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of
The Society for Arabian Studies
جمعية دراسات الجزيرة العربية

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The *Bulletin* depends on the good will of Society members and correspondents to provide contributions. News, items of general interest, ongoing and details of completed postgraduate research, forthcoming conferences, meetings and special events are welcome. Please contact the Honorary Secretary, Ionis Thompson. Email ionisthompson@ukonline.co.uk

Applications to conduct research in Yemen

Applications to conduct research in Yemen should be made to the Society's sub-committee, the British Archaeological Mission in Yemen (BAMY). Contact Professor Tony Wilkinson, Durham University, Department of Archaeology, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE. Tel. 0191 334 1111.

Email t.j.wilkinson@durham.ac.uk

Grants in aid of research

Applicants are advised to apply well ahead of the May and October deadlines. Full details on p.3

Applications for official sponsorship

Expeditions and individuals may apply for official sponsorship from the Society for research projects if helpful in obtaining funds from other sources or permission from foreign governments.

Sponsorship signifies the Society's approval of academic content but not financial support.

Applications should be submitted on the relevant form, available from the Hon. Secretary at the address below, and sent to the Grants Sub-Committee: Dr St John Simpson, Middle East

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Membership

Membership details are available from Ionis Thompson, the Honorary Secretary, at the address below or on the Society's website. For membership renewals contact the Treasurer, Douglas Stobie, at the address below, or email: dmms@btinternet.com

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CONTENTS

<p>A Message from the Chairman2</p> <p>Society for Arabian Studies News3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Monograph Series3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Grants in Aid of Research3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Society Grants-in-Aid 2008.....3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Grant-In-Aid Reports.....3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">British Archaeological Mission in Yemen (BAMY).....4</p> <p>Lectures and Lecture Reports 2008.....4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City and State in Bahrain and in the Gulf before Oil. Nelida Fuccaro4 • From Mayfair to Mecca: Lady Evelyn Cobbold, British Muslim. William Facey 5 • The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers, and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf James Onley 6 • Classic Ships of Islam. Dionisius Agius..... 6 <p>Lecture Programme 2009.....9</p> <p>Arabian News and Research10</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Arts10</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Wildlife.....11</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Other General News12</p> <p>News and Research by Country14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bahrain</i>.....14 <i>Kuwait</i>16 <i>Oman</i>18 <i>Qatar</i>19 <i>United Arab Emirates</i>.....20 <li style="padding-left: 20px;">General UAE News.....20 <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Abu Dhabi.....20 <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Fujairah21 <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Ras Al-Khaimah.....21 <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Sharjah23 <i>Saudi Arabia</i>.....23 <i>Yemen</i>25 	<p>Awards and Prizes26</p> <p>Available Grants and Prizes26</p> <p>Conferences and Seminars 2008-2009300</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Completed Conferences.....300</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Upcoming Conferences 200932</p> <p>Book Reviews.....33</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Saudi Arabia: An Environmental Overview</i>.....33 • <i>Women In Pre-Islamic Arabia: Nabataea</i>.....35 • <i>The Tihamah Coastal Plain of South-West Arabia In Its Regional Context, C. 6000 BC–AD 600</i>36 • <i>Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean</i>.....37 • <i>India Traders Of The Middle Ages: Documents From The Cairo Geniza – ‘India Book’</i>38 • <i>A Traveller in Thirteenth-Century Arabia: Ibn Al-Mujāwir’s Tārīkh Al-Mustabsir</i>.....40 • <i>The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers, And The British in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf</i>... ..42 • <i>British Missions around the Gulf, 1575–2005: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman</i>.....43 • <i>Pilgrimage to Mecca</i>.....44 • <i>The Western Hadramawt: Ethnographic Field Research , 1983–91</i>.....45 • <i>A Land Transformed: The Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia and Saudi Aramco</i>.....47 • <i>The Burial Mounds of Bahrain. Social Complexity in Early Dilmun</i>.....48 • <i>The Tylos Period Burials in Bahrain. Volume 1, The Glass and Pottery Vessels</i>.....48 • <i>Funeral Monuments and Human Remains from Jebel Al-Buhais</i>.....52 <p>New Publications on Arabia56</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">New Books 2008–0956</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Journals And Magazines.....56</p> <p>Societies, Associations and Other Online Resources58</p> <p>Obituaries59</p>
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Front Cover: Hudaibah Tower, Ras al-Khaimah. Photo by Christian Velde.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

When the Society for Arabian Studies was founded in the mid-1980s, its remit was strongly archaeological; the rapid rate of development on the back of sharply increased oil revenues was seen as a major threat to the fragile and often little-explored archaeological past of the Peninsula, particularly the Gulf. Interest in that past was sparked by organisations such as ours, and teams of archaeologists from all over the world have since excavated some remarkable early sites. Several members of the Society's Committee attended Abu Dhabi's excellent annual archaeological conference in March; a report on page 32 keeps us all up to date. Thanks to the Bulletin's current editor, Dr Rob Carter, and web expert Ivor Pridden, access to news and the Bulletin itself has been vastly improved by posting it on the Society's website, visited by a growing number of interested parties.

Over the past eight years the Society has organised a very successful series of biennial conferences, three of them dedicated to the Red Sea and one to Death and Burial in Arabia from the earliest times to the Islamic period. A fourth Red Sea conference was organised in 2008 by Southampton's Marine Archaeology Department. The idea behind these conferences has been to include areas adjoining the Peninsula – eastern Africa, Mesopotamia and Iran, for instance. A fifth Red Sea conference is planned by Professor Dionisius Agius to take place in Exeter in September 2010, extending that focus to the Indian Ocean. Other UK academic societies involved in these areas are being strongly advised to spread their regional wings, and the British Institute for the Study of Iraq generously supported the Death and Burial conference.

Development still threatens archaeology but the Society is also concerned to publicise its threat to other aspects of the Arabian world. There are dramatic plans for museums, art galleries, and music and sports facilities in all GCC countries, often designed by some of the world's leading architects, which the Bulletin has begun to follow over the past few years.

But all too often their designs threaten the fragile environment of desert, mountain and shore. The threats are highlighted by a relatively new journal, *Wildlife Middle East* (see page 58). The Society feels as concerned today about the danger to the natural environment from careless development as it was initially for the archaeological heritage of Arabia.

Population pressure rather than grand cultural developments is a critical problem in a very different environment from the rest of the Peninsula, that of Yemen. Hence the Society's decision to highlight Yemen's water problem in its AGM lecture in May. But water issues must surely be a growing source of anxiety all over the Peninsula. Development of whatever kind is thirsty! We look forward to some pertinent discussion of the problem at the AGM.

A happier note is the UAE's enthusiasm to commemorate the British traveller Wilfred Thesiger. Abu Dhabi gave him a posthumous award in December, and his biographer Alexander Maitland was invited to the Dubai Literary Festival to speak on Thesiger's books (2009 marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Arabian Sands*). A permanent exhibition of Thesiger's remarkable photographs is due to open later this year in Al Ain. Maybe the Society should organise a special tour to visit them!

Sarah Searight
Chairman

EDITOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As always, many thanks indeed to all our contributors, and to Ionis Thompson and Sarah Searight for providing additional material. The *Bulletin* would not exist without them. This year thanks are also due to Paula Carter for her immense help in compiling and formatting the Bulletin. Thanks too to all those who read and commented on the manuscript.

Robert Carter
Editor

SOCIETY FOR ARABIAN STUDIES NEWS

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

MONOGRAPH SERIES

In 2004, the Society launched a Monograph Series with the aim of publishing peer-reviewed research-based studies, conference proceedings, archaeological excavation or survey reports, and theses comprising an important synthesis or a significant addition to knowledge. The scope encompasses the archaeology, early history, ethnography, epigraphy and numismatics of the Arabian Peninsula and related matters. The Series now has seven titles, published by Archaeopress (B.A.R. International Series); these are listed on the back cover of the bulletin.

SOCIETY GRANTS-IN-AID

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

Awards are tenable for one year from the date on which they are awarded. Grant holders will be required to provide a written report on their research with an account of expenditure, to be submitted within six months of the expiry of the period for which the grant was made. Successful applicants will also be required to

submit a summary of their research for publication in the *Bulletin* following the end of the period during which the grant was held. The Society may also ask grant holders to give a talk to Society members on their research projects.

Further information and application instructions are available on the website, www.societyforarabianstudies.org or from Dr St John Simpson, Middle East Department, British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG, UK. Email ssimpson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

SOCIETY GRANTS-IN-AID 2008

Dr Robert Carter and **Dr Roberta Tomber** were awarded a grant for thin-section analysis of ceramics from Sir Bani Yas, Abu Dhabi. A preliminary report is presented below.

T. Mathiesen was awarded a grant to study *Trans-nationalism in Saudi Arabia* (report forthcoming).

Farah al-Naqib was awarded a grant to study *Oral histories of Kuwait* (report forthcoming).

GRANT-IN-AID REPORTS

Dr Robert Carter and **Dr Roberta Tomber**, in collaboration with Seth Priestman, received an award for a pilot study entitled *Torpedo Jars: Origins and Contents*. This kind of bitumen-lined amphora is widely distributed in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean region from the Sasanian to the Abbasid periods. The intent is to apply thin-section petrographic analysis to a selection of samples from Sir Bani Yas (Abu Dhabi), Iran (Williamson Collection) and India (already prepared by Dr Tomber), in order to identify provenance and patterns of trade. The grant covered the preparation and analysis of the Sir Bani Yas material by Dr Tomber, and is accompanied by a parallel typographic and chronological analysis (Seth Priestman), and a provenance analysis of the associated bitumen (Dr Carter and Jacques Connan, CNRS). The team is pleased to report that the thin sections have been made and are currently under analysis. The pilot study is also supported by the British Institute of Persian Studies, and the Emirates Natural History Group. An application will be made subsequently to a major funding body for an extensive study.

Robert Carter

Dr Michel Mouton was awarded a grant in 2007 for the reformatting of his ground-breaking 1992 thesis, *La Peninsule d'Oman de la fin de l'age du fer au debut de la periode Sassanide*. This is now published in the Society Monograph Series. See the back cover of this *Bulletin* for details.

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

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

In late 2007 and early 2008, Tony Wilkinson and Carl Phillips attended two meetings in Qatar which aimed to establish a series of projects in Yemen sponsored by the states of Qatar and Yemen. The meeting was attended by representatives of archaeological teams from France, Germany, Russia, Canada, the UK, Yemen, and other countries. A proposal for new British investigations at the site of Hajar Henu Az-Zureir (i.e. the Qatabanian city of Haribat) was presented, and is under review. We are still awaiting final results of the review process although the delays in the start date of the project are raising questions about whether such a programme will actually go ahead.

UK applications for permission to carry out research in Yemen should be referred to the BAMY Committee. The applications it approves will become official BAMY projects and BAMY will apply for permits from the General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM), Ministry of Culture, Sanaa on behalf of applicants. Application deadlines are 30 April and 30 September each year. Further details can be obtained from: BAMY, Professor Tony Wilkinson, Durham University, Department of Archaeology, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE. Tel. 0191 334 1111. Email t.j.wilkinson@durham.ac.uk

*Tony Wilkinson
Chairman of the British Archaeological
Mission to Yemen
(Durham University)*

LECTURE REPORTS 2008

19 March 2008:

City and State in Bahrain and in the Gulf before Oil

Dr Nelida Fuccaro

Dr Fuccaro lectures in the modern history of the Arab Middle East at SOAS.

This lecture presented an account of the making of new 'urban frontiers' in the Persian Gulf and in the islands of Bahrain from the 18th to the early 20th centuries, before the region started to be populated by modern entrepreneurs, consumer goods and oil companies – a process which started in Bahrain in the 1930s. This was a period of tribal expansion, British imperial encroachment and of the boom of Gulf pearls in the world markets which was characterised by the making of new urban settlements and states throughout the region under the aegis of the Government of India. This paper relates the story of how new port towns such as Muharraq in Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai, and old port settlements like Manama started to develop at an exponential rate and how their socio-political and spatial organisation reflected new patterns of state building across the Gulf.

In this context the islands of Bahrain constituted a sort of microcosm of the new 'urban frontier' which emerged after the 18th century. For centuries, the configuration of settled life and the organisation of coastal towns reflected the demographic and political realities of a frontier society in flux. The establishment of tribal settlements and of a new capital city, Muharraq, had profound repercussions on existing patterns of agricultural settlement and, more generally, on the tradition of government established under the rule of the Safavid Empire (1602–1717). To complicate the picture, in the age of imperial expansion Bahrain became the stronghold of British power on the Arab side of the Gulf. By the last quarter of the 19th century Manama, the cosmopolitan port town of the islands, became the busiest entrepôt of the Persian Gulf, a centre of British and European shipping and the world centre of pearling.

Nelida Fuccaro

21 May 2008

From Mayfair to Mecca: Lady Evelyn Cobbold, British Muslim

Mr William Facey

Mr Facey is a publisher and writer on Arabia and its history.

Aristocrat, Mayfair socialite, owner of an estate in the Scottish highlands, accomplished deerstalker and angler, mother and gardener, Lady Evelyn Cobbold (1867–1963) was probably unique in being also a Muslim and an Arabic-speaker. In 1933, at the age of 65, this highly unusual Anglo-Scottish aristocrat became the first British-born Muslim woman to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Yet the story of her life and her contribution to the literature of the Hajj have been inexplicably overlooked until now. Nor has she been studied from the point of view of what her life has to say about Islam among the British.

Lady Evelyn Murray was born in Edinburgh in 1867, the eldest child of the famous traveller, Charles Adolphus Murray, 7th Earl of Dunmore. Permanently hard up, Lord Dunmore found it both cheap and congenial to cart his family off to North Africa every winter. This was how, by Evelyn's own account, Islam was imbued in her – by a childhood during which she became, as she puts it, 'unconsciously a little Moslem at heart' – and why she liked to claim that she had been a Muslim all her life. Here she was steeped in the culture and language of everyday life in the Arab Muslim world, and came to feel completely at home there.

At 24 Evelyn was married, in Cairo, to John Dupuis Cobbold, of the wealthy Suffolk brewing family. Three children followed between 1893 and 1900, but it is fairly clear that she found it hard to settle back in Suffolk. Still travelling in North Africa, by 1911 it becomes increasingly evident that she regarded herself as a Muslim. In 1922, she and her husband separated, and the Cobbolds arranged a generous financial settlement, including the highland deer forest of Glencarron, which made her a very wealthy woman. Much of the 1920s was occupied by the field sports at which she excelled, and she became the first woman to down a 14-point stag.

In 1929 her husband John Cobbold died, and it was from this point that she began seriously to contemplate performing the pilgrimage. By 1933 she was ready, arriving in Jiddah, where she was put up by the Philbys,

who introduced her to the Amir Faisal and the US oil negotiators then present there. While awaiting official permission from the King for her to perform the Hajj, Philby arranged for Evelyn to travel by car to Madinah, fixing up her accommodation with a local family. Once permission arrived she would be allowed, as a travelling grandee, to go to Makkah also by car, Philby once again providing guide and driver.

Her book, *Pilgrimage to Mecca* (London: John Murray, 1934), gives a fascinating and sympathetic account of her Arabian journey. It was reprinted in 2008 (see the Book Reviews section). As much a record of an interior experience of faith as a conventional travelogue, it is remarkable for its sympathy and vividness. As a lone female Muslim, she was able to do something no traveller before her had done: to describe the female side of domestic life in Makkah and Madinah. This, and its author's religious commitment, set her account apart from every previous English description of the Hijaz.

What sort of a Muslim was Lady Evelyn? Though she would certainly have claimed to be Sunni it is difficult to pin her down more precisely. Though clearly firm in her faith, there is no record of her performing the five daily prayers, or of giving alms to the poor and needy, during her normal life at home, though there is anecdotal evidence of her fasting during Ramadan. No doubt she had uttered the *shahadah*, or declaration of faith, on various occasions; otherwise, going on the Hajj seems to have been the sole other Pillar of Islam that she subscribed to.

There is a long history of British converts to Islam before her time, going back at least to the Crusades, and peaking during the 17th century when many Britons were enslaved, either to man the fleets of the Barbary corsairs, or otherwise to be absorbed into North African society. But Lady Evelyn belongs to a later category – that of educated converts in Britain itself in the late 19th century. She was contemporary with other eminent Muslims of this type – Abdullah Quilliam, Lord Headley, Lord Hothfield, and Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, to name but a few.

The Western attitude to faith as a matter of private choice and practice, which works very well for Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and other religions, is perhaps not so easy for Muslims to adopt. For many, to be a Muslim is

a matter of more than mere private religious conviction, kept behind closed doors. While historical and social experiences of the religion obviously vary, Islam is often perceived – not only by outsiders but by also by many of its adherents – to entail a commitment to a certain type of state and society, certain types of public institution especially where the law and education are concerned, and prescriptions for family life and daily public behaviour. Public space, as well as the private sphere, is considered to be its legitimate domain, and Muslims regard Islam as providing not just a personal faith but a complete social system intimately tied up with a specific worldview and norms of identity.

In contrast to this view of Islam, there is little sign that Lady Evelyn was much aware of these public implications of her faith. In regarding Islam solely as a matter of private conviction and in subscribing to it entirely on her own terms, she followed a very European model of religious belief. In this, she has to be placed in the context of her time. She lived in an age in which many members of the intelligentsia and society's upper echelons sought enlightenment among various non-Christian systems of belief on offer.

Lady Evelyn lived on for another thirty years. She died in January 1963, one of the coldest months of the century in Britain, and was buried, as she stipulated, on a remote hillside on her Glencarron estate. Her splendidly Islamo-Caledonian interment symbolized her two worlds: a piper, so frozen that he was scarcely able to walk let alone perform, played MacCrimmon's lament, and the Surah 'Light' from the Qur'an was recited in Arabic by the equally refrigerated Imam of the Woking Mosque. A verse from the same Surah adorns the flat slab over her grave.

William Facey

22 October 2008

The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers, and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf

Dr James Onley

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University

This lecture accompanied the launch of Dr Onley's book of the same name, the research for which was partially funded by the Society. Dr Onley presented the main arguments made in his book and explained how he came to

write it, illustrating his talk with a series of slides.

The Arabian Frontier is a study of one of the most forbidding frontier zones of Britain's Indian Empire. He explained how Britain's Political Residency in the Gulf, which was responsible for Britain's relationship with eastern Arabia and southern Persia, was part of an extensive network of political residencies that surrounded and protected British India until 1947. It was the responsibility of Britain's Political Resident in the Gulf and his very small cadre of British officers to maintain the Pax Britannica on the waters of the Gulf, protect British interests throughout the region, and manage political relations with the dozens of Arab rulers and governors on both shores of the Gulf. How, Dr Onley asked, did such a small number of British diplomats (sometimes just two or three) manage such duties for an area the size of the United Kingdom?

The secret to the Gulf Residency's effectiveness, he explained, was the extent to which these men worked *within* the indigenous political systems of the Gulf. Arab rulers in need of protection collaborated with the British to maintain the Pax Britannica, while influential men from affluent Arab, Persian, and Indian merchant families served as Britain's 'native agents' (compradors) in over half of the political posts within the Gulf Residency. Onley gave the example of the Safar family (originally from Hillah in southern Iraq), members of which served as British political officers and agents throughout Arabia for five generations between the 1830s and 1930s. Research for his book was based primarily upon the private papers of men such as the Safars' agents, kept by their descendants in the Gulf. Onley explained how there are a great many such records in Arabia, locked away in dust-covered trunks, awaiting discovery by historians.

James Onley

22 January 2009

Classic Ships of Islam

Professor Dionisius A. Agius

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University

The lecture was a book launch presentation and joint lecture with the Society for Arabian Studies, the Palestine Exploration Fund and the Council for British Research in the Levant.

