There are great pressures on the environment and wildlife throughout the Middle East. The rapid pace of economic development and the fragility of the natural ecosystems are factors making many indigenous species vulnerable to extinction. An extremely useful quarterly bulletin of wildlife news, Wild Life Middle East keeps abreast of the situation and reviews new publications.

## SOCIETIES, ASSOCIATIONS & OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

**Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH)**

<https://tcaabudhabi.ae/en/default.aspx>

**Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey**

[www.adias-uae.com](http://www.adias-uae.com)

ADIAS has now been absorbed into ADACH, but this website still contains a record of its activities.

**Aga Kahn Documentation Center**

<https://libraries.mit.edu/akdc/>

**Aga Khan Trust for Culture**

<http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture>

**American Institute for Yemeni Studies**

[www.aiys.org](http://www.aiys.org)

**The Anglo-Jordanian Society**

<http://a-j-s.org.uk/>

**The Anglo-Omani Society**

<http://www.angloomanisociety.com/>

**Arab-British Centre**

<https://www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk/>

**Arab World Institute**

[www.imarabe.org/](http://www.imarabe.org/)

**The Asfari Foundation**

<http://www.atassifoundation.com/>

**International Council for Archaeozoology**

<https://alexandriaarchive.org/icaz/workaswa>

**ArchNet**

<https://archnet.org/>

**Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East**

[www.astene.org.uk](http://www.astene.org.uk)

**Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia**

<https://www.nhbs.com/series/atlas-of-the-breeding-birds-of-arabia>

**Bahrain Society**

[www.bahrainsociety.com](http://www.bahrainsociety.com)

**Barakat Trust**

[www.barakat.org](http://www.barakat.org)

**BAR Publishing**

<https://www.barpublishing.com/>

**Brill Publishing**

<http://www.brill.com/>

**British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology**

<http://banealcane.org/banea/>

**British Council, Middle East**

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/about>

**British Institute of Persian Studies**

[www.bips.ac.uk](http://www.bips.ac.uk)

**British Institute for the Study of Iraq**

[www.bisi.ac.uk/](http://www.bisi.ac.uk/)

**British Society for Middle Eastern Studies**

[www.brismes.ac.uk](http://www.brismes.ac.uk)

**British-Yemeni Society**

<http://b-ys.org.uk/journal/about-journal>

**Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World**

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/research/research-centres/casaw>

**Centre Français d'Archéologie et de Sciences Sociales de Sanaa (CEFAS)**

<http://www.ifre.fr/c/201>

**Council for British Research in the Levant**

[www.cbri.org.uk](http://www.cbri.org.uk)

**Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient Department**

<https://www.dainst.org/dai/meldungen>



**Freer-Sackler Galleries, Ancient Near East Collection**

<https://www.freersackler.si.edu/collections-area/ancient-near-east/>

**Freer-Sackler Galleries - Ernst Herzfeld Papers**

<http://archive.asia.si.edu/research/archives/HerzfeldCollection.asp>

**French Institute of the Near-East (Ifpo)**

[www.ifporient.org/](http://www.ifporient.org/)

**Friends of the Hadhramaut**

[www.hadhramaut.co.uk](http://www.hadhramaut.co.uk)

**Friends of Soqatra**

[www.friendsofsoqatra.org](http://www.friendsofsoqatra.org)

**Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation**

<https://www.al-furqan.com/>

**Fondazione MedA**

<http://www.fondazionemeda.it/>

**Index Islamicus**

<https://bibliographies.brillonline.com/browse/index-islamicus>

**Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University**

[www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iaais](http://www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iaais)

**Iran Heritage Foundation**

<https://www.iranheritage.org/>

**The Islamic Manuscript Association**

<http://www.islamicmanuscript.org/home.aspx>

**Janet Rady Fine Art**

[www.janetradyfineart.com/html/home.asp](http://www.janetradyfineart.com/html/home.asp)

**London Centre for the Ancient Near East**

<http://banealcane.org/>

**London Middle East Institute**

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/>

**Louvre Abu Dhabi**

<https://www.louvreabudhabi.ae/>

**Middle East Medievalists**

<https://islamichistorycommons.org/mem/>

**Mathaf Gallery**

[www.mathafgallery.com](http://www.mathafgallery.com)

**MetPublications**

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications>

**MBI Al Jaber Foundation**

[www.mbfoundation.com](http://www.mbfoundation.com)

**Museum of Islamic Art (Qatar)**

<http://www.mia.org.qa/en/>

**National Art Library**

<https://nal-vam.on.worldcat.org/discovery>

**Oman & Arabia Natural History**

[www.oman.org/nath00.htm](http://www.oman.org/nath00.htm)

**Ornithological Society of the Middle East**

[www.osme.org](http://www.osme.org)

**Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia**

<http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/ociana/>

**Palestine Exploration Fund**

[www.pef.org.uk](http://www.pef.org.uk)