Classic Ships of Islam is the culmination of research which goes back to the 1980s. It is the final part of a trilogy covering the development of maritime culture in the Western Indian Ocean. The first two books, *In the Wake of the Dhow* (2002) and *Seafaring in the Arabian Gulf and Oman: The People of the Dhow* (2005) focused on the cultural, material and commercial significance of the traditional wooden vessel (known in the West as the dhow). They speak of its role in the life and interaction of coastal communities and the traditions of seafaring during the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English presence, until the decline in maritime activity in the Gulf and the advent of oil. Most of the material gathered for both works was by way of more than 200 interviews and archival research. The third and final book, *Classic Ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean* (2008) is a journey into the past from the Modern Age to the Classical period and even further, touching on the Bronze Age. It charts the development of watercraft in the Western Indian Ocean.

Divided into six parts, the book opens with a discussion of Arabic sources and methodology; the second part looks at maritime contacts and port towns of the pre-Islamic, Classical and Medieval Islamic periods; part three examines watercraft technology during the Bronze Age showing similar construction features of ships in Medieval Islam; part four is an inquiry into seamanship and the Indian Ocean ship, whether engaged in trade or pilgrimage or naval activities; part five analyses watercraft types, the origin of their nomenclature and the context of their occurrence. Finally the book concludes with a discussion on language contact and language dominance, the use of technical terminology, and cultural and technological exchange.

Professor Agius set out to answer two principal questions: i) What information do early and medieval literary and non-literary sources provide about watercraft in the Western Indian Ocean? and, ii) How reliable are their data and how far can they help us to understand construction features of vessels and technology?

He explains the scope of the study of the book by defining what is tradition and culture. In order to understand what tradition is he argues that one needs to define culture because tradition forms an important part of culture.

Culture shapes society. It is a system of relationships that exist among the community, their daily activities as dictated by the politics of the region, and their religious belief. Of these relationships, he considers interaction between man and material culture to be one of the most important and significant elements in a community. Material culture comprises the objects that the individuals of a community manufacture, subject to climate, environment and the materials available. This book explores the relationships between man and all that pertains to the sea: the carpenter, the manufacturer and his materials, the watercraft, the crew, navigational aids, the winds and currents, the merchants and their voyage, trade and pilgrimage and the harbour and people.

The traditions of seafaring and shipbuilding have long been a means of cultural as well as commercial exchange among the diverse linguistic ethnic communities of Mesopotamia and the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean seafaring tradition developed quite separately from the Mediterranean tradition though contact with Egypt and the Levant via the Red Sea, was inevitable. Seasonal trade was dictated by the monsoonal winds and they were fundamental to the physical and human unities of the Indian Ocean, while religion (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam), no doubt, was a great driving force which strengthened trade and cultural ties.

A new departure in research methods in *Classic Ships of Islam* is that it makes extensive use of: a) Arabic textual and documentary material (historical, geographical, travel and maritime works); b) Arabic lexicography which involves the search for meaning and origins of nautical and maritime terminology; c) archaeology (nautical and marine) and d) iconography (graffiti, illustrations and miniatures). These constitute the corners, the demarcation of the book's framework, and within these *four parameters* it demonstrates the relationship of maritime material culture to the wider picture of the ethnic, religious and linguistic mix as well as the technological and economic developments of trade and commerce in the Western Indian Ocean. The framework is an attempt to bring four disciplines together, to strengthen evidence where there is doubt, to fill gaps where there are holes and to offer

interpretations of the sources available and make inferences from them.



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For the textual data the book looks at firstly pre-Islamic and Islamic poetry, where nautical scenes and the language the poets use to describe them are recorded with great vitality and precision; the contribution to nautical terminology of this literature is significant and makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the maritime past. Geographical texts give abundant information on socio-economic events, customs and practices of people, trade and commerce, harbours and coasts of the Indian ocean and provide a wealth of material cultural terminology, though disappointingly without a great deal of information on seamanship and shipbuilding. Historical works were used because of their information on society, culture and commerce, biographies of men, reports on human and physical disasters, military and naval incursions. Travel works are an important and indispensable source of information on ethnography and cultural history, not to mention details on maritime culture, while the works of the maritime literary genre offer exclusive data on Indian Ocean navigation: statements from merchants concerning their voyage, accounts of heroic

mariners etc. Of course, information from such sources must be cautiously evaluated but, with care, they offer an often overlooked source of information. Navigational treatises were the hub of this study, containing details on coastlines, winds and currents, navigation and shipping and trade. They are the synthesis of earlier Persian manuals on navigation and, as such, they throw light on the knowledge of nautical theory and practice that came down to the Arabs by way of Sanskrit and Persian.

Reconstructing the past is a difficult task because of the absence of tangible information. We have lists of names of watercraft types but little discussion on what they served for, or where they sailed. We have lists of exports and imports, but hardly any assessment of the importance of trade in terms of its role in the economic survival of the region. Professor Agius has evaluated information from documentary evidence, such as the Genizah papers and the Quseir al-Qadim paper fragments of the medieval period (11th–13th CE); but if textual material was lacking then his only resource is to go to visual material and archaeological finds. Here too evidence can be thin; however, much can be learnt about Perso-Arabian and Indian craft through Mediterranean and Chinese sources, always bearing in mind that illustrations and figures can often be subjective and not a real representation of the period in question. Archaeological finds can be arbitrary; they can give us clues but no conclusive answers.

In an attempt to classify watercraft of medieval Islam, a discussion on early unknown types ensues; three chapters focus on the river-type (e.g. *shabbāra*, *'ushārī* etc.), the deep-sea vessels (e.g. *jalba*, *sanbūq* etc.) and the war and transport vessels such as the *harrāqa*, the *ṭarrāda* and the *ghurāb* and examples of their use in the Western Indian Ocean. Some of these craft are compared with those of the Mediterranean in the context of their history, naval tactics and construction features.

The results of the study on the development of the medieval ship in the western Indian Ocean are examined in the light of: a) philological data and b) cultural and technological exchange.

Firstly, for many centuries before the rise of Islam, right up to the 14th century, Persian was the leading trade language; the nautical terminology mariners used and the maritime manuals they followed are proof, no doubt, of

the Persian foreign dominance which has, through many centuries and up to the present day, influenced Arabic terminology. This can be shown in many words for boat and ship terms, parts of the watercraft, and nautical terms, all of which can be traced to Persian and some even earlier, to Sanskrit. That the language of trade in the Indian Ocean from pre-Islamic times (in particular the Sasanian period) was Persian is largely true but not totally, and even though the nautical instructions known to Arabian mariners were written in Persian before the 1500s, and a number of nautical terms are of Persian origin, it cannot be taken as conclusive proof that Persian navigation was superior to Arabian. However, it seems irrefutable that Arabic was only the vehicle; the tradition of Persian nautical manuals existed long before Ibn Mājīd's treatise, the only one we have in Arabic, because as Ibn Mājīd tells us, the Persian manuals were lost.

Secondly, Professor Agius talked about the question of cultural and technological exchange: How far did it go and what were its implications? Watercraft designs depended on environment, topography and economic demands but they were influenced also by social, cultural and religious factors. Some construction features of contemporary primitive boats are our clue to boats of antiquity and it is possible to show common design features with the early vessels of the Bronze Age, and with the watercraft of the classical and medieval periods of Islam. No examples of watercraft construction features are found between the Bronze Age and medieval Islam. Craft like the Iraqi *quffa* coracle, reed canoes of the Marshes of Southern Iraq, reed bundles for crossing the Nile, the Omani beach canoe, the *shāsha*, are examples of long standing techniques that go back to antiquity. Stitching planks predated nail construction and its use can be traced from antiquity to this very day on the west Indian coast.

The book demonstrates that technological exchange brought about adaptations and inventions which have Chinese connections, such as the compass, stern rudder, the lateen-settee and types of fire. It is evident from written sources (over 100 Arabic primary works were used) and pictorial sources (limited because of the Islamic prohibition on figurative art within a religious context) that

technological transfer in the Indian Ocean has often moved from east to west in spite of Eurocentric views to the contrary; of course indigenous innovations could have developed independently.

Much legend surrounds the encounter between Ibn Mājīd and Vasco da Gama but one fact is irrefutable: until 1487, the leading merchants and traders of the Indian Ocean were the Persians, Arabs and Indians, many under the identity of Muslim, as attested in the works of the geographers, historians and travellers. However, in terms of science and technology it is no exaggeration to conclude that China was for many years ahead of the Muslim world and Europe.

Dionisius Agius

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2009

20 May 2009

Water in Yemen: changing views on a rapidly changing resource'

Dr Jac van der Gun

5.30pm in the Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS.

Joint lecture with the British-Yemeni Society.

Dr van der Gun is a hydrologist with specialist knowledge of water resource management at Utrecht University. He worked in Yemen on water projects in the 1990s and will talk about the problems associated with the decline in water resources in Yemen, and how people there are adapting to the change.

Autumn 2009

Windtower

Dr Anne Coles

Dr Coles is a geographer, who lived and worked in Dubai from 1968 to 1971. She has spent many years in the Middle East, and her career has combined research, university teaching and professional practice. She has particular interests in the cultural aspects of development, migration and human responses to 'difficult' environments. Dr Coles is presently a research associate at the International Gender Studies Centre in Department of International Development, Oxford University and is co-author of *Windtower* with Peter Jackson.

Note from the Honorary Secretary

In addition to the Society's own lecture programme, Society members are sometimes invited to attend lectures and talks organised by other societies. Members with email

addresses can be sent notice of these lectures as they arise, often at very short notice. It is impractical to send notices to those with only postal addresses. Any members who are *not*

receiving such notices but who would like to do so are asked to send a current email address to me at: ionisthompson@ukonline.co.uk

Ionis Thompson

ARABIAN NEWS AND RESEARCH

The first parts of this section give general coverage of activities throughout the Arabian Peninsula, while archaeological activities are covered in a following country-by-country section.

ARTS

Art Island, Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi is going ahead with its plans for a huge offshore cultural island on Saadiyat to accommodate four new museums and a vast performing arts centre. These are part of a \$27 billion development including beach resorts, a marina, golf courses and luxury housing for 170,000 people. Museums include a new national museum, the Shaikh Zayed National Museum, Frank Gehry's building for a contemporary art museum, alias Guggenheim. Another museum, designed by Jean Nouvel, will house objects from the main Louvre collection under a \$1.6 billion contract for the loan of objects for thirty years. A maritime museum is being designed by Japanese architect Tadao Ando, and the Iraqi-born Zaha Hadid has designed a 'Daliesque' theatre complex. Saadiyat will be linked to the main Abu Dhabi island by a bridge and causeways. The whole complex is planned to be completed by 2018.

The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Art Sharjah's exhibition of *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Art* opened in February (Feb 1 – April 1). This is the fourth venue for this exhibition, which has already been on show at the Mellon Centre in Yale, at London's Tate Britain and at the Pera Museum in Istanbul.

International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF)

Since it was founded in 1968 the Booker Prize (the Man Booker since 2002) has been the parent of other international literary prizes. After the fall of the Soviet Union a Russian Booker prize was launched. At the beginning of the new century the Caine Prize for African Writing was founded in association with the

Booker Prize Foundation. In the last five years a Man Booker International Prize has been awarded every other year to a writer of international stature.

The latest arrival to the family has been the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF), established in 2007, in association with the Booker Prize Foundation. It has received generous and assured funding from the Emirates Foundation in Abu Dhabi and, like the other Booker children, has already become a major presence in the global literary world. It is now (February 2009) approaching the end of the second annual cycle: on 16 March the second prize was announced at a gala dinner in Abu Dhabi.

The running of the prize follows a familiar format. Publishers of Arabic fiction, in the Arab world and beyond, are invited to submit copies of up to two novels published in the previous year to the Administrator – the Lebanese poet, editor and journalist, Joumana Haddad. In both the first and the second year 130 novels were submitted: all Arab countries have been represented. She sends a copy to each of six judges who over a few months whittle the list down to a long list of sixteen and a short list of six. Both lists are published and three months later the judges meet on the afternoon of the gala dinner where the winning novel is announced.

One of the emphases of the prize is its international nature. Registered in London, funded from the Emirates and run from Lebanon, a dozen Trustees come from different parts of the Arab world and beyond. Trustees appoint the judges who also come from different Arab countries. One judge is selected from outside the Arab world, in the first year a British Professor of Arabic Literature, in the second year the leading translator of contemporary Arabic literature into German.

The objectives of the Prize are to bring reward, readership and recognition to the writers. Like the Man Booker the award is for the novel, not for lifetime achievement. All

shortlisted authors receive a prize of US\$10,000, the winner an extra US\$50,000. International publishers have become interested and the novel by the winner of the first prize, Bahaa Taher, is currently being translated into seven languages. Bahaa Taher himself, a senior Egyptian novelist, has in the last year been invited to festivals and conferences from Indonesia to Washington.

The Arab media, after initial scepticism, has been warmly supportive of the Prize. The Prize focuses the minds of publishers, editors, writers and above all readers – in Arab countries, among the Arab diaspora and elsewhere – on the high quality and varied nature of contemporary Arabic fiction

Peter Clark

Peter Clark is a Trustee of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction

Dubai International Children's Book Fair

Not to be outdone by Abu Dhabi's sponsorship of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction, in November 2008 the Ruler of Dubai, Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum launched the first Dubai International Children's Book Fair. The Foundation has also initiated a mobile library.

Exhibition of contemporary Saudi art

The first-ever comprehensive exhibition of contemporary Saudi Arabian art, *Edge of Arabia*, was held at SOAS, London, on 16 Oct 2008 – 13 Dec 2008.

www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/visit

WILDLIFE

Qatar joins BirdLife

Her Highness Shaikha Jawaher Bint Hamad Bin Sahim al-Thani, consort to the Heir Apparent of Qatar, has donated \$1 million to establish a BirdLife fund to conserve birds and biodiversity, and to promote sustainable use of natural resources through site protection and management across the Middle East. She announced the donation in her address at the opening ceremony of BirdLife's 31st Global Council Meeting, at the Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar. During the Meeting, Qatar's Friends of Environment Centre joined the BirdLife Partnership as the BirdLife Affiliate in Qatar. Among other work, the fund will be used to establish *hima*, a traditional system with its roots in Islamic law, under which communities manage natural

areas such as woodlands, grasslands and wetlands, and protect them from over-exploitation, for the benefit of biodiversity, people and livelihoods.

Following the announcement of the fund, BirdLife is considering establishing a permanent office in Qatar, to support the development of the bird conservation programme of the Friends of the Environment Centre, and to co-ordinate its activities in the Gulf region.

Conservation organisations from two further countries in the Gulf region, Nature Iraq and Bahrain Natural History Society, were also welcomed to the Partnership during the Council meeting.

Yemen Leopard Recovery Program

The recovery program was initiated by the YLRP in 2007 to conduct leopard surveys and to publicise its plight. Captive leopards are mainly from Wada'a in the western highlands, having been captured in traditional stone traps or *margaba*. According to specialists reporting in the June issue of *Wildlife Middle East*, such traps have been used since ancient times to catch leopards and other predators.

ABBA Survey 40: Northern Saudi Arabia

During February 2009 a survey was made of wintering birds in northern Saudi Arabia by myself and three alternating staff members from the NCWCD Riyadh (National Commission For Wildlife Conservation And Development). The main study area was within about 200 km of the borders with Jordan and Iraq. The survey covered the whole region from near the Arabian Gulf coast to the Gulf of Aqaba, chalking up 8,700 km. In previous similar surveys of this generally treeless plain, thousands of sandgrouse (Pin-tailed *Pterocles alchata* and Black-bellied *P. orientalis*) and uncommon wintering waders such as Sociable Plover *Chettusia gregaria* and Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* were encountered. An objective of the survey was to systematically cover the region so that some numbers could be put to these wintering species, and thus to judge how important the region is as a wintering habitat for them. Methods included a series of vehicle transect counts (more than 1,500 km of measured off-road counts) as well as early morning timed censuses on foot. However whilst this region has enjoyed good rains during the 1990s it has suffered widespread drought conditions for most of the

21st century. Indeed most of this whole region was showing conditions consistent with prolonged drought and in many areas there was a complete absence of green vegetation.

Probably because of these conditions, not a single Dotterel or Sociable Plover were seen and only a few dozen Pin-tailed Sandgrouse were found at one site. The Pin-tailed Sandgrouse were seen on irrigated farmland and it is possible that many more of the other species were also wintering on other farms where they would find green vegetation, such as alfalfa. However the lack of records of the study species in desert regions also suggests that many had gone elsewhere this winter. Numbers of other wintering birds were generally low and not a single wintering vulture was seen, although Lappet-faced vultures were breeding at one locality. There were however very good numbers of Eastern Imperial Eagles *Aquila heliaca*. It is clear this region holds a significant part of the world population. 500 wintering Black Kites *Milvus migrans* were roosting at one farm, more than previously recorded as wintering in this region. Breeding range extensions were recorded of Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*, Desert Eagle Owl *Bubo ascalaphus* and Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* among other species. Wintering birds included several small flocks of Eurasian Linnets *Carduelis cannabina* (not recorded in northern Saudi Arabia before) and Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus* relatively numerous at one farm. This area has rather limited species diversity in winter but the short list included 13 species of raptors, five owls, nine larks (numbers were low of this group and more species were expected) and seven wheatears.

The NCWCD sponsored the survey and a full report of the findings is being prepared for them, which will include full details and analysis of transects counts and censuses and a systematic list. A soft copy of this report will be available to those who subscribe to *Phoenix* and who let me know they would like a copy. A summary of the survey will appear in *Phoenix* 26 (January 2010).

Mike Jenning
Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia, and
Editor of Phoenix newsletter
ArabianBirds@dsl.pipex.com

OTHER GENERAL NEWS

UAE honours Sir Wilfred Thesiger

The great explorer traveller, writer and photographer, the late Sir Wilfred Thesiger, who died on 24 August 2003, was recently honoured at a series of events in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.

At a ceremony in the Emirates Palace Hotel on 21 December 2008 Thesiger's friend and biographer Alexander Maitland received on his behalf a posthumous Abu Dhabi Award, presented by the Crown Prince, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Salim bin Kabina, who accompanied Thesiger's two crossings of the Empty Quarter in 1946–48, also attended the ceremony. A filmed interview with bin Kabina summarising Thesiger's achievements was shown to an audience of 300 before the presentation, which also marked the 60th anniversary of Sir Wilfred's first visit to Abu Dhabi in 1948, and his first meeting with HH the late Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

The first Emirates Airline International Festival of Literature, held in Dubai from 26 February to 1 March 2009, featured a discussion of Thesiger's travel writing between the Gulf publisher Ian Fairservice and Alexander Maitland. On National Day, 2 December 2008, the world's first permanent exhibition of Sir Wilfred Thesiger's photographs was formally opened at Al Jahili Fort, Al Ain, entitled 'Mubarak bin London: Wilfred Thesiger and the Freedom of the Desert'; the exhibition was conceived and organised by the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, directed by Dr Sami al-Masri. In the words of ADACH's chairman, HE Shaikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, "this exhibition and catalogue are a celebration of the life and legacy of an explorer who, more than any other, had the spirit of a true Bedu".

Alexander Maitland

Exeter sets sail on MARES project

A major three-year project to investigate the maritime past of the Red Sea and the Arabian-Persian Gulf has been launched at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS) of the University of Exeter.



*Ship under construction, al-Ghurayrah, Yemen
(Photo: John Cooper)*

The £750,000 MARES Project is a multi-disciplinary, multi-period research programme that focuses on the maritime traditions of the peoples inhabiting and travelling on the two great seaways flanking the Arabian Peninsula. It aims to draw on ethnography, anthropology, archaeology, history and linguistics in a bid to understand how people made their lives on and alongside these seas in late antiquity and the medieval period, and how they have done so in the recent past.

‘For centuries, the Islamic lands stood at the centre of trading and communications networks that stretched across Africa, Asia and Europe,’ says Professor Dionisius Agius, who is leading the MARES Project. ‘Seafaring was a vital medium in achieving that communication. The sea brought into contact people of diverse identities and traditions, carrying with them goods, technologies and ideas. The Red Sea and the Gulf were essential corridors in that process.’ Professor Agius has published widely on Islamic seafaring traditions.