**The Palestinian Museum**

<https://www.pal museum.org/language/english>

**Palaeodeserts**

<http://www.palaeodeserts.com/>

**Qatar Digital Library (British Library)**

<http://www.qdl.qa/en>

**Royal Asiatic Society**

[www.royalasiaticsociety.org/](http://www.royalasiaticsociety.org/)

**Saudi-British Society**

[www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk](http://www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk)

**SOAS Library**

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/library/>

**Soudavar Memorial Foundation**

<http://soudavar.org/>

**The Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA)**

<http://timea.rice.edu/>

**University of Michigan Global Islamic Studies Center**

<https://ii.umich.edu/content/ii-directory/islamicstudies/en.html>

**The Qantara Project**

<http://www.qantara-med.org>

**Victoria and Albert Museum – Collection Search**

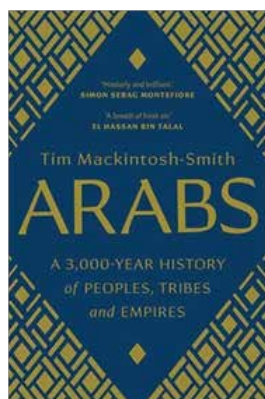
<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/>

**The Yemen Manuscript Digitization Initiative**

<http://ymdi.uoregon.edu/>

## BOOK REVIEWS

Book Reviews are collated by **Alexandra Hirst**.



*Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*  
Tim Mackintosh-Smith  
Newhaven/London: Yale University Press, 2019. 630 pp.  
26 colour illus. + 4 maps. Notes, Index, Chronology, Bibliography.  
Hardback.  
\$18/£25. ISBN 978-0-300-18028-2

TIM MACKINTOSH-SMITH is probably best known for his *Travels with a Tangerine: A Journey in the Footsteps of Ibn Battutah* (John Murray, 2012), but his latest work *Arabs* is a vastly more ambitious project. It is a treatment of Arabs and their ethnicity over a period of some 3,000 years, from far back into the pre-Islamic era, up to the contemporary Arab Spring and its aftermath. This study is delivered from an unusual standpoint for a western-world anglophone writer: Tim Mackintosh-Smith has been working in Yemen, his adoptive, and currently war-torn, country. While writing this book, he explains, the noise of battle rolled around his ‘little tower... on the tail-end of a ruin-mound built up of bits of pre-Islamic Sana.’ Nonetheless this little tower evidently boasts a library extremely well-furnished with Middle East source materials, as his wide-ranging erudition attests.

It is clear that Yemen is very close to his heart. He sees the region of Yemen and Hadhramawt, the seat of the Sabean-Himiyari civilisations of antiquity, as a second, southern Fertile Crescent, complementing the larger and better-known civilisations in the eponymous northern lands of Syria and Iraq – with the central desert lying in between as the original cradle of Arab ethnicity.

He shows how much Islam, when it came in the 7th century CE, drew on existing religious practices in the Arabian peninsula, including the then incumbent monotheisms of Judaism and Christianity. He speculates as to whether, following the subsequent warrior-borne spread of Islam to the regions to the north, the Arabic- and Aramaic-speaking Christians of these regions saw the Muslim invaders as no more than slightly weird co-religionists – and he concludes that this was quite possible, on the evidence of shared rituals of worship, such as prostration, and shared places of worship. Even nowadays, this kind of syncretism will strike a chord with anyone who has sat quietly in a corner of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus observing the confessional variety of those at prayer and sensing the presence of a very ancient genius loci.

Mackintosh-Smith writes in a brisk conversational way,

often vividly, and with no undue reverence. The Genesis story of the Fall of Man he describes as ‘the original scrumping of the Tree of Knowledge.’ He has a talent for unearthing the picturesque and the quirky: this reviewer, despite more than 40 years’ professional engagement on Arab matters, never knew that it was Napoleon who introduced the wheelbarrow to Egypt, or that the Marxist regime in South Yemen in the 1970s had mooted the nationalisation of bicycles.

Mackintosh-Smith’s observations on the Arabic language are woven very closely into the fabric of the historical narrative he develops. He emphasises the gulf between the various dialects of spoken Arabic, and Modern Standard Arabic – the Arabic conventionally used for writing and delivering speeches. This ‘MSA’ is grounded deeply in the old classical language, with its semantic richness and complex rules of syntax: it is as if Byron, Mackintosh-Smith says, were still writing in the style and language of Beowulf. In the Arab world nowadays, as in past centuries, dignitaries of state go in fear of ridicule in the eyes of the educated classes if they commit errors of grammar or usage. Rough soldiers who hack their way to the pinnacle of power have always been in need of a well-lettered wingman to vet and polish the Arabic of their public utterances.