Joining Professor Agius on the project are two post-doctoral research fellows, Dr Chiara Zazzaro and John Cooper, and Ph.D. candidate Julian Jansen van Rensburg.

Despite a growing awareness of the importance of seafaring in facilitating cultural connections within the Middle East and beyond, the practices, skills and patterns of seafaring in the region are still poorly understood. The team aims to investigate recent wind-powered seafaring practices through ethnographic survey of coastal communities, drawing on the memories of older people who recall the age of sail.

The research aims not only to better understand sailing techniques, but also to explore the navigational skills of seafarers, including stellar navigation and the use of

landscape and seascape indicators in establishing location. It also seeks to gather poetry and song used by seafarers as mnemonic aids in maintaining and transmitting navigational knowledge, and to discover the economic, environmental and cultural factors influencing the choice of route across these seas.

The team will also explore the vestiges of the Arab wooden boat-building tradition along the coasts of the Red Sea and the Gulf, visiting remaining boatyards, and recording wooden ship remains.

The MARES project is also seeking to identify candidate areas of the Red Sea and Gulf coastline for archaeological survey as case studies, aiming to better understand pivotal points in navigation on these seas.

Preliminary fieldwork for the MARES project is scheduled to take place in Yemen and Djibouti, including Soqatra, in February and March 2009. The project is also investigating the possibility of further fieldwork in Egypt and Iran in subsequent seasons.

Among the activities of the MARES project will be a regular public lecture programme at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS) of the University of Exeter, as well as seminars and workshops. The IAIS will host a major exhibition on Arab Dhows in September 2010, coinciding with Red Sea V, the latest in a series of biennial conferences on the Red Sea supported by the Society for Arabian Studies. Details of MARES events and activities can be found on the MARES website, projects.exeter.ac.uk/mares

The project is being funded by the Golden Web Foundation, a registered charity based in Cambridge (www.goldenweb.org). It is being hosted by the IAIS.

John Cooper

Ancient Egypt’s Red Sea contacts explored

MARES postdoctoral research fellow Chiara Zazzaro has recently conducted one month’s fieldwork in the Egyptian Red Sea, including an experiment to navigate in the sea on a reconstruction of an ancient Egyptian seagoing ship, and an archaeological excavation project at Mersa and Wadi Gawasis.

The project to build and navigate the ship *Min of the Desert* was initiated and backed by French TV documentary production company Sombrero & Co. The basic lines of the ship

were designed by maritime archaeologist Cheryl Ward, who also coordinated an international team comprising naval architect Patrick Couser, maritime archaeologist and shipbuilder Tom Vosmer, and the Egyptian archaeologist Mohamed Abdel Maguid.

The event was an exceptional opportunity to experiment with sailing and navigation techniques in the Red Sea using a ship constructed using the ancient mortise-and-tenon system of joining planks. The *Min* sailed downwind, keeping a distance of 5–10 kilometres from the coast and reaching a cruising speed of 5–7 knots in a moderate and fresh north-northeasterly breeze. The crew experimented with raising and lowering the sail, changing course, rowing and dropping anchor. As in ancient times, navigation was avoided at night because of the widespread reefs just below the surface. Night stops were taken along coral reefs in the middle of the sea or in a *marsa* (bay). Navigation in the Red Sea is guided by careful observation of the sea surface and of the coastal landscape, keeping as references the many *ras* (headlands) and *jabal* (mountain reliefs). During the second day of navigation, the *Min* passed the site of Mersa Gawasis, location of the Pharaonic harbour of *Sww*. A group of crested mountains of the Eastern Desert chain rises from the flat and slightly hilly coastal desert north of the site, creating a very distinctive landscape that may have helped ancient Egyptian to identify the harbour (Figure 1).

Excavation at Mersa Gawasis was carried out in 2009 under the direction of Rodolfo Fattovich of the University of Napoli 'l'Orientale' with Boston University. Dr Zazzaro, who since 2003 has conducted a systematic study of Gawasis stone anchors in collaboration with Mohamed Abdel Maguid, had the opportunity to examine newly discovered anchors at the site.

Three anchor fragments and a concentration of hundreds of limestone fragments probably from an anchor were found in a circular ceremonial structure of conglomerate and granite slabs enclosed by a mound of gravel. The limestone fragments were found arranged in a circle beneath the mound. It is hypothesized that an anchor was intentionally crushed during a foundation ritual for the structure. Unfinished holes recorded on one of the anchors, as well as on previously examined anchors, confirm the activity of

production and modification of the ship equipment at the site.

The wealth of new information coming from Mersa Gawasis and the positive results of the *Min* navigation experiment are opening new lines of enquiry into maritime activity on the Red Sea.

Chiara Zazzaro



Mersa Gawasis from the deck of the 'Min of the Desert' Photo: Chiara Zazzaro

Do you have photographs of traditional Arab ships?

The MARES Project, University of Exeter, is a three-year project investigating the seafaring traditions of the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf. We are seeking to gather photographs and images of Arab ships and boats in order to build up an image bank and develop a typology of Arab vessels. We appeal for your assistance by sending any images you have to our collection. All images would be used for non-commercial purposes, and would be fully credited to the image owner. For further information, please contact mares@exeter.ac.uk

Oxford Brookes launches new Arabian Heritage consultancy

Oxford Brookes University has launched a commercial consultancy which provides specialised research and archaeological services in Arabian heritage, and in geoarchaeology. The team is led by Dr Robert Carter and Professor Adrian Parker. The new organisation is called Oxford Brookes Archaeology and Heritage (OBAH) and can be found at heritage.brookes.ac.uk

Robert Carter

NEWS AND RESEARCH BY COUNTRY

BAHRAIN

Waleed M. Al-Sadeqi, Durham University, reports on archaeological and heritage news from Bahrain for 2008/2009.

Exhibitions and museum-related news

An exhibition highlighting the work of the French Archaeological Mission to Bahrain was

held at a renovated historical house on the island of Muharraq during February 2008. Under the title of *30 Years of French Archaeological Excavations in Bahrain*, it was made possible through the efforts of Dr Pierre Lombard of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Lyon, and Shaikha Mai Al Khalifa, then of the Directorate of Culture and National Heritage, Kingdom of Bahrain.

The month of March 2008 saw the opening of an exhibition entitled *Masks*, which sought to bring together different traditional wear of this sort from various countries. The display was held at the Bahrain National Museum.

During April 2008 the Bahrain National Museum hosted an exhibition of several Ancient Egyptian antiquities under the title of *Pharaohs*. The exhibition was held at the museum's conference theatre where special arrangements had been made to house the collection from Cairo.

The new museum at Qala'at al-Bahrain, the largest archaeological site on the islands, was opened to the public on 18 February 2008. The building's construction and inauguration was part of the campaign by Shaikha Mai Al Khalifa to further the archaeological and cultural heritage of Bahrain and was opened under the supervision of Dr Pierre Lombard and Dr Monique Kervran, and put together with the aid of Eskild Laursen, the exhibition's architect, and the graphic designer, Hanne Kolding. The museum remains open, despite some uncertainty about its status since inauguration.

Fieldwork in Bahrain

The Directorate of Culture and National Heritage, Kingdom of Bahrain, turned its attention in 2008 to the rescue excavation of threatened sites. The teams working at Janabiya and Shakhoura were headed by Ali Ibrahim of the Bahrain National Museum. Excavations at Karranah were supervised by Abbas Ahmad, of the same institution Bahrain.

Additional excavations are currently being undertaken by the Bahraini Directorate of Culture and National Heritage at Shakhoura. Under the direction of Abbas Ahmad, these were begun in February and proceeded into March of 2009.

Moesgaard Museum, Denmark, has plans for the further excavation of Early Dilmun

(2300-1700 BC) burial mounds in Bahrain during 2009.

Negotiations are underway at the time of writing between the Directorate of Culture and National Heritage, Kingdom of Bahrain, and a German archaeological expedition as regards excavation on the Islands sometime in 2009.

Archaeological publications related to Bahrain

The Danish Archaeological Expedition has published a report of four Early Dilmun burial mounds, two of which were excavated in the Wadi Sail region. Under the title of 'Late third-millennium elite burials in Bahrain', published in *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* (2008), an overview is given of the tumuli that represent a type hitherto unknown; they contain a second and larger ring-wall beyond the standard perimeter of the mounds.

A study of the social milieu of Early Dilmun derived from an examination of the burial mounds has also been published by Steffen Terp Laursen in *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* (2008).

A short booklet on the work of the Danish Archaeological Expedition in Bahrain and other Gulf countries was published by Moesgaard Museum, Denmark, in 2008.

A second volume detailing the Tylos material record is being prepared for publication in 2009. The volume was written by Søren Fredslund Andersen of Denmark and Mustafa Salman of the Directorate of Culture and National Heritage, Kingdom of Bahrain. It will be a follow-up to *The Tylos Period Burials in Bahrain* (2007), written by Søren Fredslund Andersen and published by the Directorate of Culture and National Heritage, Kingdom of Bahrain, in association with Moesgaard Museum, Denmark (reviewed on page 48).

Dr Pierre Lombard of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Lyon, and Khalid Al-Sindi of the Directorate of Culture and National Heritage, Kingdom of Bahrain, are in the process of editing the proceedings of 2007's *20 Years of Bahraini Archaeology* conference. The proceedings are scheduled for publication in 2009 or 2010.

Ongoing work by doctoral students

The following PhD students are currently active in Bahraini archaeology:

Thomas Brandt Fibiger, Aarhus University, has been undertaking

anthropological studies focusing on Bahrain. His work continues in 2009.

Steffen Terp Laursen, Aarhus University, Denmark, has been examining seals and pottery from the Early Dilmun burials of Bahrain.

Eric Olijdam, Durham University, has been examining Dilmun transitional material from Bahrain.

Waleed M. Al-Sadeqi, Durham University, has been studying the beads from Bahrain's burial assemblages in 2008.

Waleed M. Al-Sadeqi

The contributor thanks Dr Flemming Højlund (Moesgard Museum), Dr Pierre Lombard (CNRS), Steffen Terp Laursen (Aarhus University), and the staff at the Bahrain National Museum.

KUWAIT

Thanks to Shehab Abdel Hamid Shehab, Khalid Mahmoud Farhat, Salma Fadel Ghaddar and Lukasz Wojnarowicz for contributing to the following report

Kuwait National Museum: Excavations

The Kuwait National Museum's excavation season lasts annually from October till April. Activities are mainly related to excavations in Failaka Island, where many teams from different countries are conducting ongoing excavations. They are listed below by country.

The Polish Team consists of 8 members. They started their first season at the end of December 2007, while the second lasted from 27 October 2008 until 3 December 2008. Both seasons were at As-Sabiyah, in an area known as 'Rocky Mounds' (*al-Rukamat al-Sakhreya*). The team has discovered the remains of burial mounds which are similar to those examined and excavated in Bahrain and eastern Saudi Arabia since the 1950's. The Polish team concentrated on the site survey and study of the nature of these burials, besides site excavation. A full report of Polish activities is given at the end of the Kuwait section.

The Greek Team. The first season ended in February 2008, and a second season of excavation on Failaka Island began in January/February 2009. The team members (15 specialists) excavated at *Tell Said*, where a Hellenistic fort (3rd century BC) was discovered by the Danish expedition in the mid 20th century. The main duty of the Greek team is to restore and preserve the Hellenistic fort, which has many damaged walls, some of them

in a state of collapse, due to neglect of the island since the Iraqi invasion. The team will also conduct subsurface survey using the latest remote sensing techniques, which will inform their excavation plans for the next season.

The French Team. The final season on Failaka Island for the French team will be at the end of 2009. Previous seasons focused on two sites, excavated by 15 archaeologists. The first site is the Hellenistic fort, where the team has been excavating on the northwestern side. Many archaeological finds were recovered and await publication. The other site excavated by the French is located in the centre of the island at Al-Qusur (Arabic 'palaces'), where the team discovered an early Christian church amidst a village of the 8th century AD.

The Slovak Team. The fifth season for the team started on 15 February 2009 and will end on 30 April 2009. The team consists of the same 19 members who undertook the fourth season in 2008, and is working on the same sites on Failaka Island.

Al-Qusur and Al-Khidr sites are the two most important locations investigated by the team. At Al-Khidr the excavations revealed urban structures as well as numerous finds, including large storage jars of the second millennium BC, similar to Bronze Age vessels in Bahrain during the Early Dilmun period. At Al-Qusur, the team will draw a complete map of the excavated settlement and rebuild one of the settlement units, to give an example of how the ancient village looked, based on archaeological information from the excavated remains of the site.

The GCC Team. A group of archaeologists drawn from all the Arabian Gulf countries (2 members from each), is working now in Kuwait and excavating at the As-Sabiyah 'Rocky Mounds' sites, near the Polish team.

According to the Museum Director, Shehab Abdel Hamid Shehab, two new excavation teams are expected to start digging on Failaka island by the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010, after long absences from the island. The first is the Danish team, which will re-excavate a Dilmun temple and palace where the first Danish excavation took place. The second expected team is Italian, which will start working from January 2010 at a new site called Al-Qurainiya, on the north coast of Failaka Island.

Kuwait National Museum: exhibitions

Inside the museum complex, the museum administration arranged for an open exhibition called '4000 Years of Industrial Products From Failaka'. This event was part of the 15th Qurain Festival, which occurs annually during December. The exhibition was extended after the end of the festival to show a collection of old and new excavated finds from different sites on Failaka, which reflect the types of products characteristic of the island. The exhibition is still open to for the public.

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI) activities

The cultural season of the DAI is an annual programme starting in October and ending in May, combining lectures, exhibitions, excavations and other cultural activities. For more information about DAI activities, please visit the official site:

www.darmuseum.org.kw

Shehab Abdel Hamid Shehab, Khalid Mahmoud Farhat, & Salma Fadel Ghaddar

The second season of Kuwaiti-Polish excavations in As-Sabiyah, Kuwait

The Joint Kuwaiti-Polish Archaeological Mission continued its investigations in As-Sabiyah (northern Kuwait) from late October to the beginning of December 2008. Like last year, our main efforts were focused on the exploration of stone cairns set along the edges of natural terraces in the Mugheira Well Area. During this second season all the sites localised in close vicinity of the three mounds explored in 2007 were investigated. Part of our team was also involved in exploring a large stone structure in the Mohate area, about three kilometers to the west of the main area of our activities. Again, these investigations were possible thanks to the generous support from the Kuwaiti Department of Antiquities and Museums.

Because of the rich inventory found last year in grave SMQ 30, we decided to continue our work there. The remaining three-quarters of its fill were excavated in order to collect all the ornaments. After this season the collection of shell and stone beads reached 600 pieces, exclusively from this grave. All were scattered among the stones of the fill. Unfortunately, no new types were found. The beads were mostly made of flat pieces of shell with one or two drilled holes. Tubular beads made of dentalium

shells were the most common type. As in the first season, one drilled pearl was found.

Besides SMQ 30, eight new cairns were explored. However, not all of them can be classified as funerary structures. SMQ 33, 35A, 35B, 38 and 45 most probably served as graves. They vary in size from about three to eight metres in diameter. Each had a single chamber, set in the centre. As in the case of SMQ 30, larger stones were organized in two rings: the first one formed a chamber and the second functioned as a retaining wall. The space between them was filled with small loose stones. Except for SMQ 35A, all of these graves were poor in finds and only splinters of human bones and shell or stone beads were found in the filling of their chambers. The number of these beads varied from only a few to about a dozen per grave. In the chamber of the largest investigated grave, SMQ 35A, an almost complete human skeleton was found, along with the disturbed remains of probably two more individuals. A single copper/bronze item along with a rounded stone bead were the only funeral gifts that were recorded.

All the bones from the first and the second excavation season have been submitted to an anthropological analysis and its results will be presented soon.

The structures labeled as SMQ 36, 37 and 44 were also explored, but their function remains unclear. They were constructed of stones, like the others, but had no chamber. Perhaps they were some kind of platform used by nomads to support their tents. No artifacts were reported.

The stone construction exposed within the Mohate area had a different character. This site, labeled as SM 12, is a well. Its elaborate construction consisted of a stone shaft, a ring made of well-worked stones and the steps leading from the outer ring to the shaft. The surrounding wall is circa 8.5 metres in diameter and was set slightly higher than the top of the well itself. The shaft was shaped as a cone, expanding upwards. We were able to explore the shaft to the depth of more than two meters. Except for one piece of a ceramic vessel and a fragment of an iron blade, no artifacts were found. The relatively good state of preservation and the careful masonry work lead us to the assumption that this site could be dated to the Islamic Period.

Northern Kuwait still remains an insufficiently studied area. Continued

fieldwork in As-Sabiyah will be necessary to provide more data concerning the burial customs of its ancient inhabitants.

Lukasz Wojnarowicz

OMAN

Nasser al-Jahwari kindly provides the following reports on archaeological activities in Oman

Archaeological teams in Oman under the supervision of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture

A *French Archaeological Team* consisting of five people worked in Adam in the ad-Dakhiliyah region during the period from November to December 2008. The team carried out a survey in Adam and its surroundings, and found a group of Hafit cairns and 3rd millennium BC stone buildings.

An *American Archaeological Team* has been working in Bat for almost three years. During the period of February to March 2009, the team worked in Al-Wahrah area in Bat, where they have cleaned and partly excavated one of the area's 3rd millennium BC stone towers. The main aim of this season was clearing the main walls of the tower and identifying the tower interior divisions. Some 3rd millennium BC finds have been found.

A local archaeological team representing the *Ministry of Heritage and Culture* carried out a survey and excavation in Bandar al-Jasah in December 2008 for three weeks with the aim of documenting the archaeological remains. Among the recovered remains are an Iron Age settlement and tombs as well as an Islamic cemetery. An excavation was made in the Iron Age tombs and settlement where Iron Age material was recovered.

An *Iranian Archaeological Mission* has been invited to work in Qalhat at Sur on the coast during the period from February to March. The team is working in association with a French archaeological team. The Iranian archaeological team is working on the remains at Qalhat in an attempt to understand the relationship with the Iranian coast during the Hormuzi period.

The *Joint Ra's al-Hadd Project* is carrying out excavation at the sites of Ra's al-Hadd.

The *Al-Hajar Project* under the supervision of Jeffery and Jocelyn Orchard is carrying out a survey and excavation at Bisya and Salut at Bahla from February to March 2009.

A *German Team* carried out restoration of the Haft-Beehive tombs at Bat in Ibbri.

The *Ministry of Heritage and Culture* is carrying out restoration of various forts in different areas of Oman.

SOLAS

Stargazing in Oman: Land and Sea

Dionisius Agius (University of Exeter) and Harriet Nash are applying to the AHRC for a research grant to study stargazing in agricultural, fishing, pastoral and nomadic communities in Oman. We plan to collect information on the stars used, identify the stars and explore their significance to these various but interconnected communities.

If you are involved in projects/research in any way related to ours, please contact us on nashalbu@uku.co.uk, as both our proposal and research should link with yours.

Harriet Nash's thesis on *Water Management: the use of stars in Oman* can be viewed in abstract at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/10036/51237>

Archaeological teams in Oman under the supervision of His Majesty Advisor Office for Cultural Affairs

An *Italian Team* is carrying out an excavation at Salut, near Bahla. The first season of work started in February-March 2005, and it was continued during the period from February to March 2009. The aim of this work is to excavate a 3rd millennium BC defensive stone tower, which is buried underground to a depth of almost 3 metres.

An excavation is being carried out at the Iron Age site of Khor Rori in Dhofar by an *Italian-Russian Team* during the period from February to March 2009. Among the recovered material is an incense burner that might be imported from Mesopotamia.

An *Australian Team* is carrying out a survey in Al-Maghsail at Dhofar during the period from May to June 2009.

An *American Team* is carrying out an excavation at Al-Balid in Dhofar during the autumn of 2009.