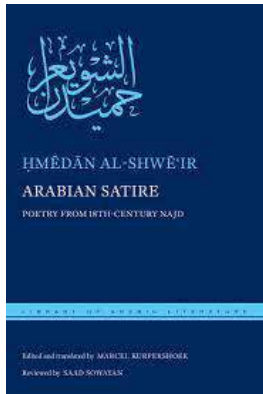
For Arabists, Mackintosh-Smith provides a number of fascinating lexical digressions: he reviews the surprising number of Arabic words that bear alternative meanings which are the direct opposite of each other; and he revels in the expounding of loan-words, both incoming and outgoing. Arabic has, apparently, penetrated English to the tune of more than 2,000 words, while Spanish possesses 4,000 undoubted Arabic loan-words. Mackintosh-Smith is capable even of proposing an Arabic etymology for the recreational shouts of the English ‘tally-ho’, and the Spanish ‘olé’.

For all his narrative verve and linguistic deftness, Mackintosh-Smith’s *Arabs* ends on a sombre note. He makes the regrettable point that it is the places in the Middle East richest in antiquities which tend to be the most hotly contested in modern armed conflicts. He sees the withering of the Arab Spring as a ‘Mass Stockholm Syndrome’, a coping mechanism for populations so in thrall to all-powerful leaders that they begin to declare that their masters are good, rather than acknowledge their own powerlessness and loss of self-respect.

This book is no slim volume – 630 pages and priced at £25 – but it is well produced. The text is broken down into jauntily-captioned sub-chapters and supported by a full apparatus of chronology tables, reference notes for sources, bibliography and a commodious-looking index, as well as 7 pages of maps and a central clump of well-chosen illustrations. It weighs

in at 1.2 Kg, unfortunately too chunky for bedside or hand-baggage purposes.

by **Alastair Hirst**



***Ḥmēdān al-Shwē'ir: Arabian Satire. Poetry from 18th-century Najd***

Ed. and tr. Marcel Kurpershoek  
New York: NYU Press, 2017.  
1 + 204 pp. 2 maps. Parallel  
Arabic/English text. Notes,  
Glossary, Bibliography, Indexes.  
Hardback jacketed. \$35.00. ISBN  
9781479878062

AS THOSE FAMILIAR with his excellent *Arabia of the Bedouins* (Saqi Books, 2001) will know, Marcel Kurpershoek has made a niche for himself as an interpreter to Western readers of traditional Najdi attitudes. His extensive travels throughout central Arabia were spurred by a fascination with so-called Nabaṭī poetry, the oral verse of tribesmen that keeps alive a centuries-old art rooted in the pre-Islamic bardic odes. A career diplomat who studied Arabic at the University of Leiden, he joined the Dutch foreign service in 1974 and was posted in 1986 to Saudi Arabia. Here he set about tracking down the most celebrated poets and recording their recitations, a campaign taking several years and culminating in his five-volume *Oral Poetry and Narratives from Central Arabia* (Brill 1994–2005).

As well as serving as ambassador of the Netherlands to Pakistan, Turkey, Poland and as special envoy to Syria until 2015, Kurpershoek held a chair at Leiden from 1996 to 2002 as professor of literature and politics in the Arab world. Today he is a senior research fellow at the Abu Dhabi campus of New York University, the publisher of the 'Library of Arabic Literature' series which includes the title under review, as well as James Montgomery's *'Antarah ibn Shaddād: War Songs* reviewed in the last Bulletin. With *Ḥmēdān al-Shwē'ir*, 'Ḥumaydān the Little Poet', Kurpershoek has turned his attention from the Bedouin to the sedentary oasis-dwellers of Najd.

Ḥumaydān was born Ḥamad ibn Nāṣir al-Sayyārī in al-Qaṣab, a small settlement of date palms and salt pans on the edge of al-Waṣhm, the district 100 or so miles north-west of Riyadh. He composed most of his work between ca. 1705 and 1740. These were the decades leading up to the establishment by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb of the reform movement at al-Dir'iyyah, and the emergence of the First Saudi State to which it gave rise. As a poet, Ḥumaydān stands out from the normal run of panegyrists and sycophants, as he cared little for self-advancement. He was a small-town Juvenal, a satirist and moralizer inveighing against injustice, greed, venality, pretension and hypocrisy. His work is a vital source of insight into the social realities

and mental outlook of the townspeople of Najd before the reform movement.

Unafraid to speak truth to power and ridicule religious elders, he could also be disarmingly self-deprecating. But the one achievement he has no doubt about is his own stature as a versifier, and he vaunts the grandeur of his calling: 'The urge to speak in verse burst forth from inside, shaping my rhymes: / Exquisite lines studded with precious content, strings of pearls from the choicest shells' (Poem 20.1–2). His gift for the memorable turn of phrase has ensured that his poetry has never been forgotten. Despite much of its tone being at odds with the conformism of a society in which, soon after his time, public piety came to stifle dissenting voices, it is quoted to this day, and his work has been mined as a source of proverbs and maxims. A spokesman for traditional Najdi values, Ḥumaydān continues to find admirers as a champion of old-fashioned fairness and decency. His refreshing irreverence and strictures are as relevant today as they were in his own era. 'I'd rather have a slab of rock for a pillow / than sleep on a soft carpet in a land of ignominy' (Poem 28: 12).