Nasser al-Jahwari
Assistant Professor, Department of
Archaeology, College of Arts and Social
Sciences, Sultan Qaboos University

QATAR

Frances Gillespie kindly provides the following information on activities in Qatar

This winter, no fewer than five teams of archaeologists from overseas worked in Qatar in collaboration with the staff of the Department of Antiquities, directed by Faisal al-Noaimi, which comes under the umbrella of the Qatar Museums Authority (QMA). Their work will contribute to the increased understanding and appreciation of the long and fascinating history of this country.

QMA is collaborating with the University of Birmingham in the UK to study the country's ancient landscape using GIS technology (Geographic Information System). The Senior Project Manager, Mr Richard Cuttler, and his colleagues from the UK have been working in Qatar since October 2008, carrying out a project which will gather and combine a range of geological, archaeological and remotely sensed satellite imagery data, including data from the offshore sea bed. The project partly aims to uncover evidence for ancient landscapes now submerged beneath the Gulf. Some of the data is already available from studies done for oil exploration and seismic research, but there is much to be done towards the thorough documentation of archaeological sites.

A small team from the University of Copenhagen will excavate the site of the old trading and pearling city of Zubara on the northwestern coast of Qatar. It was established by the mid-18th century and since then has had a turbulent history, being attacked and burned down several times until it was eventually abandoned in the 1930s.

The city sprawls over an area of around 11 hectares, and the houses along its once busy streets have crumbled into mounds of sandy rubble, strewn with bright fragments of glazed Chinese porcelain and humbler local-made earthenware. Excavation by archaeologists from the Department of Antiquities took place in the 1980s, exposing two large areas of housing, a beach-side market and sections of the wall which encircled the town. Between 2002 and 2004 Iraqi archaeologist Dr Munir Taha from the Department directed excavations of what proved to be a semi-industrial area, with hearths and crucibles.

A team from the University of Tübingen in Germany has been working on a burial cairn field dating to the Iron Age, situated at Umm

Al-Ma, also on the north-western coast, and is continuing excavating there. Japanese archaeologists from Rikkyo University in Tokyo excavated at this site in 1988, and again in 1990–1 and 1994. The burial mounds contained the remains of bodies which were placed in a bent, sitting position in pits within the mounds, which were then covered with capstones. Accompanying the burials were grave goods, which included beads, bowls of bronze and copper and useful everyday objects such as grinding stones.

Returning to Qatar for a further season of excavation at Murwab is Dr Alexandrine Guerin and her team from Lyon in France. Murwab is an early Islamic city dating to the Abbasid period of the 8th–9th centuries, known as the Golden Age of trade and expansion, and is situated a few kilometres inland close to Zubara. Dr Guerin spent three seasons, from 2003–2005, excavating the early 19th-century fort and surrounding settlement at Bir Zekrit on the Abruq peninsula, before moving to Murwab. The site contains around 250 houses, of which only a few have been excavated, and is home to Qatar's oldest forts, dating to the Abbasid period, and also the peninsula's earliest mosques. It was a well-to-do settlement, as is testified by the fragments of fine Abbasid glassware and ceramics which litter the site. Murwab poses many questions, one of which is why such an obviously important trading centre is not mentioned in any contemporary literature.

The Danish expedition excavated there in 1958–9, uncovering a dozen houses, a mosque and the two forts. A British expedition followed in 1972, and from the late 1970s onwards the French Archaeological Mission carried out a survey and excavations. Dr Guerin spent two seasons, in 2005–7, surveying and excavating at Murwab, and now returns to uncover yet more of what remains of this enigmatic and mysterious settlement in what is now one of the loneliest and least inhabited places on the peninsula.

Finally, a newcomer to Qatar, Dr Andrew Petersen, who is Director of Islamic Research Archaeology at the University of Wales, based in Lampeter, will begin work on the vast fortress and associated settlement adjacent to the shore at Ruwayda on the north-west tip of the peninsula. Dr Petersen has previously worked in the UAE.

Although a major and imposing site, Ruwayda has never previously been excavated. The fortified area consists of three large courtyards of different sizes, apparently representing the development of the fortress over the years, with smaller courtyards being added to the original large one. Outside the fort the remains of buildings take the form of low mounds stretching away from the fortress and parallel to the beach, to a distance of as much as 2.5km. Surface pottery is mainly 18th century, although the British expedition in 1972–3 identified some which potentially dates to the 10th century.

On Dr Petersen's initial visit to the site he noted the presence of Indian pottery of the 11th century, confirming that this is a very early Islamic site. Even without excavation, the range of material visible on the surface indicates wide-ranging trade networks with East Africa, India and China.

Frances Gillespie

Qatar's Museum of Islamic Art was opened on 22 November before an assembly of over 1,000 dignitaries. The building is at least as remarkable as its contents. Designed by the Chinese-born architect I.M. Pei, creator of such landmarks as the Louvre Pyramid, the Bank of China tower in Hong Kong and the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the simple, stone-faced Doha structure is situated on an artificial island facing the capital's cornice. Inside coffered ceilings and geometric forms reflect Islamic architectural heritage, a relatively sober environment for the display of the fine collection of artefacts acquired by the ruling family since the 1990s. These include ceramics, jewellery, woodwork, textiles, glass, and Qur'ans.

Other museums will be devoted to orientalist paintings, photography and costume.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

General UAE news

UAE to establish Antiquities body

A new federal Council for Tourism and Antiquities is to be set up in the United Arab Emirates, it was announced in mid-February 2009. Covering the whole of the seven-member federation, the Council will be headed by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development and will include

representatives from local departments in each emirate as well as nominated experts.

While the archaeology departments in each emirate will continue to handle their own surveys and excavations, the new Council will act as a supervisory body to ensure that work is carried out in accordance with international standards. The Council will also provide financial support for some excavation work. Another focus of the Council's attention will be on efforts to recover artefacts which have been stolen or excavated illegally and have been smuggled out of the country, according to the Minister, Abdul Rahman Mohammed Al Owais.

'We need to get back the lost historic artefacts, and also need to do a general survey to document all the findings, provide technical support for some emirates that need help and undertake more excavation at some sites,' he said. 'Unfortunately many artefacts were stolen and smuggled outside the country and were sold in international auctions; the Council is expected to re-open those cases and prevent the smuggling,' he said.

Peter Hellyer

Abu Dhabi

The following information was largely derived from the ADACH website (Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage)

Al-Ain's bid for World Heritage status

Al Ain is now on the tentative list of World Heritage Sites of UNESCO. The move, which is a preliminary step for Al Ain to make it to the official list, capitalises on the particular cultural wealth of the city.

Hafit Cemetery Survey

In its annual programme of surveying and protecting archaeological sites, the Department of Archaeology conducted an intensive two-week survey of the ancient cemeteries around Jebel Hafit (Early Bronze Age). The intention was to update the information on the tombs and benefit from modern maps, aerial photographs and GPS recording. 122 tombs were recorded in detail.

The archaeological sites in the area of Jebel Hafit are considered among the most important elements in ADACH's bid to add the city of Al Ain to the list of World Heritage sites.

Jahili Fort Restoration

The restored Jahili Fort was inaugurated in the city of Al Ain in Abu Dhabi on 3 December 2008, under the patronage of Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, on the occasion of the celebrations of the United Arab Emirates thirty-seventh National Day. Shaikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Chairman of ADACH, said that the Jahili Fort dates back to 1898 and is one of the most important historical monuments in the city of Al Ain, as well as being the town's largest fortification.

Baynunah Miocene Survey

A team from the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University in the U.S.A. arrived in Abu Dhabi in mid-December 2008 to continue their collaboration with the Historic Environment Department from the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, ADACH. The joint ADACH-Yale project concerns the investigation of the Baynunah Formation, a set of geological deposits rich in fossils which is exposed in Abu Dhabi's Western Region. The team, led by Professor Andrew Hill and Faysal Bibi from Yale University, worked in Abu Dhabi for one month in January, surveying and mapping fossil sites. These sites date back to around 6–8 million years ago (the late Miocene epoch). During that time Abu Dhabi was greener than today, with rivers flowing through it teeming with hippos, crocodiles, turtles and fish. The team has so far carried out surveys and excavations at Jaw al-Dibsa, Hamra and Shuwaihat. The highlights of this field season so far have been the discovery and excavation of a well-preserved elephant jaw from Jaw al-Dibsa, as well as a pair of jaws from a primitive horse (known as a 'hipparion') and a crocodile skeleton from Hamra.

Baynunah Camel Site

A team of archaeologists from ADACH began investigations at a recently discovered site in the western region of Abu Dhabi, which contains the skeletons of at least 40 ancient wild camels. According to Mark Beech, of ADACH, these 'represent the largest sample of ancient wild camel bones so far discovered in Arabia'. Bones have already been scientifically dated to *ca.* 6000 years ago, and a team of geoarchaeological specialists from Oxford Brookes University, consisting of Adrian Parker and Ash Parton, is collaborating with

ADACH to reconstruct the past environment of the area.

Fujairah

A rescue survey and test excavations were carried out in Wadi Madab, just outside Fujairah City, in March 2008. The team included Peter Hellyer, Simon Aspinall, Robert Carter, Alex Wasse and Matt Jones. The field team was led by Dr Carter (Oxford Brookes University). The area is due to be developed into a golf course and housing complex, and the fieldwork was commissioned and funded by the developer, ICG, Dubai. The work was carried out following approval from HH The Ruler of Fujairah, and received invaluable support in kind from the Ruler's Diwan, and from the Fujairah Department of Heritage and Antiquities. Numerous small chambered features were recorded and excavated, as well as several large buildings, rock art, an Islamic settlement dating to before the Portuguese period, and pre-Islamic settlement remains. The wadi appears to have an extensive Iron Age occupation, with further significant settlement during two phases of the Islamic Period. A full report is being finalised.

Robert Carter

Ras al-Khaimah

Thanks to Christian Velde for providing this report

Research work carried out during 2008 by the Department of Antiquities and Museums, Ras al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates

Continuation of Ma'arid Survey

The survey of traditional pre-1950s houses in the coastal village of Ma'arid opposite Ras al-Khaimah Old Town (see report in last year's *Bulletin*) was continued. An inventory of buildings was prepared for the Planning Department of the Municipality of Ras al-Khaimah.

3D Animation

Mrs Rebecca Kohlauer, a geography student from the University of Heidelberg in Germany, joined the Department's office for six weeks in order to work on her MA. She set up a computerized 3D reconstruction of Ras al-Khaimah Old Town with the assistance and documentation of the Department of Antiquities and Museums, aiming to recreate a model of the city before modernization took place, using old photographs, maps of the fifties and preserved traditional buildings. Her

work resulted in an animated ‘fly over’ and ‘walk through’, which will be of use for future exhibitions in the National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah.

Survey at Jazirat al-Hamra

Mr Gøran Johansen, an architecture student from Bergen University in Norway, started a survey of traditional houses in Old Town Jazirat al-Hamra for his MA degree. Jazirat al-Hamra is the last authentic and traditional town still standing in the United Arab Emirates. Once a small island, its inhabitants subsisted on maritime and pearl trading before they abandoned their houses in the middle of the 20th century, when the rush to modernise started. Mr Johansen divided the village into five zones, according to its set-up, which clearly shows divisions, marking various clusters. The entire village will be documented, identifying and marking all houses, showing an undisturbed picture of life before the discovery of oil. Jazirat al-Hamra shows all elements of a traditional town, including a fortress for defence purposes, a small market, several mosques and a variety of house types. These range from simple buildings to ornate houses with courtyards, which belonged to rich pearl merchants. It is one of the best places to study traditional coral-stone architecture, used along the coast of the Arabian Gulf in the past.



Hudaibah tower and the teahouse in the background

Hudaibah Tower

This fortified Shaikh’s residence is currently being developed into a visitor complex (see report in last year’s *Bulletin*). Following its original siting in the fertile palm gardens of Nakheel, which had to make space in recent times for modern housing, a small palm garden has now been planted. It is situated between the restored tower and a newly built teahouse

and supplemented by further shrubs and plants. This small garden not only enhances the atmosphere, giving back some original features, but will also visually shield the place from the main road and give some protection against traffic noise. The newly created teahouse matches the traditional architectural style, and will enable future visitors to sit outside in a shaded area after having toured the tower, and to enjoy the view of the tower and the palm garden next to it.

Restoration of the National Museum

Restoration work in the old fort of Ras al-Khaimah (see *Bulletin* 2006 and 2007), which houses the National Museum, was continued. All traditional walls inside the fort were built in a sophisticated layer technique, in order to slow their erosion by water and salt seeping up from the ground. Originally every single layer of wall, built of wadi stones, coral stones, or a combination of both, was coated on all sides with plaster, before the next layer was built on top. From outside, this technique can be identified by horizontal lines which are formed by the building process, giving the walls an interesting and significant design. When restoring their outside surface, the Department was faced with the challenge of redoing these lines without destroying and rebuilding them. Together with our masons a solution was developed, which imitates these original building lines. The new plaster is applied in horizontal stripes, following the outlines of each original building layer and thus copying the original appearance.

After the removal of modern plaster and paint, the so called ‘Qawasim Room’ turned out to be in parts older than originally assumed. The older walls belong to a former public majlis, which was erected above the fort’s entrance. A veranda originally ran in front of it towards the fort’s courtyard. It was eventually changed and enlarged into one big hall, serving as an exhibition room for the history of the ruling Qawasim family.

Visiting Scholars

Akemi Horii, an MA student of Islamic Art and Archaeology from Oxford (UK) studied the Chinese Blue and White porcelain from the medieval trading town of Julfar. This material was excavated by John Hansman in 1976 and during the British Julfar Excavations in the 1990s.

Olivier Brunet, a PhD archaeology student from Paris University (France) continued to study the carnelian beads from the 2nd and 3rd millennium BC tombs in Ras al-Khaimah (see last year's *Bulletin*). He was able to finish the vast collection of beads and found that most probably the beads of the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1600 BC) were produced locally, in contrast to the 3rd millennium BC beads, which are mainly imports. During his study he was able to visit Jebel Ma'taradth south of Ras al-Khaimah, which is a local source of carnelian.

Beatrice de Cardi worked on the material from the French excavations in Julfar, a collection of highly elaborate Iranian pottery, as well as Chinese porcelain and other South-East Asian wares. They had been excavated in the area of the fort, showing clearly the higher social status of its inhabitants. In the future these finds will be part of the new Julfar exhibition in the restored National Museum.

Dr Adrian Parker and Dr Helen Walkington from Oxford Brookes University (UK) did a survey in Wadi Haqil, searching for flint sources. Afterwards both organized and led a one-week excursion of geography students from Brookes University, concentrating on the palm oasis of Dhayah.

Prof. Valeria Piacentini from Milan University (Italy) discussed a planned publication of her work for the Centre for Documentation and Research in Abu Dhabi, which evaluates all Italian sources on the Arabian Gulf during the 15th–17th centuries AD. It will include a joint chapter by herself and Resident Archaeologist Christian Velde on the history, geography and archaeology of Julfar, the famous trading town of Ras al-Khaimah, which dominated the western shore of the Arabian Gulf during this period.

Christian Velde

Sharjah

Emma Thompson kindly provided this report

In 2008, Sharjah Archaeology Museum expanded their team and continued to care for and display the archaeological finds of Sharjah. The collection also continues to grow through the fruitful work of Dr Sabah Jasim, Eissa Abbas and the Directorate of Antiquities. Mr Nasser bin Hashim is now the Curator of the Museum.

New staff

The Museum welcomed an Archaeological Finds Supervisor and Assistant to be

responsible for collection documentation, access and care. We also welcomed two new guides, an education officer and an events coordinator. Enquiries for any member of staff can be made through

archaeology@sharjahmuseums.ae

Exhibition

On the occasion of International Museums Day 2008 the Museum opened an exhibition titled *STOP! History is not for Sale* highlighting the problem of illicit trade in antiquities and advertising the measures that Sharjah is taking to put an end to the practice. On the evening of the official opening, a panel discussion was open to the public and led by Dr Hamed bin Seray from U.A.E. University, Dr Sabah Jasim, Director of the Antiquities Department of Sharjah, and Mr Mohammed Al-Raeesi from Sharjah Customs Department. Each panel member outlined his role in putting a stop to the illicit sale and trade in antiquities.

Object loan

The Museum loaned 22 artefacts for the 2nd GCC Archaeology Exhibition, this year held in Riyadh.

Research

Through the generosity of His Highness Shaikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, the Museum was able to offer one Research Internship for a foreign student in 2008. The successful candidate was Olivier Brunet. He studied more than 5000 beads in the collection over three months. The results will be provided to the Museum in a report and will contribute to his doctoral research. The museum intends to offer similar internships in the future.

Emma Thompson

SAUDI ARABIA

Many thanks to Clare Reeler for compiling the following reports, and to all her informants.

In 2008 the Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums in Saudi Arabia moved from the Ministry of Education and became incorporated into the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities. Prof Ali Ghabban is the Vice President of Antiquities and Museums. The Antiquities Department continued its own program of local fieldwork, excavation and archaeological survey throughout the Kingdom. It also hosted three foreign archaeological missions: a joint Saudi-German team, excavating at Tayma; a joint Saudi-British team working in the Farasan

islands; and a joint Saudi-French team excavating at Madain Salih. The formal inclusion of Madain Salih as a World Heritage Site during 2008 was a highlight for the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities. Madain Salih is the first site in Saudi Arabia to be listed as a World Heritage Site and it is hoped that this will boost the country's international profile and act as a drawcard for foreign tourists, who are being allowed into the country in increasing numbers. Much archaeological work is being planned in Saudi Arabia for 2009, which should prove to be a very busy year for fieldwork and research within the country, and the participation of foreign researchers in collaboration with local experts is expected to grow.

Clare Reeler

Farasan Islands

Geoff Bailey from the Department of Archaeology, University of York, spent another season of fieldwork in the Farasan Islands in March 2008 as part of an ongoing joint Saudi-UK project with Abdullah Al-Sharekh of the College of Tourism and Archaeology, King Saud University Riyadh. Work comprised further survey of the Islands' impressive series of prehistoric shell mounds, excavation of selected shell mounds, and more wide-ranging survey of the hinterland for traces of Palaeolithic occupation dating from the period of lowered sea levels when the Islands were connected to the mainland. Work also included diving in depths down to -20m to continue exploration of the now submerged landscape and associated archaeology, formed when sea levels were lower than the present. Survey of the shell mounds has produced more detailed information about the location and distribution of the sites in relation to recent changes in shoreline palaeoenvironments, while excavation has generated a large sample of shell material for dating and other laboratory analyses and evidence of fish bone material. Underwater survey has identified a number of underwater areas with evidence of palaeoshoreline features and promising possibilities for the discovery of associated archaeological material. Other participants in the work were Anthony Sinclair, University of Liverpool, Garry Momber, Hants and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology, Lawrence Morean and Matthew Williams, University of York, Saud Al-Ghamdi, University of Durham,

Abdullah Al-Zahrani and Nabil Al-Shaykh, Supreme Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, and Abdar Razzack Al-M'Mary, University of San'aa.

Geoff Bailey

Madain Salih

The Madain Salih Archaeological Project undertook its second field season in February 2009. This project was sponsored mainly by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Supreme Commission for Tourism in Riyadh and the CNRS, as well as by several private sponsors and donors (Total, Veolia, Del Duca Foundation being the main ones). It aims at large-scale excavations at the ancient site of Hegra, one of the major Nabataean sites, located at the southern limit of the Nabataean kingdom, which was integrated into the Roman province of Arabia in AD 106.

Several areas were chosen for excavation: in the residential part of the site, which lies in the middle of the plain and which is surrounded by a city wall built in mudbrick; in the Jabal Ithlib, north-east of the site, where most of the sanctuaries are located; in the monumental rock-cut tombs, one of which, IGN 117, was excavated systematically with the help of an anthropologist; and finally, in the *tumuli* area, south-west of the site, where a tower-tomb was uncovered, the date of which will be determined by C¹⁴ analysis of bone samples. In the residential area, the excavations have brought to light elements of a possible early mudbrick rampart of the 1st century BC, as well as domestic structures which belong to both the Nabataean and Roman periods, down to the interval between the 4th and 6th century AD. The walls usually have a stone base and a mudbrick superstructure. Soundings along the city wall have shown that it was built in the 1st century AD. The Nabataean tombs have yielded a large amount of archaeological material, among which textiles and leather shrouds. Finally, it should be noted that restoration and presentation to the public of former excavations are among the objectives of the project and are being undertaken using traditional building methods.