He can speak in various guises: as a paterfamilias dispensing wisdom to unruly and disrespectful sons; a peasant farmer toiling against the odds; a picaresque antihero; a taker of potshots at the moral failings and hypocrisy of the established order; and a husband falling short of the demands of his wife. There is marriage advice, eyebrow-raising sex (as smutty as Catullus), and much else about women. Though he expresses disgust at violence against them and the men guilty of it, his occasional dismissal of women as essentially disposable items strikes a startlingly crude note.

Neither especially religious nor irreligious, his poems express the realities of life and the spirit of the hardy, stalwart settlers of Najd, with their instincts for social justice and determination to feed and defend themselves. He can be an advocate of both war and peace, upholding the Najdi statelets' need for military self-reliance while advising against hotheadedness and the lust for cheap glory. He is in favour of hereditary leadership only to the extent that it is deserved. His recognition of the importance of lineage is tempered by a streak of egalitarianism, and he is scathing about those who have nothing to show for themselves except boasts about their ancestry. In Poem 14 he derides various types of unsatisfactory ruler before setting out his ideal (lines 24–28):

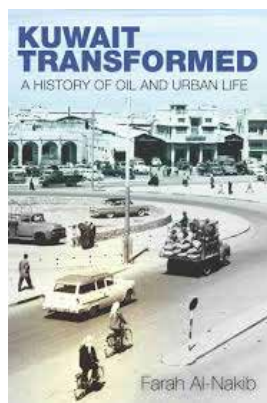
The true ruler provides his subjects with security  
by wielding the sword against theft and attack  
Affairs of the realm are dear to his heart:  
he strives to create prosperity and keep ruin at bay  
Like a fierce lion he rips the enemy to shreds,  
but reigns without violating his subjects' rights.  
Fearless, he takes the fight to his adversaries,  
raiding both Bedouin and villagers at dawn:



Sweeter than the Euphrates to his friends,  
more bitter than the colocynth to his foes.

His egalitarian outlook extends to his views on wealth – ‘You can’t take it with you’ being the main message. Wealth also leads to unhealthy social distortion by lifting up the unworthy at the expense of the virtuous. It warps the natural hierarchy and promotes sham at the expense of the truth. ‘Wealth covers your back like a fur coat, and hides sores and blisters from view; / it has the power to make plain women pretty, and make up for some men’s defects’ (Poem 4: 16–17). But he does acknowledge the necessity of a modicum of the stuff to maintain one’s dignity.

There are 34 poems, ranging in length from 5 to 74 lines, painstakingly gleaned from manuscript and printed anthologies. They have been fluently translated in a lean and readable no-nonsense style honed by James Montgomery. This will appeal to general readers, though the declamatory flavour of the Arabic verses, with every line landing on the same end-rhyme, has inevitably been lost. The presentation of the beautifully typeset parallel Arabic text of the poems is exemplary, as are the extensive scholarly introduction and notes. Sa’d al-Šuwayān, the well-known Saudi thinker, anthropologist and doyen of Nabaṭī poetry scholars in English, has had a hand in reviewing the volume. The author has been well served by his publisher: it is a handsomely produced volume of ‘melodic verses that swell and roll / like roaring waves on a pitch-black sea’ (Poem 20: 4).  
by **William Facey**



***Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life***

Farah Al-Nakib  
Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016. Pp. xv, 278. Bibliographic references and index. Paper. \$24.95 ISBN 9780804798525

ONE COULD BE FORGIVEN for believing that, as traditional social bonds dissolve and new forms of virtual relationships assume ever-greater importance, the world is becoming more atomised. We retreat into our own homes, constructing a protective cognitive bubble of ‘people like us.’ This fracturing of social norms manifests itself socially in anti-social behaviour, plummeting levels of trust, and a renewed emphasis on identity politics. It has become received wisdom to lay the blame for this on social media and consumerism. Yet might the fact that the very fabric of the places we live has become disjointed not have a greater effect on our relationships with our neighbours, and on us a society? In her book, *Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life*, Farah al-Nakib, a professor at the American University

of Kuwait, draws a direct link between the destruction of Kuwait’s traditional pre-oil urban fabric, and its replacement by an urbanism based on 20th-century modernism, and the rise of a divided, insular society fearful of difference, marked by ever greater estrangement between the diverse peoples that make up the population of Kuwait, and indeed, between the population of Kuwaiti nationals themselves.

While this is most definitely an academic book, and draws a lot on theories of urbanism and society, nevertheless it is not over-heavy with specialised jargon. On the contrary, while thoroughly researched, the book is also full of charming vignettes and asides, which leaven the work and keep it readable. Indeed, in some cases – such as that of the man who fell in love with his neighbour’s daughter when he saw her unveiled as she was passing between the houses – we are left rather wishing we could know more.