L. Nehmé, D. al-Talhi, F. Villeneuve

Tayma

Excavations at the oasis of Tayma continued in 2008 based on a co-operation between the Supreme Commission for Tourism and

Antiquities, Riyadh, and the Oriental Department of the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin (www.dainst.org).

Altogether six periods of occupation have been identified so far at Tayma, ranging from the Neolithic to the modern period. Excavations in the centre of the ancient settlement uncovered a temple and surrounding domestic quarters of Occupational Period 3, i.e. from the mid-1st millennium BC to the post-Nabataean periods. A tunnel leading to/from the temple, more than 14 m long, has been discovered most recently. One of its covering slabs bears an Aramaic inscription of a Babylonian name but this slab may have been re-used.

An early Iron Age complex (Occupational Period 4, ca. 12th to 9th ca. BC) delimited by a substantial enclosure lies between the outer and inner walls. A small rectangular building surrounded by a row of pillars contained painted pottery similar to the so-called Qurayyah painted ware, objects of organic materials as well as a number of Egyptian or Egyptianising artefacts. The building or parts of it were destroyed by fire.

Sand deposits at the outer city wall have been analysed by optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) and suggest a late 3rd/early 2nd millennium BC construction date of the wall (Occupational Period 5). Therefore, there may have been a large and important settlement at the oasis of Tayma already at this time.

In addition to the early Islamic cluster of occupation (Occupational Period 2) in the north-western part of the site, a larger complex of this period further north has been investigated. Furthermore, two buildings from the early Islamic period have been the object of conservation measures.

Associated projects at Tayma deal with hydrology, geoarchaeology, investigations into the city wall system and mineralogical/petrographic research.

The work has been funded mainly by the German Research Foundation (DFG), Bonn. Accommodation and equipment has been offered by the Tayma Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography.

Arnulf Hausleiter

Remains of an Ancient Arabian

From Arab News, Jiddah, 5 March 2008

Studies on human remains discovered at Um Jarsan cave in Khaibar, north of Madinah, have established that some of bones are 6,440 years old, according to a report carried by *Al-Watan* Arabic daily. Um-Jarsan is one of the largest caves in the Arab world with a length of 1,500 meters.

An expert team from the Saudi Geological Survey (SGS) found human skulls and bones of animals and engravings that date back thousands of years. SGS President Zuhair Nawab said his organisation sent samples to a leading science and technology university in Poland to determine their age. 'The results showed that some findings were 2,300 years old. Some of the human skulls found at the cave were 2,150 years old while others were 5,400 years old,' he said, adding that the oldest skull found at the cave was estimated to be 6,440 years old. The team had also found remains of wild antelope; an expert at the Polish university said they were 4,285 years old. Nawab said the studies were part of a major project that began in 1999 to survey the Kingdom's many caves.

YEMEN

Antiquities Smuggling

Extracts from an article by Fares Anam, in the Yemen Observer, 14 June, 2008

The Yemeni authorities have been working hard to eliminate the smuggling of antiquities. Sana'a Interpol sent briefings to International Interpol on sets of Yemeni antiquities that had recently been smuggled outside the country, said Dr Abdul-Qader Qahtan, the manager of Sana'a Interpol. He had received several messages recently from concerned bodies such as the General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM), and the Tourism and Culture Ministries, which asked him to circulate information on items stolen from Al-Awon museum. Qahtan reported his actions at the symposium *The Protection of Yemen's Archaeology and the Preservation of its Civilized Heritage* organized by the Progress and Advancement Forum.

At the same symposium, the Customs Authority presented a paper on its role in protecting and preserving Yemeni cultural heritage, and in anti-smuggling operations. A copy of a customs record was presented on the arrest of a French national found with a group

of antiquities at Sana'a airport. The court found him innocent because, according to the report made by Archaeology Department of Sana'a University, the antiquities were counterfeit. About 51 ancient pieces were seized during the first half of 2007 in Sana'a Airport with 19 different nationalities attempting to smuggle antiquities outside the country.

Dinosaurs in Yemen

Scientists have discovered the tracks of a herd of eleven long-necked sauropods, the first discovery of dinosaur footprints in the Arabian Peninsula, according to a Reuters report. The footprints, found some fifty miles north of Sana'a date from around 150 million years ago. Sauropods were the largest land mammals in earth's history; they walked on four stout legs and were herbivorous.

AWARDS AND PRIZES

Two of the Committee members of the SAS were awarded with prizes for books:

Professor Dionisius Agius received the **Keith Matthews Prize** with honourable mention for his *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean* (Leiden: E.J. BRILL 2008).

Dr Shelagh Weir was joint winner of the **British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize** for academic books on the Middle East, administered by BRISMES, for *A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen* (British Museum Press, 2007).

Dr Hatoun al Fassi, received the **Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques** by the French government for her book *Women in Pre-Islamic Arabia: Nabataea* (BAR, 2007).

Arab-British Culture and Society Award: The Winners

The first Arab-British Culture and Society prize of £5,000 was awarded to **Al Saqi Bookshop and Publishers**, in recognition of their immense contribution over more than 20 years to our knowledge and understanding of the life, society and culture of the Arab people.

The Panel were impressed by the high quality of the 62 nominations received and decided to commend very highly the following candidates for their notable contributions:

- Reem Kelani, Diaspora Palestinian singer, musician and broadcaster.
- Margaret Obank, Co-founder, publisher and editor of Banipal magazine; founder/publisher of Banipal Books; and Secretary of the Banipal Trust for Arab Literature.
- Maysoon Pachachi, Documentary filmmaker, who has worked for many years as a documentary and fiction film editor in the UK.
- Dr Venetia Porter, Curator of the collection of Middle Eastern art at the British Museum.

Rawabi Holding Awards

The 2009 awards, for making a significant contribution to Saudi-British cultural relations, were presented to **Mr Michael Rice** and **Mr William Facey**.

AVAILABLE GRANTS AND PRIZES

Arab-British Culture and Society Award 2009

The Arab-British Centre (ABC) awards an annual prize of £5,000. The prize, which is open to candidates of any nationality and working in any field, recognises and celebrates those who have made an outstanding contribution to the British public's understanding of the life, society and culture of the Arab people. In addition to the £5,000 prize, the ABC provides the winner with

opportunities to promote his or her work more widely.

Details of last year's winners are given in the section above. The shortlist of this year's applicants will be published in April 2009, followed by the announcement of the winner and presentation of the award by Sir Marrack Goulding at a ceremony shortly thereafter.

www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk

Barakat Trust

The Trust awards a number of scholarships and grants to students of Islamic art 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 **Salahuddin Y. H. Abduljawad Award** is also administered by the Barakat Trust and offers grants up to £10,000 to a Muslim scholar doing a postgraduate degree in the field of Islamic Art History at a British university.

Contact the Barakat Trust, The Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford, OX1 2LE. barakat.trust@orinst.ox.ac.uk; further information on the grants at www.barakat.org/grants.php

British Academy

The Academy offers a number of academic, research and travel fellowships and other grants. For full details visit the British Academy website.

www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide

British Institute of Persian Studies

BIPS welcomes applications from scholars wishing to pursue research in Persian Studies. Further information is at www.bips.ac.uk

Research Programmes. Most of BIPS' research income is set aside for collaborative research programmes. BIPS is currently seeking to attract applications from scholars in three 'umbrella' programmes: Socio-Economic Transformations in the Later Prehistory of Iran; Kingship in Persian Cultural History; Modern Iran: National Identities – History, Myth and Literature.

Individual Grants. A small part of BIPS' research budget is set aside to support the research of individual students and scholars rather than programmes. Grants are awarded mainly to cover travel and research within Iran.

Undergraduate Bursaries. BIPS offers a limited number of bursaries in 2009–10 to encourage visits by undergraduates to Iran. The deadline is 1 May 2009.

All applicants for grants must be members of the British Institute of Persian Studies. Membership forms are available to download from www.bips.ac.uk/join/join-us. Please send grant application and membership forms to The Secretary, BIPS, The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Application forms can be obtained from www.bips.ac.uk/story/awards-grants-2009-10 Email bips@britac.ac.uk

British Institute for the Study of Iraq

BISI Research Grants. Applications are welcomed twice a year to support research or conferences on Iraq and neighbouring countries not covered by other BASIS-sponsored institutions, in any field of the humanities or social sciences, concerned with any time period from prehistory to the present day. Awards will normally fall within a limit of £4000, though more substantial awards may be made.

The Institute welcomes funding applications for pilot projects, especially on the theme of *Exile and Return*. Funding of up to £8000 is available for one such project a year. The Institute offers assistance to the award-holder in drafting a full research proposal to submit jointly to other funding bodies.

Applicants must be residents of the UK or, exceptionally, other individuals whose academic research closely coincides with that of the BISI. Two academic references are required. All applications and references must be received by 31 January and 31 October.

BISI Development Grants. Grants are available to support development events and projects, such as lectures, study days, and popular publications that relate to Iraq and neighbouring countries and to the areas of interest covered by BISI. A Development Grant application should normally be for an amount up to £500.. Conditions are as above, but deadlines are 15 April and 15 October.

Please see the website for full details and conditions of BISI's grants:

www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/grants.htm

or contact the administrator: bisi@britac.ac.uk

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.

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.

For full details, deadlines and conditions of all the above see the website www.brismes.ac.uk/scholarships07.htm or email a.l.haysey@durham.ac.uk

BRISMES administers the *British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize in Middle Eastern Studies*, which is also funded by an endowment from the Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Charitable Foundation. In each of the years since the prize commenced, it has attracted around 30 nominations from some 15 publishers and the overall standard of entries has been extremely high. The prize is awarded for the best scholarly work on the Middle East each year.

The deadline for entries for this year's prize was 10th February 2009. Application forms and further information can be found at www.dur.ac.uk/brismes/book_prize.htm

British-Yemeni Society Annual Essay Competition

Submissions are invited from anyone carrying out research in or on Yemen. Essays may be on any subject or field related to Yemen and should be about 1,500 to 1,600 words, and may be written in English or Arabic. Submissions are to reach the Hon. Secretary to the

Committee by 30 April each year. The winner's essay will be published in the Society's Journal. The winner will receive £250, and a year's free membership of the Society, and the runner-up will receive £150 and a year's free membership.

Any questions should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary, The British-Yemeni Society, 2 Lisgar Terrace, London W14 8SJ 1. Email rebeccajohnson@gmail.com or see the website: www.al-bab.com/bys

Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World

CASAW, a Language-based Area Studies Initiative funded by the AHRC, ESRC, HEFCE and SFC, offers funding for postgraduate studentships and postdoctoral fellowships at the Universities of Edinburgh, Durham and Manchester.

Studentships. These studentships cover tuition fees in addition to an annual stipend. Eligibility requirements for postgraduate awards can be found on the ESRC website: www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/postgraduate/fundingopportunities

Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL)

CBRL currently offers *Research Awards* (up to £10,000), *Travel Grants*, *Conference Funding*, *Pilot Study/Pump-priming*, *Visiting Research Fellowships* and *Project Affiliation* for research that comes under the following themes: the spread of early humans through the Near East from Africa; the origins, development and practice of economic and social strategies in the Middle East from earliest times to the modern day; the development and workings of complex societies and their products; long-term landscape and settlement studies; the relationship between people, past and present, and their built and natural environment; synthetic studies of key historical periods; the interface between East and West; the investigation of multiple identities in the Middle East; the diachronic and synchronic study of the use of language, music and the written record in Middle Eastern society. Further details, application forms and conditions of the grant schemes are available from the UK Secretary, CBRL, British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH, or see:

www.cbri.org.uk/funding_opportunities.shtm.

Queries regarding the next deadlines should be addressed to info@cbri.org.uk

Gerald Avery 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. It holds an annual Schools Essay Prize, awards Research Grants to mature scholars and also sponsors a post-doctoral Fellowship.

Research Grant deadlines are on 1 May and 1 December. Visit the website for application forms and guidelines: www.krc.ox.ac.uk/gawainwright.htm

For further information contact: The Gerald Avery Wainwright Near Eastern Archaeological Fund, Khalili Research Centre, University of Oxford, 3 St. John Street, Oxford OX1 2LG. Tel: 01865 278222. Email: krc@orinst.ox.ac.uk

International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF)

The 'Arabic Booker Prize' is covered above by Peter Clark in the ARTS news. For further details, see www.arabicfiction.org/en

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 £500. 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, U.K. The deadline for submission of entries for the 2008 award was 31 January 2009.

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 vporter@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

For further information on Leigh Douglas and the Fund's work see www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/douglas06.htm.

MBI Al Jaber Foundation

The Foundation has a long-standing scholarship programme, and is currently offering the following scholarship programmes:

Postgraduate Scholarships for Masters' Degrees in the UK, open to Yemeni nationals.

Undergraduate scholarships for the Bachelors in Business Administration (Tourism and Hospitality Management) at MODUL University Vienna. This scholarship programme is open to all Arab residents of the Middle East and North Africa.

You are eligible to apply if you can demonstrate financial need; if you intend to return to your country of residence and contribute to its future development; if you have applied for, and already been accepted onto a post-graduate Master's degree programme at one of our partner institutions. Email info@mbifoundation.com or see www.mbifoundation.com/scholarships

Palestine Exploration Fund

The PEF awards small grants to students and others pursuing research into topics relevant to its general aims. The deadline is 31 January each year. Please address applications to Grants Manager, Palestine Exploration Fund, 2 Hinde Mews, Marylebone Lane, London W1U 2AA. Enquiries can be addressed to the Executive Secretary, Felicity Cobbing. Email ExecSec@PEF.org.uk

Further details and application forms can be found at www.pef.org.uk/Pages/Grants.htm.

Rawabi Holding Award

The Saudi-British Society presents this annual prize, donated by a Saudi businessman, Mr Abdulaziz al-Turki, to two British people who have made a significant contribution towards the promotion of Saudi-British relations. Nominations are submitted by the members of the Society and the Society's Committee makes the final selection.

www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk/main/rh-awards.htm

Royal Asiatic Society

The Society offers several prizes for outstanding research in Asian studies, including the *Professor Mary Boyce Prize* for an article relating to the study of religion in Asia, and the *Sir George Staunton Prize* for an article by a young scholar, both for articles submitted to the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.

The Society moreover welcomes *Fellowship applications* from anyone with a serious interest in Asian studies. For more information contact Alison Ohta, Curator, Royal Asiatic Society, 14 Stephenson Way, London W1 2HD. Tel: +44 (0)20 7388 4539. Email ao@royalasiaticsociety.org
See also www.royalasiaticsociety.org

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) and is hosted by Durham University for a period of three months from the beginning of May. 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.

For further information see www.dur.ac.uk/sgia/imeis/lucefund. Contact Mrs Jane Hogan, Honorary 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

SOAS Scholarships and Studentships

The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, offers numerous scholarship schemes with relevance to Arabian studies. For further information see www.soas.ac.uk/soasnet/adminservices/registry/scholarships or contact The Scholarships Officer, Registry, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG, UK. Tel: + 44 (0)20 7074 5094/5091. Email: scholarships@soas.ac.uk

Thesiger-Oman Fellowships

The Royal Geographical Society offers two annual fellowships of up to £8,000 for geographical research in the arid regions of the world, as a memorial to Sir Wilfred Thesiger.

The annual fellowships reflect Thesiger's interests in the peoples and environments of the desert. One fellowship will focus on the physical aspects and the other on the human dimension of arid environments.

The fellowship funds two researchers with outstanding research proposals 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.

For more information see www.rgs.org/OurWork/Grants/Research/Thesiger-Oman+Fellowships.htm

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS 2008-2009

COMPLETED CONFERENCES

Red Sea IV puts in to Southampton

The latest conference in the Red Sea Project series received a warm welcome when it arrived in Southampton last September. Visitors from more than 20 countries attended

Red Sea IV, which was hosted by the University of Southampton's Centre for Maritime Archaeology.

Around seventy people attended the conference, which was held over two sunny days on 25–26 September. They included die-hard supporters of previous Red Sea conferences, veterans of fieldwork in the

region, and an encouraging proportion of newcomers to the field of Red Sea studies. Attendees heard 28 speakers give papers ranging from the Pharaonic era to the 19th century. Geographically, the papers touched on all of the modern states on the Red Sea littoral, while the subject matter ranged from the linguistics of the Dahlak islands to the epidemiology of the 19th-century Hajj, in the meantime encompassing archaeology, material culture, medieval economies and maritime history. In accord with the theme of the conference – Connected Hinterlands – papers touched not only on life on the sea itself, but also on the role of the sea in bringing together disparate and apparently separated communities and polities.

This was the first time that the Red Sea Project conference had been held outside London since the project's inception in 2000. Previous conferences have been held at the British Museum.

The conference team are currently preparing and editing around 23 of the academic papers given at the conference for publication in an edited volume of conference proceedings. These are to be published by Archaeopress in the BAR International Series. The volume is scheduled to go on sale this summer. The full cost of editing and publishing the volume is being met by a generous grant from the Seven Pillars of Wisdom Trust, which also sponsored the publication in the BAR Series of earlier volumes of the Red Sea Project series.

The Southampton conference was generously sponsored and supported by the Society for Arabian Studies, which originated the Red Sea Project series, as well as the School of Law, Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Southampton, and the Saudi-British Society. The kind support of these organisations enabled the conference organisers to keep attendance fees at accessible levels, and also to enable the attendance of a small number of speakers requiring financial assistance.

The high quality of the papers given at the conference and the lively nature of the ensuing discussions reflect the health and broad range of current scholarship on the ancient Red Sea, as well as an undiminished enthusiasm for the Red Sea Project as a forum for scholarly exchange. Planning for the tenth anniversary conference of the series is already under way.

The Red Sea V conference is scheduled for 10–11 September 2010, and will be hosted by the MARES Project team at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. The conference will coincide with an exhibition on dhows to be held at the Institute. For further details of the conference see projects.exeter.ac.uk/mares/conferences.htm, where the Call for Papers and registration instructions will be posted in due course.

John Cooper

Society for Arabian Studies Biennial Conference 2008: Death, Burial, and the Transition to the Afterlife in Arabia and Adjacent Regions

The conference took place at the British Museum from 27–29 November 2008 and was attended by 95 individuals from the Middle East, Europe, the USA, Australia, and the UK. A total of 38 papers were presented over three days in the main lecture series, with a further 9 papers presented in two workshops and 14 poster presentations.

The conference was organised to highlight the incredible richness of death and burial traditions in Arabia and to bring together researchers addressing this fundamental aspect of past and present societies in the region. Papers were presented from fields as diverse as archaeology, archaeological science, physical anthropology, ethnography, epigraphy, art history and poetry. As became clear over the course of the conference, this varied research had implications well beyond the confines of death and burial traditions themselves, and was of relevance to understanding much wider aspects of ancient and contemporary Arabian societies including health and diet, daily activities, belief systems, landscape modification, inter-cultural contacts and exchange systems. All conference participants deserve thanks for providing a fascinating insight into the subject.

The conference could not have taken place without the generous financial support of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq, the University of Nottingham, and the British-Yemeni Society, in addition to institutional support from the British Museum and the Society for Arabian Studies. We would like to express our sincerest thanks to these sponsors. The proceedings of the conference are currently in preparation, and will be published

in the Society for Arabian Studies monograph series.

Lloyd Weeks

UAE marks 50th anniversary of Umm al-Nar excavations

The Second International Conference on the Archaeology of the United Arab Emirates took place between 1–4 March 2009 in Abu Dhabi.