Al-Nakib gives a thorough picture of the old Kuwait as a typical Gulf port town, based not just on pearling, but on a trade network reaching across the Indian Ocean. This was certainly a hierarchical society, with an elite made up of shipowners and merchants, and a lower class of *nawākhidhah* (sea captains), divers, and providers of ancillary services; chandlers, boatbuilders, and shopkeepers. Then, as now, everything had to be imported, even water, which largely came from the Shatt al Arab. So too did people have to be imported – this expanding port drew in people from around the shores of the Gulf, as well as from inland in Arabia, to meet labour and skills shortages. Yet while poor by modern standards, and lacking anything resembling the modern state, with all its associated administrative apparatus, this was a society that, for the very reason of material scarcity perhaps, could only function through strong networks of solidarity. Patrimonial these may have been, but crucially, they were not exclusive, (that is based on tribe, ethnicity, language or religion) but cross-cutting.

As elsewhere in the Gulf, the town was based around the *farij* (pl. *firjān*), collections of courtyard houses, clustered around narrow streets and the *barāhah* (square). The *firjān* constituted a prime support network for the inhabitants, who, by dint of close proximity with their neighbours, and the virtual impossibility of keeping secrets, were obliged to participate in informal, but largely effective, networks of mutual support with their immediate neighbours. Although al-Nakib is not sentimental about the harshness of pre-oil times, or the claustrophobia of the *firjān* (which also facilitated the spread of rumour and disease, to name but two social ills), she argues that it was this very neighbourliness that enabled newcomers to be integrated quickly into society, regardless of background.

With the advent of oil, Kuwait’s rulers chose the then-prevailing school of modernism as a means to completely remake their town into a modern, progressive city befitting the capital of a modern nation state. Al-Nakib argues

that the imposition of this urban form – functionally differentiated zones for industry, offices, and residences (the latter, crucially, segregated by class and ethnic origin), the replacement of streets with motorways, the souq with malls, and the virtual removal of public, common spaces where the inhabitants come together as citizens, users, or passers-by; and thereby find themselves obliged to work out a *modus vivendi* with other people – has contributed to the social atomisation of Kuwait, and to the rise of intolerance and xenophobia.

Al-Nakib's argument can be summarised as that when it comes to social integration, what counts is not so much demographic diversity (characteristic as that is of all Gulf societies) but the diversity of use that inheres in the urban typology. It is the simultaneous variety (domestic, social, religious, political, commercial et al) of uses of the street, the quarter and the market that lead to spontaneous, uncontrolled encounter, and with it the need to reach an accommodation with others that characterises urban, civilised life. Mere demographic diversity without this type of diversity of the urban form, appears to lead to isolation by group and class, and mutual distrust, not least in cases such as Kuwait, where citizenship is a legally constituted form of access to economic benefit rather than a web of ties of mutual responsibility. The 'right to the city' then is people's right to participate in the production and usage of urban space according to their varied needs – something that has been largely lost in Kuwait over the past 70-odd years.

One area where the book could have been stronger is in relation to the effect of the Iraqi Invasion of 1990 on Kuwaiti society, as well as Kuwaiti urbanism. After a lengthy series of chapters details pre-oil Kuwaiti society and townscape, and its subsequent destruction under a succession of planners in the 1950s and 60s, the post-war reconstruction period and its effects are dealt with in just a few pages. It might also have been useful to append a list of key personalities (rulers, planning officials, missionaries, colonial personnel and historians etc.) whose views of Kuwait's urban development fill these pages; sometimes it can be difficult to keep track exactly who is who, especially in the case of individuals with the same or similar surname.

Nevertheless, this book is likely to make the reader think about Kuwait in jarringly new ways, not least, those readers who have only experienced the city as a 'place without history,' a *tabula rasa* to be made and remade according to the exigencies of power and of profit. Anybody with even a fleeting experience of Kuwait, or for that matter, large Gulf metropolises, should find themselves similarly rethinking how they react to the city. In an increasingly atomised, angry, intolerant world, the key to healing social divisions might well be not so much to ban social media, but to find ways to get us all to know, and rely upon, our neighbours once more.

by **Henry Harding**

## LIVES REMEMBERED

### **Dr Noel J. Guckian CVO OBE (1955-2019)**

Noel Guckian passed away very suddenly at Ipswich Hospital on 7 December 2019. A senior diplomat quite recently retired, he had served as HM Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman for six years, from 2005 to 2011, having earlier served there as Deputy Head of Mission for 3 years in the 1990s. Born in Ireland into a Roman Catholic family he had a peripatetic education – his secondary school education was in Rome where his father then worked, and he then went on to Ulster University to study for his BA in the modern history of India, the Middle East, Japan and China. This was followed by an MA that focused on the last years of British rule in Aden and South Yemen and then a PhD on British relations with Trans-Jordan in the 1920s, both at Aberystwyth University in Wales.

From there he went on to join the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as a researcher and analyst of Middle Eastern affairs in the FCO's Research Department, the Foreign Office's "corporate memory". This proved an excellent springboard for further overseas experiences, and

over a 32 year career he served in Saudi Arabia, Libya, Kuwait, Syria and Northern Iraq (where he was the UK's first Consul General for the Kurdistan Region in 2005, based in Kirkuk) as well as Oman.

On retiring from the FCO he remained active with a range of consultancies in Oman and the UK, and shared his knowledge and experience lecturing on ME issues at schools and universities, including helping PhD candidates and writers on the Middle East. He maintained his links with Oman as chairman of the Anglo-Omani Society until 2013 and later, in 2019, was elected as chairman of the British-Yemeni Society, a position he held at the time of his death.

While ambitious, he was at the same time generous, amiable and approachable: virtues recognised by many during his lifetime and after his decease. He is survived by his three daughters and a son. His wife, Lorna predeceased him in 2012.

By **Robert Wilson**

## **Jocelyn Cecilia Orchard (1936-2019)**



Jocelyn Orchard, who died in August last year following a short illness, was a specialist in the archaeology of the Ancient Near East, with a passion for the grand sweep of history and the early periods of Mesopotamia and Arabia. She was a unique figure in the field of archaeology - in her origins, her enthusiasm and unwavering determination, and in her achievements despite invariably only very modest resources at her disposal. Latterly an Honorary Research Fellow of the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity in The College of Arts and Law at the University of Birmingham, she was co-founder and co-Director, with her husband Jeffrey Orchard, of The University of Birmingham Archaeological Expedition to the Sultanate of Oman - later re-named The Hajar Project - and worked for 33 years investigating sites in the Wadi Bahla, near Bahla town and in the vicinity of Bisya, under the patronage of the Oman Ministry of Heritage and Culture.

Born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, on 27th October 1936, Jocelyn was one of four daughters of Charles Farrell, a civil engineer, and Hilda May (nee Herbert). She was educated at Bishop Anstey's High School and received her overseas Baccalauréat from the Sorbonne, Faculty des Lettres. Jocelyn studied for her MA at the University of Edinburgh between 1958-1962, before moving to the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, where she received the

Post-Graduate Diploma in the Archaeology of the Near East in June 1966. Afterwards, she worked on excavations in Jerusalem, Petra, and Warka, assisted in the Department of Antiquities in Aden, Southern Yemen, and from 1967 to 1969 was Librarian and Assistant Administrator of the Palestine Exploration Fund in London. However, it was when working with the British School of Archaeology in Iraq that she met Jeffrey Orchard, then the Assistant Director, and together they formed a close and enduring personal and professional partnership which endured until his death in 2015.

In 1971, Wilfred Lambert, then Professor of Assyriology at the University of Birmingham, encouraged Jeffrey to apply for the post of lecturer in the Ancient History and Archaeology of Western Asia. Jeffrey was successful, but typically, in terms of their equal relationship, this was clearly viewed as a joint opportunity. "Frankly, I think that this is something that both of us must apply for in the hope that one of us might just get it", he wrote to Jocelyn. "The great advantage of this opening, as I see it, is that it would give us freedom to plan our own archaeological field projects... I am completely blocked by prior interests... whilst you are hampered by permit requiring purposes by the fact you don't represent a university or a museum...". Jocelyn embarked upon her own career in Birmingham as a museum administrator, first from 1976 to 1981 as Assistant Director of the Area Museum and Art Gallery Service for the Midlands, and then, until 1990, Deputy Director of the West Midlands Area Museums Council.

In 1980, Jeffrey and Jocelyn began their annual survey, research and excavation seasons in Oman, investigating the earliest appearance, character and evolution of oasis settlements. These settlements - which they had named The Hajar Oasis Towns - are distinguished by their enigmatic monumental circular structures, their cemeteries of beehive-shaped tombs, and their contacts with Mesopotamia, Iran and the Indus Valley. From the first, Jocelyn was particularly intrigued - following from her keen interest in the archaeology of Yemen - by the possibility of structures buried in wadi sediments and, later, in a greater understanding of the use of aflaj (groundwater-fed sub-surface to surface irrigation systems).

In 1990, Jocelyn's post in Birmingham fell victim to one of the seemingly haphazard organisational reviews of which the museum sector seems prone, though happily giving her the freedom she wanted, both in time and money, for their annual fieldwork in Oman. With Jeffrey's retirement in 1993, this could now be their primary aim and activity.