Organised by Peter Hellyer, Archaeological Adviser at the UAE National Media Council for the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the first excavations in the Emirates, by P.V. Glob and Geoffrey Bibby at the Bronze Age settlement and necropolis of Umm al-Nar, the conference had a total of 31 papers, covering all of the major time periods in UAE history, and opened with a selection of previously unshown film-clips and pictures from the 1959 excavations. It also included an overview of the important Late Miocene palaeontological sites in Abu Dhabi's Al-0Gharbia (Western Region).

Two particular highlights of the conference were a visit for participants to the Umm al-Nar site, which is generally inaccessible due to its location in a high-security zone, and a special presentation by Minister of Presidential Affairs Shaikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the President of the Society for Arabian Studies, Beatrice de Cardi, in recognition of her many years of involvement in Emirates archaeology, which began in 1968.

Peter Hellyer

UPCOMING CONFERENCES 2009

Frontiers: Space, Separation and Contact in the Middle East

The BRISMES Annual Conference 2009. School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures at the University of Manchester 3-5 July 2009

Political and territorial frontiers in the Middle East have been a source of conflict and violence for millennia and continue to be so with acute topicality. However, while undoubtedly functioning as separators, borders have also always been zones of contact and exchange. The 2009 theme endeavours to embrace a notion of 'frontier' that goes far beyond mere geo-political implications by inviting thought and reflection on 'frontiers' at a whole host of levels, be they cultural,

ideological or economic and as they relate to the study of art, philosophy, literature, religion and science etc.

www.brismes2009.com

Britain and the Muslim World: Historical Perspectives

A multi-disciplinary and international conference to be held at the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, UK, 17–19 April 2009.

A collaboration between IAIS and SOAS, this conference aims to explore the historical impact of cross-cultural encounters between the Muslim World and Britain by bringing together writers, established scholars, younger researchers, public intellectuals and members of the media to present and discuss cutting-edge research on the question of how past relations have brought us to our current situation, and to propose directions for necessary further consideration and research.

www.sall.ex.ac.uk/conferences/britain-and-the-muslim-world.html

Ships, Saints and Sealore: Maritime Ethnography of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea

Malta Maritime Museum, Il-Birgu, Malta, 16–19 April, 2009

The conference is sponsored by The National Maritime Museum of Malta, the Centre for Maritime Historical Studies, University of Exeter, and the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. Themes will include Sea People and Trade, Folklore and Belief and Technology.

www.um.edu.mt/events/maritimethnography2009/maritimeconf_index.html

The fifth Islamic Manuscript Association Conference

Christ's College, University of Cambridge, 24–26 July 2009

The Fifth Islamic Manuscript Conference will be hosted by the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation and the Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge.

The Conference will address topics related to the care, management, and study of Islamic manuscripts, particularly the issue of access to manuscripts.

www.islamicmanuscript.org/conferences/FifthIslamicManuscriptConference.html

2009 Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR)

18–21 November 2009, New Orleans

Papers on any topic associated with the ancient Red Sea are welcomed. This includes the chronological periods spanning the beginnings of exploration by the Egyptian Pharaohs until the collapse of the Umayyad dynasty. Geographically, papers examining the modern Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, and the regions connected by these bodies of water

will be considered. Typically, papers could cover the results of archaeological excavations, analysis of materials, discussion of trade, cultural exchange, or other topics related to the ancient Red Sea.

The presentation of a paper at the ASOR annual meeting requires an ASOR membership and registration with the conference.

www.asor.org/am/index.html

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SOME RECENT BAR TITLES INCLUDE

- BAR –S1930, 2009 **The Harbour of Sebastos (Caesarea Maritima) in its Roman Mediterranean Context** by Avner Raban edited by M. Artzy, B. Goodman and Z. Gal. ISBN 978 1 4073 0412 0. £47.00.
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BAR –S1843, 2008 **Le site néolithique de Tell Mureybet (Syrie du Nord) En hommage à Jacques Cauvin** Édité par Juan José Ibáñez. Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux. (Two volumes) ISBN 978 1 4073 0330 7. £100.00.
BAR –S1842, 2008 **La préhistoire du Yémen Diffusions et diversités locales, à travers l'étude d'industries lithiques du Hadramawt** by Rémy Crassard. ISBN 978 1 4073 0327 7. £38.00.
BAR –S1820, 2008 **Wooden Mosques of the Samsun Region, Turkey From the past to the present in the light of surveys carried out in the years 2001-2003** by E. Emine Naza-Dönmez. ISBN 978 1 4073 0306 2. £32.00.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Saudi Arabia: An Environmental Overview

Peter Vincent

London, Leiden, New York: Taylor and Francis, 2008. xix + 309 pp. Hardback.

References, index. 46 colour and 10 b/w photographs. 39 maps, 17 diagrams, 50 tables. References, index. Price: £89.00. ISBN 978-0-415-41387-9 (hbk). ISBN 978-0-203-03088-2 (ebook)

With the world's largest sand desert, the Rub al-Khali, some of the world's largest oil reserves, and a history of rapid development within living memory from an isolated and

deeply traditional society of warring tribes and towns to a regional power at the centre of Islam and an increasingly important role in global geopolitics, Saudi Arabia is a land of extremes and dramatic contrasts. Its relative isolation is the source of much fascination to the wider world but also of much ignorance. The need for well-informed surveys is bound to grow with its changing role in world affairs, and with the emergence of an ecotourism industry that has been the focus of active investment in the past decade, with the establishment of the Supreme Commission for

Tourism under Prince Sultan bin Salman bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, responsible for natural and cultural heritage and antiquities. Much of the country remains little known or difficult of access. Few outsiders have had the opportunity of exploring widely enough to appreciate the diversity of its varied landscapes and the richness of its cultural heritage. One such is the author of this book, a physical geographer by profession and a specialist in arid zone geomorphology, who has been a regular visitor to Saudi Arabia since 1983. He has travelled widely throughout the country with a specialist's eye for its landscapes, and a photographer's eye for the telling image.

Environment is taken here to include everything from earliest geological epochs, extending back to the Precambrian 1.2 billion years ago, to the present and future environmental impact of human activity. The book ranges widely across the tectonic and volcanic history of the landscape, climate and environmental change, hydrology, geomorphology and landforms, biogeography, soils and soil erosion, and environmental hazards. It brings together a vast array of published sources and much unpublished information. The marine environment is explicitly excluded, presumably because it is a large topic in its own right and already served by an extensive and reasonably accessible literature. The chapter on geomorphology is the longest, in keeping with the author's own special expertise; while the chapter on plant and animal life is the shortest.

Although aimed in large part at an audience of professional scientists and students, with technical detail intended for reference by specialists, the book is also full of information about modern Saudi Arabia and will provide much of interest for the general reader, especially in the first two chapters and in the last two (9 and 10). Chapter 1 provides a readable account of the earliest European explorers, beginning with occasional visits in the 17th century, and the ill-fated scientific expedition beginning in 1762 led by the German surveyor Carsten Niebuhr, followed by the better-known exploits in the 19th and 20th centuries of Doughty, Bell, Philby and Thesiger, among others. Chapter 2 offers an overview of the overall physical setting, and a useful and concise account of the archaeology and more recent history. Chapter 9 deals with the range of natural environmental hazards,

accentuated by modern environmental changes and the additional impact of man-made industrial pollution and desertification, while 10 outlines the steps now being taken by various government organizations to protect the environment and address the problem of developing sustainable sources of future energy and economic wealth, not least from tourism, when the oil runs out. Those interested in understanding the geological basis for the country's natural resources, its mineral and agricultural wealth and the history of its landforms, including its deserts, mountain escarpments and volcanic lava fields, will also find interest in the intervening chapters. Throughout, the emphasis is on the relevance of geological and environmental processes to human society, and the perpetual challenge posed by some of the most extreme environments in the world as a source of economic opportunities as well as threats.

It may come as a surprise to those unfamiliar with the scientific literature that Arabia has been, at least periodically, a wetter and greener region than at present throughout much of the span of human occupation over the past 2 million years. Human settlement extended into areas that today are too arid to support it, but once had shallow lakes, as in the Rub' al-Khali and the Nafud, as well as extensive grasslands, most recently between about 9000 and 6000 years ago. Further back in geological time, the Arabian plate has been shifted by tectonic forces towards the pole and at other times towards the equator. In the late Ordovician period, 440 million years ago, it was covered by an ice sheet, and the intense sculpting by glacial action has left its visible mark on the present landscape. 70 million years ago, Arabia was located across the equator and had dense vegetation and perennial rivers.

One of the delights of this book is the splendid accompaniment of colour photographs that enliven and inform the text, along with many line drawings and maps, some of them in colour. The photographs really bring home the dramatic nature of so many of the landforms, along with more intimate details of Arabian life, archaeology and nature. Almost all the colour photographs were taken by the author, testament to his extensive travels, enthusiasm for Arabian landscapes and his long working association with them. A minor irritant is the excessive

number of typing and typographic errors. Scarcely a page goes by without some noticeable error. Copy editing seems to be a rapidly dying art in modern publishing houses, perhaps for reasons of economy, or because of the mistaken assumption that the electronic transfer of typescript made possible by modern computers has made proof-reading redundant. At any rate one should be grateful for the possibilities of colour reproduction afforded by digital technology. This is a book that will be of interest not only to a wide range of specialists, but to the serious traveller, to those who live in the Kingdom, and to anyone with an interest in the Arabian Peninsula.

Geoff Bailey

Women in Pre-Islamic Arabia: Nabataea

Hatoon Ajwad al-Fassi

Oxford: Archaeopress, BAR International Series S1659, 2007. xii + 129 pp. 37 plates, 2 in colour. Large-format softback. Price: £30.00. ISBN 978-1-4073-0095-5

Scholars have explored the subject of ancient women, specifically those of both the Graeco-Roman and Egyptian worlds, for many years, with recent biographies on Cornelia, Julia Domna and Hypatia appearing in print. However, the women of the ancient Near East have remained a somewhat forgotten topic and are therefore ripe for study. Hence al-Fassi's doctoral thesis, published as *Women in Pre-Islamic Arabia: Nabataea*, makes a welcome addition to the scholarly debates on ancient women and ancient Arabia.

This compact, dense work brings forth original research about ancient women in five chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion. Chapters 4 and 5 present the most original analysis and arguments about women's exceptional status and rights in Nabataean society. Her explanation for the high status of certain Nabataean women is twofold. First, the absence of men, who were involved in the full-time, long-distance trade of luxury goods that drove the Nabataean economy, meant that women had to conduct business, while also running much of Nabataean society in place of their men. Second, al-Fassi argues that the centralized, powerful Nabataean state, as evident in the complex defensive and hydraulic systems of its cities and its well-developed coinage, was critical in women's empowerment. The strong state seems to have liberated women from traditional tribal roles,

giving them more freedom and the ability to own property.

Her evidence certainly supports these arguments. Her analysis of the Nabataean papyri in Babatha's archive demonstrates that, unlike Graeco-Roman women, Nabataean women did not need male guardians in court or for contractual purposes; guardianship of Nabataean women only became a common feature after the Roman annexation of Arabia in the 2nd century AD. Furthermore, the discussion of funerary inscriptions clearly shows that women had other legal rights too. Women could own property, and they did not need a male relative or husband (as co-owner or inhabitant) to own a tomb. Second, al-Fassi observes that unmarried women with children often owned their own tombs. Her close reading of the funerary inscriptions showing that some of the tomb owners were women who were widowed, divorced, or unmarried mothers, is striking. These inscriptions demonstrate the possibility that unmarried women with children were not outcasts from Nabataean society, and that matrilinearity, in certain cases where patrilinearity was not possible or where matrilinearity offered greater social benefits, was a legitimate way to trace one's descent. These arguments are well contextualized, as numerous references are made to the social and legal position of women in Egypt, Greece, Rome and the ancient Near East, demonstrating that high-status women in Nabataea not only had the same privileges as their contemporaries but additional rights not enjoyed by other ancient women. As with all discussions of ancient societies, the evidence allows us to know only how elite women fared.

One of the strengths of the book is al-Fassi's deft use of all available evidence. She moves effortlessly from inscriptions and ancient authors to archaeological and numismatic evidence. From her detailed study of these fragmentary and partial types of evidence together, al-Fassi reconstructs a fuller image of ancient Nabataean women than one might have expected or that would be possible using only a single class of material.

While the book's contribution to the scholarly canon is significant, it suffers from being a very lightly revised doctoral thesis. The introduction reads like a methodology chapter and, as such, is quite dry. Chapter 2 reminds the reader of the pitfalls of studying the ancient world and writing ancient history,

but it again reads like a thesis chapter and seems too long for a book of this length. While the 'Tale of Two Cities' passage on Hegra in Chapter 2 brings the reader into the world of ancient Arabia and of ancient Nabataean women, it seems disconnected from most of the book and to an extent from the conclusion, where a similar passage on Raqamu (Petra) appears. Higher-quality images would have certainly enhanced the book's arguments: in particular, crisper photographs of the coins discussed would have been very helpful for the reader. The plate numbers are also out of order in the text; many of the plates also have two images, which are unlabelled. Both of these features make the plates annoying if not difficult to use. Certain images, such as Plates XIX, XXI, XXII, and XXVII for example, do not contribute to the book's arguments and could have been removed or replaced with more suitable ones. It would have also been useful to have the full text of the funerary inscriptions that are discussed in Chapter 4, included in an appendix.

These criticisms aside, *Women in Pre-Islamic Arabia: Nabataea* is an original and worthwhile contribution to the study of ancient Arabia and of ancient women. With so much attention focused on the role of women in modern-day Arabia, the high status and visibility of Nabataean women, compared to other ancient women, is thought-provoking on many levels.

Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis

The Tihamah coastal plain of South-west Arabia in its regional context, c. 6000 BC–AD 600

Nadia Durrani

Oxford: Archaeopress, BAR International Series S1456, SAS Monograph 4, 2005. x + 164 pp. 4 maps, 8 tables, 21 plans and b/w photographs. Large-format softback. Price: £32.00. ISBN 1-84171-894-7

The south-western corner of the Arabian Peninsula has often unfairly been viewed as something of a peripheral area, both archaeologically and historically. Yemen, however, is a unique and distinctive cultural and geographical meeting point between Africa and Asia, and pre-Islamic south-west Arabia has played an important role in the shaping of the cultural history of the northern Horn of Africa. The development of complex polities in this region gave this part of the

Peninsula an economic and strategic importance in the wider Red Sea–Indian Ocean system. The cultural history of this area demands to be better known in mainstream archaeology.

It is to this vital task that Dr Durrani has addressed herself, and she has produced a work of great significance for students of the archaeology of both sides of the Bab al-Mandab and beyond. Drawing upon primary fieldwork data generated by survey work in the 1990s, and producing a detailed and balanced synthesis of a wide-ranging, comprehensive and truly international literature base, Dr Durrani has produced what is an effective and timely treatment of a complex topic: the long-term landscape history of the Tihamah Plain, that important topographical feature extending some 300 miles along the coast of modern Yemen whose archaeology, hitherto poorly known and under-appreciated, has far-reaching implications for cultural developments in neighbouring regions of Arabia as well as the northern Horn of Africa. Importantly, this work also provides a regional context for the better-researched areas of the Yemen hinterland such as the Sayhad, Hadramawt and the central highlands.

The volume is well balanced and well structured. An overview of the literature is presented in Chapters 1 and 3; as an Africanist, I found this of great use for making sense of a number of issues that I needed to clarify in my research on the later prehistoric archaeology of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Chapter 2 focuses on the physical and historical character of the study area. Chapters 4 and 5 take us through the regional prehistoric archaeological sequence, i.e. from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages into the Iron Age. Again, this is all presented with impressive economy and clarity, and for a non-specialist in the region very approachably too.

From a personal perspective I very much engaged with Chapter 6, which is subdivided into two parts, dealing with contacts between the Tihamah and the northern Horn of Africa during the prehistoric and historic periods respectively. The nature of contact between these regions has been a controversial and long-debated topic. In the context of prehistoric contacts, to which Rodolfo Fattovich has long drawn our attention, we may debate the role of obsidian exchange and of cattle and crop genetic resources, as well as possible similarities in rock art styles in the

formation of a pan-regional ‘Tihamah’ cultural axis, the nexus of which was maritime trade through the Bab al-Mandab. This is unquestionably an area which, as Durrani demonstrates, demands more focused research.

More controversially we encounter, in the historical periods, old-style migrationist-diffusionist accounts to explain the emergence of complex polities in the northern Ethiopian/Eritrean highlands; this period has been variously labelled the Ethio-Sabaeen culture, the South Arabian phase, or, of late, the (illogically named) pre-Aksumite period, with its associated and contemporary ‘Ona’ cultural developments in the region round Asmara in Eritrea. It is to her credit that Dr Durrani skirts some of the more obtuse aspects of this controversy, but offers food for thought in her analysis (pp. 120ff) of the nature of ‘pre-Aksumite’ kingship which, though employing South Arabian terminology, clearly implied a different sense of governance.

In summary, Dr Durrani’s careful analysis has highlighted both the archaeological potential of the Tihamah coastal plain and the need for more focused research to place it in a better-understood international context. It would be a very useful service to archaeologists and historians engaged with the region as a whole if perhaps the author were to turn her attention to a broader regional treatment. It is sorely needed, and a study such as this, limited naturally by the scope of the publisher, ought to be extended into a more richly illustrated regional synthesis.

Neil Finneran

Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean

Dionisius A. Agius

Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008. Volume 92 in the Brill Handbook of Oriental Studies. xxiv + 508 pp. 89 illustrations, 7 figures and 7 maps. Notes, Bibliography, Glossary, 2 Appendices and Index. Hardback. Price: € 140/US\$ 209. ISBN 978 90 04 15863 4. ISSN 0169-9423

Although it is the critic’s job to analyse the book not the writer, one has to acknowledge the diligence and thoroughness with which Agius has left hardly a page unturned and hardly a website unvisited in the quest for inspiration, ideas and information to fill the pages of this imposing volume, and his tenacity and persistence in wrestling with the

often obscure language and thoughts of medieval Arab writers.

The author’s stated purpose in this latest addition to the growing corpus of books on Islamic ships and seafaring is to chart the development of watercraft from antiquity to the Middle Medieval Islamic period. It is structured in six, loosely related parts:

1. Methodology and main Arabic sources.
2. Early maritime contacts and port towns of the Classical and Medieval Islamic Period.
3. Watercraft technology during the Bronze Age and construction features of ships in Medieval Islam.
4. Seamanship and the Indian Ocean ship whether engaged in trade, pilgrimage or warfare.
5. Types of boats and ships.
6. Language contact and language dominance, the use of technical terminology, and cultural and technological exchange.

Part Two (Chapters 2 & 3) restates and expands on the material of earlier works on the subject. It is likely to interest historians and geographers concerned with peoples and cultures, and provide incidental reading for those whose primary interest is classic ships of Islam.

I found Part Three (Chs 4 & 5) somewhat disappointing. While at times dilating at length on what I regard as matters of peripheral interest it fails adequately to address various significant topics, such as: the state of Bronze Age sailing; metal sheathing as an alternative to *chunam* anti-fouling (of which there is some evidence in one of the Elephantine papyri and India Office M.S. 741 f. 326); Al-Hajjaj’s unsuccessful attempt to introduce nailed ships to the Gulf at the end of the 7th century AD; and the possible effect on current thinking of Fig. 162 in Shihāb’s *Al-marākib al-‘arabiyyah tārīkhuhā wa-anwāuhā* demonstrating the feasibility of a stitched ship with a transom stern. In view of the quotations from European sources concerning junks on the Malabar coast, in this and subsequent sections, it would have been prudent to warn the reader that any large vessel in the Indian Ocean was referred to as a junk or ‘joncke’ by Europeans, including the Portuguese, until the beginning of the 17th century, and so the use of this word does not necessarily indicate a Chinese vessel.