Jeffrey's declining health after 2010 ended their personal work in the field, though both remained active in their research projects. The interim results of their work have been presented in a number of journals and papers, and preparation for the publication of the final reports was



underway at the time of her death. It is a measure of Jocelyn's indomitable character that, following the unexpected diagnosis of her final illness, all her efforts in her last days - and they were only days - were focused on the successful creation and endowment of The Jocelyn Cecilia

Orchard Research Trust for the full publication of their fieldwork.

by **Nigel Tallis** FSA

## LAST WORD

### The Soqatra Heritage Project 2017 – 2020

Jansen van Rensburg, J., Forrest, A., Ali, M.T.H., Al-Ameri, A.S.S.A., Sulaiman, S.M.O., Al-Orqbi, A.S.A., Salem, I.S.M., Al-Rumaili, A.E.A.S., Hasan, A.M.S., Esmail, A.A.M., Wilkins, O. & Carey, B.

*The Soqatra Heritage Project is shedding light on the cultural heritage of this unique island landscape. The ongoing conflict in Yemen and the increasing demands placed on Soqatra in terms of development, migration and militarisation the islands, means the poorly known cultural heritage of the island is being severely impacted. Working with those living on Socotra the project aims to assess and record the islands rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage, create a cultural heritage database, promote the awareness of Soqatra's heritage, and develop a tourism recovery strategy that could increase sustainable and profitable cultural heritage tourism.*

The island of Soqatra has often been dubbed the forgotten island, a moniker that bears direct relevance to the islands rich and unique cultural heritage. Despite several archaeological expeditions over the course of the last decade, and substantial interest in recording and mapping the cultural heritage of mainland Yemen, there has been little interest in Soqatra's cultural heritage. With the current conflict in Yemen and the increasing demands placed on Soqatra in terms of development, migration and militarisation the islands, poorly known cultural heritage is being severely impacted. In recognition of this the British Council Cultural Protection funded project CPL-185-16 "Integrating Cultural Heritage into Conservation and Development Planning on Soqatra" or, as it is better known locally, the Soqatra Heritage Project, was established in conjunction with a number of partners, notably the Centre for Middle Eastern Plants, part of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Freie Universität Berlin, the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), the Soqatra Culture and Heritage Association, and the Soqatra Environmental Protection Authority.

The main aims of the Soqatra Heritage Project (SHP) were: 1) to undertake a program of training and capacity development for a team of Soqotri women and men giving them the necessary skills to record and assess Soqatra's rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage, 2) to create the first cultural heritage database for Soqatra to increase planning and management effectiveness of cultural heritage assets for the General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) and the Soqatra Governate, 3) to promote the awareness of Soqatra's tangible and intangible heritage, including performing arts and the unique Soqotri language, 4) to develop a tourism recovery strategy that would increase sustainable and profitable cultural heritage tourism on Soqatra.

Due to the difficulties in getting to Soqatra, much of the training was carried out in at the offices of the ARC-WH in Bahrain where, over the course of three years, the team learnt a range of skills that included archaeological survey and documentation, illustration, photography, ethnographic recording, and film production. The results of this training and the work carried out by the Soqatra Heritage Project team in conjunction with the ARC-WH Focal Point for Soqatra were quite spectacular, and are a testament to their hard work and dedication in the field.

During the course of the project the team have recorded over 400 previously unknown or poorly documented cultural heritage sites, including massive settlements, dolmens, and rock art sites (Figs. 1 – 4). Whilst this achievement is in itself noteworthy, it has been further enhanced by the team's efforts in creating awareness of this cultural heritage on Soqatra – which has been instrumental in the establishment of the first cultural heritage protected site on Soqatra - SHP067, or as it is known locally Deda'ahneten (Soq). This

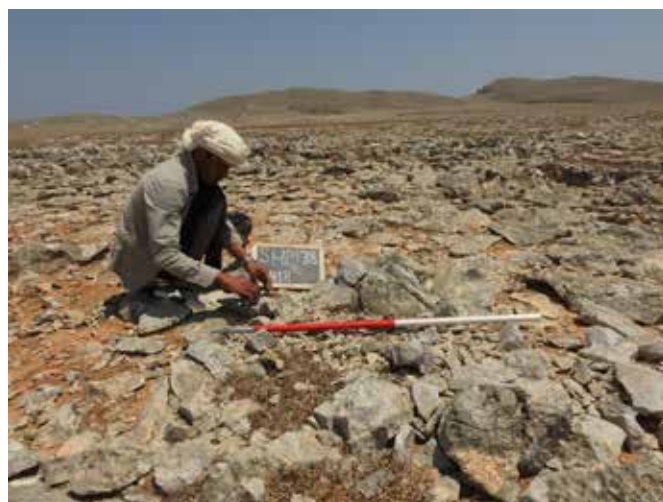


Figure 1. A member of the SHP team recording a series of burials (Photo. © SHP).



Figure 2. A settlement site found along the northern coastal plain (Photo. © SHP).



Figure 3. A large settlement found within the interior (Photo. © SHP).

site was on the verge of being lost to development before the SHP team brought together local landowners, GOAM and officials from the Soqatra Governate to establish a protected area around the site. This site was also used to foster further awareness of cultural heritage at schools, with over 100 school children having already visited the site (Fig. 5). Importantly, the sites that have been recorded are now all within a cultural heritage database, a first for Soqatra. This database is currently being used on the island in



Figure 5. School children at SHP067 (Photo. © SHP).

developmental planning and management and awareness, by showcasing the richness of Soqatra's cultural heritage and highlighting what work has been done and the areas that still need to be recorded.

The project team has also been instrumental in documenting Soqatra's rich intangible traditions, which include carpet making, ceramics, salt production, aloe and dragon blood resin harvesting, and traditional games - a hitherto unrecorded tradition (Fig. 6). The recording of these traditions, however, was not limited to documenting process, but included the accompanying songs, stories and dialectical differences in the language. Much of the recording was done using film, which has been used to further awareness of these traditions, many of which are in danger of dying out, as many of the practitioners are elderly women, whose children are leaving the countryside in search for better opportunities in the main town of Hadiboh.

The SHP project has also been instrumental in the continuation of cultural heritage festivals on Soqatra, which have not only showcased the rich Soqotri poetry, but also the traditional dancing, music and singing (Fig. 7). These festivals were all extremely well attended with over 3000 women, children and men having attended each festival held. These festivals have also helped to reinvigorate the endangered Soqotri language and traditions at a time where political agendas have sought to suppress this language in favour of Arabic. Further, theatre workshops for local children have re-connected generations with each other through shared traditional storytelling, spreading Soqotri songs and stories through a local community which was previously silent on such matters.

With the increasing influx of tourists on Soqatra, despite the ongoing conflict in Yemen, the team having been working with local communities, tour guides and governmental officials, in conjunction with a tourism expert, to highlight sustainable and profitable cultural heritage tourism on Soqatra. Their input will be an important part of the first tour guide to be published about Soqatra, leading towards



Figure 6. Documenting aloe harvesting on Soqatra (Photo. © SHP).





**Figure 4. The petroglyph site SHP067 with Jebel Hawari in the background (Photo. © SHP).**

implementation of sustainable tourism on the island in the coming years.

Perhaps the most important output of the Soqatra Heritage Project has been the three women and three men that, together with team members from GOAM and the ARC-WH, represent the first cultural heritage team on Soqatra. This team has proven themselves to be more than capable of documenting and raising awareness of their own cultural heritage. Moreover, with their skillset this team has been an

integral part of a recent National Geographic sponsored project to conduct the first ancient DNA study on Socotra looking specifically at how ancient DNA can, in conjunction with the historical and archaeological records, allow for a better understanding of the origins and genetic makeup of the ancient peoples of Socotra. But more about this project later.

More information about the Soqatra Heritage Project and its activities can be found on our website and Twitter.

<http://www.soqotraculturalheritage.org/>  
<https://twitter.com/SoqatraHeritage>



**Figure 7. Traditional games are played throughout the island (Photo. © SHP).**



**Figure 8. The Soqatra cultural heritage festival in Qalansiyah (Photo. © SHP).**



## **Bulletin Editorial Team**

### **Editor: Daniel Eddisford**

University of Durham

I have worked as a professional archaeologist for 20 years, excavating a wide range of sites both in the UK and the Middle East. I received my undergraduate and MSc degrees in archaeology at University College London. I have a long standing interest in the archaeology of the Arabian Gulf and I continue to undertake fieldwork in the region with the *Origins of Doha and Qatar Project*. My PhD research focuses on building a better understanding of the networks of interaction linking southeast Arabia to the riverine civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Indus as well as Iran. I also organize the *Seminar for Arabian Studies* and edit the *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*.

### **Research Editor: Dr. Timothy Power**

Freelance Consultant

I am an archaeologist and historian specialising in Arabia and the Islamic world. I have been based in the Arabian Gulf since 2009 and am currently a consultant to the Department of Culture and Tourism Abu Dhabi. My archaeological fieldwork focuses on the oases of al-Ain and Buraimi, Islamic-period ceramics from the Arabian Gulf, and maritime trade with Zanzibar.

### **Assistant Editor: Daniele Martiri**

Daniele Martiri holds a BA in Foreign Languages from Roma Tre University, where they studied Arabic and the geopolitics of the MENA region and wrote a dissertation on Islamic Ethics. They then completed a diploma in Management of Cultural Heritage and gained insight into how cultural and charitable institutions work, as well as how to organize public events. They are currently completing an MA in History of Art and Architecture of the Islamic Middle East at SOAS, University of London, focusing on the visibility of contemporary queer artists from the MENA region. Daniele has been with the MBI Al Jaber Foundation since September 2017; they started as an intern and were then employed as Foundation Assistant from January 2018. They currently support the planning of the annual MBI Al Jaber Foundation Lecture Series at SOAS, handle the Foundation's social media and Alumni archive and website. Daniele is a member of the Bulletin Sub-Committee since October 2017.

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