In Part Four, Ch. 6 is a miscellany of discrete sections touching on various aspects of navigation and pilotage, along much the

same lines as Tibbett's *Arab Navigation*. I am sceptical about the writer's interpretation of Abū Shāma's reference (p. 203) to a galley spreading her wings like those of a dove as implying two large bladed oars or leeboards. I know of no precedent or practical justification for large bladed oars and, as their name implies, leeboards are usually immersed on the lee side only, not spread like wings. But why should it not refer to sails? In the following verse, Al-Buhturī (d. 284 AH/AD 897) visited the sail/wing simile about 350 years before Abū Shāma's verse, with the unmistakable image of a galley running before the wind with a sail spread to port and another to starboard, thus maximizing the sail area exposed to the wind – 'running goose-winged', as we say:

When the south wind blew over the ship,
the [two] wings of the eagle soared because of
it in the blazing sky.

*idhā 'aṣafat fī-hi 'l-janūb-u'talā lahā janāhā
'uqābin fī 'l-samā'i muhajjiri*

Part Four, Ch. 7 is a brief sketch of selected naval battles.

It is in its final third, Parts Five and Six, that the book escapes from the shadow of its precursors and discovers its *raison d'être*. In Part 5 the writer presents the results of research into a broad spectrum of mainly Arabic sources for the names and descriptions of Islamic ships, building on the foundation of his contribution to *Ships and the Development of Maritime Technology in the Indian Ocean* some years ago. Although I do not see eye-to-eye with all the writer's conclusions, nor with his interpretations of pre-Islamic poetry, this is a fine piece of work that reveals the names and functions of numerous Islamic ships but, sadly, leaves us still guessing about their construction, rigs and hull forms. Part 6 (Ch. 13) is a somewhat rambling account of the interplay of languages in the western Indian Ocean and their influence on nautical terminology. It includes some interesting examples of nautical word derivations.

The merit of this book is that it revisits and revives a wealth of neglected, previously-published material from a wide diversity of sources including hitherto untranslated Arabic ones, combining it with the most recent archaeological discoveries and papers on the subject, in which those generated by the Society's conferences are well represented. Its main weakness is the tendency of the narrative to ramble off course, introducing a substantial

amount of intercalated material that, although interesting in its own right, is not strictly relevant to the topic and interrupts the flow of thought, and diverts attention from the thrust of the writer's argument. Indeed, perhaps only about half of the book's total content is directly relevant to the author's stated purposes. An even better and more readable book would have resulted from greater discrimination in the selection and organization of its content and from a more incisive, more focused and more cohesive narrative. There are places where I would like to have seen a more robust probing and testing of some of the information transmitted.

James Edgar Taylor

India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza – 'India Book'

S. D. Goitein and Mordechai A. Friedman
*Leiden: Brill, 2008. Xxii + 918 pp. 14 colour
plates. 3 maps. Hardback. References, indexes.
Price: €249. ISBN 978-90-04-15472-8*

The importance of this book cannot be overstated: it is and will remain the sourcebook for a major chapter in world economic history during the great centuries of Islam. It presents the very readable documentation for the maritime trade between Cairo, Aden and India during the 11th to mid-13th centuries AD. This detailed presentation and analysis of letters and ledgers will form the basis for all future research into the economics of international trade in the High Middle Ages, including the northern leg from Cairo to Sicily and Italy.

Our Eurocentric predisposition should not blind us to the fact that international trade in the Red Sea, Gulf and Indian Ocean was more important than the trans-Mediterranean trade of the period. However, while European commercial documents survived in considerable numbers in city, royal and other archives, the situation in the Islamic world is markedly different. Except for the Cairo Geniza documents, originating from Jewish merchant families, only the recently discovered Yemeni commercial and administrative statistics contained in the *Nur al-Ma'arif* (ca. AD 1290) give detailed insight into Indian Ocean trade in the Islamic period. The *Nur al-Ma'arif* largely confirms the Cairo Geniza material. Thus, though Jewish traders formed only a small percentage of the merchants trading and sailing within the vast

realm of Pax Islamica, or rather within its linguistic and cultural unity, it is legitimate to generalize from the Geniza material.

Pious custom in the mediaeval Orient, among both Muslims and Jews, ordained that writings containing the word 'God' should not be thrown away. Discarded letters and fragments (which invariably invoked God's blessings) were therefore deposited in a special place in a synagogue or mosque. In synagogues, such a niche or chamber was known by the term *geniza*, 'burial'. The root of the word, and its meaning, is identical with Arabic *janaza*. In Yemen, where I was still able to observe this custom in some places, a special niche or platform was arranged in mosques, where torn fragments of the Holy Book, and of other documents, were 'buried', and these were known as *maqbara al-masahif*. The manuscript treasures discovered forty years ago in the Great Mosque in San'a' had been deposited in one such 'grave'.

The Geniza material originated in the old synagogue in Fustat (= Old Cairo), where it was discovered and sold on the market in the 1890s. Today, the fragments are kept in Cambridge, Oxford, St Petersburg, Budapest and various other libraries.

Most of the Geniza documents in this volume are court and legal documents of prominent India traders, e.g. claims of partners after a shipwreck in the Indian Ocean. A considerable portion comprises letters referring to trading and seafaring enterprises in both the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Also, large numbers of religious and rabbinical texts survive, often referring to questions addressed, for example from Aden, to the consistorium in Cairo.

Usually, the language of the Geniza documents is Arabic – the vernacular used by the traders in their everyday business dealings. Normally, these Arabic texts are written in Hebrew letters. The documents are published here in English translation, with a few examples illustrated in the plates.

The texts selected are arranged in such a way as to reconstruct several family archives. For instance, in a lawsuit in Cairo, Joseph Lebdi had to provide an inventory of all his assets. He testifies that he has left some of his Indian merchandise in Aden, and then enumerates the goods still in his possession, and intended for export, such as copper, mercury, cinnabar, corals, textiles. 43 other

documents allow for a fascinating insight into the business dealings of the Lebdi family.

The global reach of these trading families is illustrated by Abraham ben Yiju. In 526 AH/AD 1131–32, now resident in Aden, he receives a letter from Cairo concerning pepper, and then establishes himself for many years in Mangalore. Shortly before, his brother had concluded a forty-year lease of an apartment in Sicily. When still in Aden, Abraham considers renting a house in Dhu Jibla (clearly, the Fatimid connection greatly facilitated and enhanced trade relations between Egypt and Yemen, and beyond).

In India, Abraham establishes a bronze factory as an international commercial venture for made-to-order production. His partners send letters from Aden announcing specified amounts of raw material, and giving extremely detailed descriptions of the objects required. He also ships iron, betel nuts and pepper to Aden (most of it destined for Cairo), and receives fine cloth and other wares from Yemen: 'Please send me arsenic – I have heard that it is in great demand in Ceylon.' A major export commodity from Yemen (and from Cairo) is paper, not available in India.

A very considerable number of documents traces the activities of Madmun b. Hasan-Japhet and the three generations of his family. Madmun was the head of the (Jewish) merchants in Aden, and *nagid* (translated as 'Prince' whereas I would prefer 'Leader') of the Jews of Yemen. The documents offer the most vivid insight into his own business dealings and his official functions as mediator and administrator, particularly in the case of shipwrecks, and into his official business with authorities in India and Cairo.

Shlomo Dov Goitein was a German oriental scholar. Early in his life, after emigration to Palestine, he became interested in the Jews from Yemen. In 1934 he published two books, *Von den Juden Jemens*, and *Jemenica, Sprichwörter ... aus Zentral-Jemen*. This must have prompted him to devote his scholarly life (later on at Princeton) to the study of the Geniza material. The result was the monumental 5-volume *A Mediterranean Society* (Berkeley, 1967–88), and a number of publications on the Aden and Indian Ocean material. After his death in 1985, Mordechai Akiva Friedman continued and completed the work on the 'India Book'. To his great credit, such scholarly service being painstaking and

lacking in glamour, Friedman has added an invaluable amount of research to Goitein's.

I have no critical remarks to make. Future scholarship will mine this rich 918-page quarry. A list of the goods mentioned and traded, and the prices, might be a particularly urgent desideratum. *Ma'ashira* (pp. 59, 565) is not a ten-cornered tray, but circular; it sits 'ten persons'.

Werner Daum

**A Traveller in Thirteenth-century Arabia:
Ibn al-Mujāwir's *Tārīkh al-Mustabsir***

Translated from Oscar Löfgren's Arabic text and edited with revisions and annotations by G. Rex Smith.

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, for The Hakluyt Society, London, Third Series, No. 19. xx + 341 pp. 2 maps and 13 illustrations. Hardback, jacketed. Footnotes, appendices, glossary, bibliography, index. Price: £50.00. ISBN 978-0-904180-91-6

Thanks to Rex Smith, we now have an authoritative translation of Ibn al-Mujāwir's *Tārīkh al-Mustabsir*, the principal source for the social and commercial history of Ayyubid Yemen. The translation is based on Löfgren's exemplary edition, compared throughout with the principal manuscripts. No one who has tried to grapple with the original can fail to be humbled at the courage of the translator, faced as he was by lacunae, unpointed consonants and *hapax legomena*. The book is notable for its mixture of Classical with Middle Arabic, making this one of only two texts by a Muslim author displaying Middle Arabic forms so far published – the other is Usāmah ibn Munqidh's *Kitāb al-I'tibār*. The earliest manuscript of the *Tārīkh al-Mustabsir* is dated 1595, and Rex Smith suggests in his introduction that Ibn Mujāwir's original probably contained an even greater Middle Arabic element, 'corrected' by successive copyists. He slightly amends his detailed study of the language of the text published in 1996, suggesting that at least some of the peculiarities of the language may be due to the fact that Ibn Mujāwir was not a native speaker of Arabic. That he spoke Persian is obvious from the text, but it seems to me that the use of Middle Arabic is unlikely by a non-native speaker.

Rex Smith has done everything possible to guide the reader through Ibn Mujāwir's sometimes tortuous but always rewarding and

frequently amusing labyrinth. The introduction discusses the author, the manuscript, the social and political background and the salient characteristics of the text, making the convincing suggestion that many of the tall stories and risqué anecdotes originated in bull sessions with his clearly extensive coterie of friends and acquaintances. He places the text in its historical and geographical context, discusses Ibn Mujāwir's written and oral sources (more than 70 named informants!), and provides a useful précis of the history of Yemen from the Ziyādids (818–1018) to the Ayyūbids (1173–1230), as well as the Sharifian dynasties of the Hijaz, both crucial for an understanding of the text.

Everywhere he went Ibn Mujāwir collected itineraries, both old and new, from informants, and all 42 are conveniently collected in Appendix A. They were used by Sprenger in his *Post- und Reiserouten* (1864), and even though many of the stages remain unidentified, they show how practically every corner of the Peninsula was linked, at one time or another, by overland trade routes. Most are mentioned in no other source. Two further appendices are devoted to dynastic and genealogical charts, and the surprisingly few written sources used by Ibn Mujāwir. There is an invaluable glossary of unusual words and a comprehensive index and bibliography. Rex Smith has supplied no fewer than 2800 notes to the text, placed as they should be at the bottom of the page, carefully pointing out inconsistencies in the text and correcting Ibn Mujāwir's often careless rendering of personal names and dates. More than 1200 place names occur in the text, and where possible these have been identified. Those that have eluded the translator are marked 'unidentified', and show how much we still do not know about the historical topography of south-west Arabia.

Nothing is known of the author but what he tells us himself. The name on the title page of the earliest and best manuscript, Ayasofia 3080 (now in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi), as Rex Smith points out in the introduction, is that of another Ibn Mujāwir entirely, a distinguished Damascene traditionalist who would certainly have been shocked to have this occasionally quite scurrilous text attributed to him. Rex Smith has conclusively shown that the author of the *Tārīkh al-Mustabsir* was Abū Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Mas'ūd ibn 'Alī ibn Ahmad Ibn al-Mujāwir al-Baghdādī al-

Nisābūrī, and the entry in *EP* must be corrected accordingly.

Ibn Mujāwir arranges his material roughly geographically, beginning with Mecca and proceeding to Tā'if, Jiddah, Tihāma, Zabīd, Bāb al-Mandab, and finally to Aden. He then deals with various places in Yemen, including Ta'izz, Janad, San'a', Sa'da, Najrān, Ghulāfiqa, Farasān, Shibām, and Dhufar (Zafār). From Dhufar he went to Oman, describing Qalhāt, Muscat and Suhār, and from there to Qays (Kish). The *Tārīkh al-Mustabsir* ends abruptly with a short, hearsay account of Bahrain and appears to be unfinished.

This arrangement leads Rex Smith to suggest that Ibn Mujāwir travelled to Mecca from Baghdad or Basra and then worked his way south. It seems more likely, as George Rentz maintained in his entry on Ibn Mujāwir in *EP*, that he sailed to Aden from the west coast of India. He was in Multān in 1221 and late in the same year he sailed from Daybūl (p. 113) to Aden on a ship jointly owned by the Nākhūda Khwāja Najīb al-Dīn Mahmūd b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Baghawī and Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī ibn Abī al-Faraj al-Baghdādī (p. 264). His description of Socotra, which occurs at the end of the book, dates from this voyage, so despite the way he has arranged his book, the places he visited do not follow the chronology of his travels. He was in Ibrah, somewhere on the coast between Aden and Zabid in 1221 (p. 119), then in Zabid the same year; in Mecca in 1223 and 1224; and in Zabid again in 1224 and 1226. The last date mentioned in the text is 1229–30, the final year of Ayyubid rule in the Yemen, and the date of Ibn Mujāwir's departure.

The thirteen illustrations, familiar to us from Löfgren's re-drawings, are here reproduced from the manuscript. These schematic plans of Mecca, Jiddah, Zabid, Aden, Ta'izz, al-Janad, Mārib, Sa'da, Bi'r al-'Āsimiyyah, Zafār, Qalhāt, Socotra and the three (unidentified) fortresses of al-Qā'idah, al-Jāhilī and al-Azālī are just as strange as the text they illustrate, sharing something with the Balkhī cartographic tradition but even more schematic. Figure 7, the plan of al-Janad, has been reproduced upside down, one of the few printing errors in this elegantly produced book. There are very few misprints, an unfortunate '*al-Mustabsir*' in the Preface (p. xvi), '627' for 620 (p. 123), and the last phrase in the quotation from Q.5:103 (p. 220) should read

'mother of a *sā'ibah*', not 'mother of a *bahīrah*'. The names of the places to which the people of Tripoli in North Africa moved during the caliphate of 'Uthmān, Bārī and Tūliyah (p. 198), should be read 'Bari and Puglia'. In the list of pearling grounds (p. 286) 'Saylān' is simply Ceylon, that is, the Palk Strait pearling beds. The mysterious Matārid al-Khayl/Murābit al-Khayl (pp. 78 and 130), located either on the mainland between al-Sirrayn and Jiddah or offshore near Farasan, is mentioned by Ahmad ibn Majid and Sulaymān al-Mahrī (Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation*, p. 406) under the latter name, which is better read Marābit al-Khayl.

Rex Smith's many important publications on aspects of the text will already be familiar to specialists, but here at last we have the entire text, and can see well-known passages, such as the Aden customs' list, in their original context. And what a context it is! This is indeed, as Rex Smith says, a truly 'weird and wonderful book', filled with nuggets of reliable information on economic affairs, plant transmissions, the tanning industry and water management, set in a matrix of frequently unreliable historical information and anecdote, fascinating folklore, dirty stories, legends, wonders, magic and sorcery, all related with great good humour. The book is filled with unusual and striking information on everything from ambergris to xenophilia, by way of customs duties and were-lions. Ibn Mujāwir's magpie mind and consuming curiosity have produced a book like no other. Hanuman's rescue of Sita in the *Ramayana* is transferred from Ceylon to Aden. Aden itself was peopled 'after the time of the Pharaohs' by voyagers from Madagascar. Somewhere in the Hijaz dwell 100 million Jews, isolated from the rest of mankind by a river of sand. The Sleepers of Ephesus still doze in a cave outside al-Janad, which was founded by Decius. Where else could we learn of mixed bathing parties at al-Fāzah to celebrate the Zabīd date harvest? This is a book to savour, the perfect antidote to the dry chronicles that are the usual fare of the historian of the period. The Arabia of Ibn Mujāwir was a strange and often surprising place, where myths and legends of the past were closely woven into the texture of everyday life, to which this book is practically our only testimony.

Paul Lunde

**The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj:
Merchants, Rulers, and the British in the
Nineteenth-century Gulf**

James Onley

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 388 pp. Hardback, jacketed. 7 b/w photos, 2 maps, 19 tables, 2 figures. Footnotes, glossary, appendices, bibliography, index. Price: £65.00. ISBN 978-0-19-922810-2

The title of this book, and the map on the jacket, illustrate something we have always accepted but never adequately acknowledged – the geographical closeness of Arabia to India. This proximity brought the Arabian Peninsula, for thousands of years, into the economic and cultural orbit of India; and for the more limited period from 1820 to 1947, parts of it became a political part of British India. Eastern Arabia in fact formed the westernmost frontier of the British Indian empire, and the British controlled it in the same way as India's other land frontiers – through a policy of protectorates that was enunciated by one of its strongest advocates, Lord Curzon, in his 1907 Romanes Lecture. These protectorates were under the supervision of a Political Resident (PR), most of whom employed a network of political agents (PAs) throughout their areas to work with the local rulers, both to protect them and to preserve British interests. In this sense, the Gulf was no different from Hyderabad or Kashmir or Baluchistan. But there was one important difference: in the 19th century the Residencies on the Indian sub-continent were British officered; whereas in the Gulf (with the exception of the Resident himself and his assistant who were British political officers), the agencies in Bahrain and elsewhere depended for their effectiveness on native agents. And that is the *raison d'être* of this book. It is a study of the native agency system in Bahrain during the 19th century – the reasons for its rise (its cheapness compared with employing European officers, and the shortage of suitable Europeans to serve in the Gulf because of the climate); the identities of the individuals who were the native agents; and the reasons for its decline at the end of the century.

This is the first study of the various native agents in Bahrain from 1816/17 to 1900, and most impressive it is. It will doubtless take its place as one of the source books for future historians of Bahrain in the 19th century. Onley has of course used the usual sources (Saldanha,

Lorimer, and the records of the India Office held in the British Library). But he has also obtained access to the private papers of some of those native agents, now preserved in the Bushiri library in Bahrain. I hope that Onley will consider at some point editing these papers for the benefit of those of us now outside Bahrain, or at the very least ensuring that they are freely available to future historians.

British India's native agency system in the Gulf started officially in 1822 with the instructions of Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, to Capt. John Macleod, the first British Resident in the Gulf: 'You should suggest a plan for securing authentic intelligence of the proceedings of the several chiefs on the coast and a ready communication with them should they appear of a questionable character. You will adopt the plan at once if not attended with much expense.' In fact, the appointment of a native agent in Bahrain had already been provided for in 1816, in the agreement between Lt William Bruce and Shaikh Abdullah of Bahrain, which had the provision that 'if the British Government should wish to establish an Agent or Broker at Bahrain, they are at liberty to do so'; and the first Agent (Sadah Anandadas) seems to have been appointed in 1817. From 1817 to 1834 the native Agents in Bahrain were Hindu merchants; but from 1834 onwards, at the request of the ruler, only Muslims were appointed. These Muslim Agents were generally wealthy merchants, with the Safar family providing many of them. The system persisted, with these wealthy Muslim merchants acting as British native agents until the very last years of the 19th century.

The decline and abolition of the native agency system at the end of the century, and its replacement with a political agency system, was the result of increasing imperial rivalry in the region, from the Ottomans and other European powers, and the native agents' own ineffectiveness in the face of this new threat. The latter was recognized by Meade, the PR, who recommended in 1898 that the Native Agency should be replaced by a Political Agency staffed by a European. Accordingly, the first (assistant) PA arrived in 1900 – Gaskin, who was half-Indian but nevertheless a political officer in the Political Residency in Bushire; and a full political agency established in 1905 with the European Prideaux as PA.

Onley concludes the book with various appendices – he gives what should now be considered the definitive listing of native agents in Bahrain from *ca.* 1816 to 1900, the agents of the British India Steam Navigation Company from the beginning to the 1950s, and the PRs from the beginning to 1972 (but, strangely, does not list the PAs in Bahrain from 1900/1905 to 1971). He then sets out the legal obligations and rights of the British Crown and the Ruler of Bahrain, the rights and obligations of British subjects and Bahrainis, and exclusive British and joint Anglo-Bahraini jurisdiction in Bahrain – the first time this has been done, and most useful it is.

This is an excellent book, not only because of the subject matter but also because of the research revealed in it. The India Office Records in the British Library have been exhaustively examined and the references are prolific. However, I do have a few quibbles. There are, strangely, a few missing references: on p. 55 Onley mentions the unsuccessful suggestion in the early years of the 18th century by the East India Company's Persia Agent in Bandar Abbas that the Agency there should be transferred to Bahrain – but he has no reference for this (presumably he gets it from Saldanha's *Selections from State Papers Bombay* p. xxxiii, or from Lorimer vol. 1, p. 838). On pp. 55–6 he mentions that in 1750 the suggestion was made again and that this time the proposal was accepted but never implemented (again no reference, but presumably from Lorimer, p. 838). On p. 294 he refers to Michael Rice as Secretary instead of as Chairman of the Bahrain Society in London; on p. 294 he describes Sir Harold Walker as Assistant Trucial States Agent but omits his time as ambassador in Bahrain. All minor errors, but they do detract. But my chief criticisms are reserved for the publisher, Oxford University Press. On p. 225, Onley lists the headquarters of the Foreign and Political Departments in British India and then obviously intends the next table to list the British diplomatic districts in neighbouring South Asia, but OUP manages to print South Africa instead of South Asia! On p. 248, OUP describes the second column as Rupees per month when it should obviously be Rupees per year. And in the bibliography, which is quite outstanding and one of the best bibliographies on the area that I have seen, OUP manages another misprint – at the top of p. 320 the

articles ascribed to Kumar were in fact written by Landen. Does OUP have no proofreaders?

We look forward to the next book by Onley – let us hope it is produced by a publisher more diligent and careful than OUP!

Robert L. Jarman

British Missions Around the Gulf, 1575–2005: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman

Hugh Arbuthnot, Terence Clark, Richard Muir
Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2008. 282 pp. 60 b/w illustrations. Hardback with jacket. Price: £55. ISBN 978-1-905246-58-8

This account by three respected retired ambassadors is all set to become required reading for aspiring young diplomats posted to any of the missions described therein. It is the second in a series edited by former diplomat Dr Jim Hoare, the first having dealt with the Far East, followed by this somewhat idiosyncratic choice of countries that excludes such major Gulf states as Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE. The line presumably has to be drawn somewhere, and it must also allow for the willingness of former diplomats to find time to write about the history of their missions.

This the three authors do succinctly, briefly summarizing the history of British relations with the four countries, and also, rather more interestingly because less well known, going into the history of the buildings occupied by the British, which were often built by them too, and in either case importantly showing the flag. It is not easy to pinpoint the 1575 date for the commencement of British missions but one early visitor to Persia was Antony Jenkinson, who came several times between 1560 and 1580 on behalf of the English Muscovy Company, though he can hardly be credited with establishing anything like a permanent mission. In all four countries, however, the missions were initially stimulated, like Jenkinson's, by trade although by the 19th century the security of the British in India had become at least as important, with moves in the Great Game often influencing the establishment of an embassy, a consulate, a residency.

Sometimes the outposts are more interesting than the centres. Hugh Arbuthnot and Terence Clark both describe in some detail the consulates that developed especially in Iran but also in Iraq in the latter half of the 19th century. Commercial, political and/or military considerations led to their establishment,

financial ones to their demise. Luckily their occupants were not always frantically busy and had time therefore to explore their terrain and to write about it. Their works are listed in the extensive bibliography (infuriatingly arranged, with first name preceding family name).

A few personal gripes: surely the Shah deserves a capital letter, also the Prime Minister, even the Foreign Minister, let alone the Ruler of Kuwait. Or is such decapitalization a 'foreign office' demotional foible? Persia-to-Iran is acceptable but surely British rather than English is appropriate for most of the period of this account. And place names need an authoritative editor to ensure consistency in spelling; the Royal Geographical Society is quite a good guide. But, quibbles apart, *British Missions* will be an invaluable handbook for that young diplomat setting off for Iran, Iraq, Kuwait or Oman, where he is sure to find it in all four embassy libraries.

Sarah Searight

Pilgrimage to Mecca

Lady Evelyn Cobbold

Biographical introduction by William Facey and Miranda Taylor

London: Arabian Publishing, 2008. Xvi + 336 pp. 50 b/w photographs, 1 map. Hardback. Notes, bibliography & sources, index. Price: £25.00. ISBN 978-0-9544792-8-2

Given the renewed interest in Islam and Muslims worldwide, generated by global developments and dramatic events, *Pilgrimage to Mecca* is a very welcome reprint of the first edition of 1934. It is a rather unusual travelogue in that it combines accounts and descriptions of people and places with lengthy treatises on Islam and Muslim history, aimed primarily at a Western non-Muslim audience. It is 'as much a record of an interior experience of faith as a conventional travelogue'. Written in diary form it offers vivid and insightful impressions of local cultures, rites, ceremonies, customs and their significance and meaning.

With the addition of a full biographical introduction by William Facey and Miranda Taylor (Lady Evelyn's great-great-niece), Professor Turkistani's copious, though arguably tendentious notes, and two sets of evocative and historically rare photographs, there emerges a rounded and balanced picture of the life and times of a remarkable British

Muslim woman. Given that most of Lady Evelyn's diaries and personal letters have been lost, the introduction does a brilliant job of diligently and skilfully piecing together nuggets of knowledge from disparate sources to present a rigorously researched and scholarly account – thus illuminating an important fragment of British Muslims' 'hidden history'. It plucks an Anglo-Scottish aristocratic convert to Islam out of obscurity and reveals an independent and free spirit with a sense of adventure; it systematically narrates Lady Evelyn's 'adoption of Islam', and evaluates her 'contribution to the literature of the Hajj' and her place among an illustrious line of British female travellers.

What emerges from the pages of *Pilgrimage to Mecca* is a woman of many parts possessing considerable vitality, intellectual curiosity, an array of interests and a number of notable accomplishments to her credit. An intriguing mixture: 'mother, landowner, deer-stalker, gardener, traveller, writer, socialite, Arabic speaker and Muslim; a strong-willed woman unfettered by the constraints of class and domestic life; but above all a seeker after enlightenment and meaning in life, though strictly on her own terms'.

By locating her in the circumstances of her family, in her peripatetic childhood experiences in the Muslim world, the introduction helps us to understand her spiritual leanings and emotional connection with the Arab East and her yearning 'to escape the restlessness and mad endeavour of modern life'. We acquire a sense of the complex nature of Lady Evelyn's very private journey to Islam as well as her particular understanding of and somewhat 'unorthodox' engagement with her adopted religion.

As a travel book, *Pilgrimage to Mecca* works well. Her account of the historic sites of Madina and Mecca is perceptive. She offers graphic descriptions of Arab life, of streets, markets and gardens; to the historical significance of places she brings knowledge and faith. But we gain most from her appreciation of the attitudes, behaviours and relations of the Arab men and women with whom she interacted intimately, as she progressed through her journey. The uniqueness of her gaze comes from her access to the world of both men and women. She was able to cross gender boundaries with some

ease, veil and unveil, mingle intimately with women and more formally with men and hold conversations on subjects of mutual interest. It was her long forays into presenting a case for Islam that provoked some criticism. Even as sympathetic a reader and friend as Pickthall was irritated by the 'propaganda for Islam'.

Pilgrimage to Mecca reveals an unresolved tension between Lady Evelyn's unequivocal sympathy for Islam and her critical observations regarding many of its practices in the Arab world, both of which find eloquent expression in her work. Basing herself in the rationalist-modernist perspective, she presents Islam as a tolerant ('there is no compulsion in religion'), peaceful ('the greatest Jihad is against man's own lust'), flexible, Abrahamic faith. As a 'liberated European woman' she found it extremely difficult to come to terms with Arab Muslim women's domestic seclusion ('the monotony of these women's lives behind the yashmak and the shutter appears to us almost like a living death') which she could never accept in her own life.

She was uncomfortable with the draconian measures instituted by the Ikhwan (whom she aptly likens to Cromwell's Puritans) – the destruction of the tombs of the Prophet's wives and companions, the severance of hand as punishment for theft, the forbidding of all amusements – yet, admirably, she was still able to understand their positive elements.

Out of this struggle what comes across most powerfully in *Pilgrimage to Mecca* is her very European conception of religious belief – which to her remains a largely private matter and an individual choice. Ceremonialism and ritualism are not part of her Islam. She asserts that 'Ceremonial rites during the pilgrimage ... are merely commemorative acts'. Indeed, throughout her journey she shows herself willing to ditch convention if it is inconvenient to her. But there can be no doubt about the deep sincerity of her faith. When her end came the instructions were clear that her burial must be Muslim, and the verse from the Qur'an, 'the light of the heavens and the earth', should be inscribed on her grave.

In the current atmosphere, when there is much debate and controversy regarding what it means to be a Muslim, *Pilgrimage to Mecca* offers a timely opening for new reflection. In delineating Lady Evelyn Cobbold's inimitable and quintessentially English pursuit of Islam, it challenges us to investigate alternatives to the

hegemonizing Islamic perspectives and practices.

Humayun Ansari

The Western Hadramawt: Ethnographic Field Research, 1983–91

Mikhail A. Rodionov

Halle an der Saale: Orientwissenschaftliches Zentrum der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Heft 24, 2007. x + 307 pages; 3 maps and 97 black and white illustrations. Appendices, glossaries, bibliography, indexes. Price: € 17.50. ISSN 1617-2469

This important book is one of the first comprehensive ethnographic studies on a region in Yemen, and stands comparison with the work of Robert B. Serjeant and Walter Dostal. It is the English translation of Rodionov's 1991 Habilitation, published in 1994 in Moscow. The Russian text has been slightly expanded; the bibliography has been fully updated; Arabic words and terminology are now correctly transliterated. The book was published in Halle, one of the major centres of Oriental research in Germany, and seat of the German Oriental Society, founded in 1845. Rodionov spent a year there as visiting professor, at the invitation of Hanne Schoenig.

Of the three main regions of Hadramaut (Eastern, Central and Western), this book deals with the latter, basically Wadi Dau'an, Wadi 'Amd, Wadi al-Kasr and Wadi al-'Ayn. Most of it is based on Rodionov's own research in the field. This has been integrated with all (as far as I can see) previous literature.

It opens with an overview of previous research. Rodionov stresses the reliability of the very first modern traveller in Hadramaut, Adolph von Wrede (1843). I have myself made use of a festival date faithfully reported by Wrede. Rodionov rightly highlights Count Landberg, the indefatigable linguist, and of course Serjeant, Dostal, and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Sabban.

The first chapter deals with the traditional social structure of Hadramaut, the Sayyids ('sada'), the Shaikhs ('*mashayikh*'), the tribes, etc. Most of this is well known, such as the genealogies of the *sada* going back to Ahmad b. 'Isa b. 'Ali b. Ja'far 'al-Muhajir'. Other information here is new, such as the lists of *sada* families (that read like a *Who's Who* of Yemeni and Indonesian politics, as well as a Saudi business almanac). For more detailed discussion of various aspects of traditional

Hadrami society, such as the relationship between the *sada* and *mashayikh*, readers will have to go back to Bob Serjeant.

Chapter 2 is a fine and comprehensive history of the region, from Kinda to 1967 (independence) and after. I was not aware that Sülayman the Magnificent had been mentioned in the *khutba* in al-Shihr on 24 Rabi' al-Awwal 944 (31 August 1537). While the Kinda period still awaits its historian, Rodionov's detailed description of the Qu'aiti–Kathiri rivalry in the 19th century is a little gem.

Then follow the chapters containing the substantive ethnological descriptions: irrigation techniques and terminology (pp. 79 f.); carpentry, tools and products (pp. 93 f.); blacksmiths (pp. 97 f.); jewellery-making (jewellers constituting the highest stratum among Hadrami craftsmen, pp. 98 f.); pottery; basketry; and weaving. Pp. 110 f. deal with ibex hunting. Rodionov adds a number of details to Serjeant's seminal study, but fails to grasp fully the cultural-religious significance so carefully analysed by Serjeant.

Pp. 144 f. deal with social customs: kinship, marriage, birth, circumcision, weddings, burial, etc. Rodionov mentions Rajab, Sha'ban and Ramadan as preferred names for boys. This is one of several highly interesting survivals of pre-Islamic beliefs ('Rajab is the month of God', Kister). Another is the circumcision-age among the al-Humum (at age 14 to 16, and sometimes before marriage), reported by Rodionov, but again not put into this context. The longest and possibly the most fascinating part of the book is the section on poets and their social role. Many examples (Arabic text, translations, commentaries) open up a hitherto unknown world.

The South Arabian Stellar Calendar is of course well known from the works of Serjeant, Varisco and Gingrich. For the newcomer to this topic, Rodionov's description is the shortest and most accessible. For the benefit of the reader of this review, I may be allowed to add a few words concerning this important aspect of traditional life, which still governs the Yemeni agricultural year.

The agricultural year in Arabia (as elsewhere in the Ancient Near East) was always and necessarily a solar year with (roughly) 365 days. The months were measured by the moon, intercalation filling the remaining 10 days. In the centuries before

Muhammad, the knowledge about intercalation got lost, so that the lunar months became decoupled from the 'real' year. It was then (and probably much earlier) that the 'star calendar' measuring the full 365-day year acquired its predominance for the agricultural population. It is based on the appearance of 28 stars in the morning and/or evening, thus dividing the year into 28 periods (27 of 13 days and one of 14 days). It has, incidentally, never been noticed that those 28 periods correspond to a division of the year into the number of the (visible) days of a moon month, and thus acquired its legitimacy and comprehensibility.

The book has 97 illustrations (indeed they are much more numerous than their numbering!) providing the most comprehensive visual survey imaginable, with maps, drawings, tools, jeweller's tools, weaving, pottery, beekeeping, henna patterns, musical instruments, ploughs, basketry, house plans, female dress, etc. Very comprehensive glossaries, bibliography and indices round off the work.

Based on his original notes and on his ongoing research in Hadramaut, Rodionov has since expanded several of the most interesting subjects of his book. It must therefore be read together with at least the following six articles (details in his bibliography), three of them published in our journal *Mare Erythraeum* (Munich), I (1997):

- 'Mawla Matar and other *awliya*': on social functions of religious places in Western Hadramawt'
- 'Poetry from 'Alwa, Hadramawt'
- 'Silversmiths in modern Hadramawt' (the most detailed description of tools and products ever)
- 'Ibex hunt today' (1992)
- 'Prophètes et saints' (1997)
- 'Zamil' (1998)

Rodionov's work adds much to our knowledge on almost every aspect of traditional life in Hadramaut. The magic of this last remaining wonderland of Arabia often shines through his careful, dense descriptions. Thankfully, he spares us 'gender', reflections on anthropology and otherness, on boundaries and visual intraperspectivation. It is closely observed, and mostly dry and scholarly. It does not dethrone past research, nor does it close the door to future studies, such as the recent wonderful work on Hadrami architecture by

Salma Samar Damluji. Rodionov's greatest shortcoming is the lack of connection with the spiritual/religious sphere and its links to the pre-Islamic past, explored by Serjeant and Dostal as well as myself. Still, Rodionov's aforementioned paper on Mawla Matar has remedied this to a large extent.

One last question must be asked: what is the use and value of ethnographic research today? The world portrayed by Rodionov is yesterday's world. True, it still influences thinking, feeling and attitudes to a degree, but it is not today's reality. My answer would be that anthropology, just like history in general, has a value of its own. It portrays a society that is so different from our modern globalized world – much harder, and at the same time more human. Thus Rodionov's book is also a book about ourselves. He has realised it in a scholarly, restrained, and altogether masterly fashion.

Werner Daum

A Land Transformed: The Arabian

Peninsula, Saudi Arabia and Saudi Aramco

William Facey, Paul Lunde, Michael Mackinnon and Thomas A. Pledge. Eds. Arthur P. Clark and Muhammad Tahlawi.

Dhahran: The Saudi Arabian oil Company (Saudi Aramco), 2006. xxiv + 324 pp. 324 x 245 mm. Colour and b/w photographs, maps, tables and diagrams throughout. Index and bibliography. Hardback with jacket. Price: n/a. ISBN 978-0-9601164-0-9

This beautifully produced book is the latest edition of the Saudi Aramco handbook, first published in 1950 as a *Handbook for American Employees* and revamped in 1952, by George Rentz and others, as *The Arabia of Ibn Saud*. Since then it has been through at least three incarnations and this new edition far surpasses its predecessors. It covers the land, the history, the religion and the people of Saudi Arabia in the first two-thirds, and the establishment and growth of the Saudi oil industry in its final third. Its dimensions, weight, appearance and numerous remarkable illustrations might qualify it as a coffee-table book, but it is clearly much more than that.

It takes as its starting point the signing of the first US oil concession in 1933 with Standard Oil of California (now Chevron), and the subsequent transformation Saudi life and fortunes. Chapter 1 sets the scene with an overview of the geology, landscape and

regions of the Kingdom. In true *Aramco World Magazine* style, the chapters are interspersed with panels and sub-sections on themes and topics related to the chapters. Throughout the text there are generally excellent maps, even if the occasional place mentioned in the text is not shown, and the maps are not referred to in the text where relevant.

The next five chapters cover the history of Arabia from the Palaeolithic to the present. Chapter 2 gives a useful overview of the evolution of society and state in Arabia as we are taken through the Bronze Age, to the age of the overland caravan cities. The emergence of powerful camel-raising tribes is followed by an excellent account of the development of the lucrative overland trade routes – a good summary of the archaeology of pre-Islamic Saudi Arabia. The Arabian city-states that grew up along them, such as Qaryat al-Faw and Mada'in Salih, are interestingly presented as examples of typically Arabian state formation. All this leads up to the Jahiliyyah centuries before Islam, the gradual economic decline of the region, the roles of Byzantium and Persia in the subjugation of Arabia, and the religious climate of the times, by way of introduction to the rise of Makkah as a commercial and political centre.

Chapter 3 deals with the subject central to the nature and subsequent history of Saudi Arabia, the rise of Islam. The early period is dealt with along standard lines, recording the life and revelations of the Prophet, the first struggles and the eventual successes. There is a valuable summary of the expansion of the Muslim empire and of the split between Sunni and Shi'a. There are excellent panels on the Five Pillars of Islam, the Qur'an, the Hijri calendar, the Arabic script and Islamic science, but perhaps best of all is the 3-page section which gallops through the entire history of Arabian literature from the pre-Islamic poets to modern Saudi writers.

The course of Islamic history inevitably pans away from Arabia itself, and Chapter 4 refocuses on the early Islamic centuries within the country. Chapter 5 opens with the pact at Dir'iyah, in 1744, between the reforming Shaikh Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab and the Saudi amir Muhammad bin Saud. We now enter the Saudi epoch, and the narrative takes us through the spread of Wahhabism, linked to the creation and conquests of the First Saudi State, again presented as an example of

Arabian state formation. Such continuities abound, in particular the parallels between the territory of the First Saudi State in 1808 and that of its counterpart today. Another is the Saudi entry into Makkah in 1803 and that orchestrated by Ibn Saud in 1924. The colourful story summarizes the ups and downs of Saudi fortunes, the siege and destruction of Dir'iyah in 1818, the conflict with Al Rashid of Hail and the extinction of the Second Saudi State in 1891. Finally we reach the capture of Riyadh by the young 'Abd al-'Aziz in 1902, the event officially regarded as the climactic moment of the current Saudi Kingdom's birth.

The narrative from this point is largely devoted to the successive expansions of Al Saud power, presented in terms of the recovery of the Al Saud 'patrimony', and also rather in terms redolent of British imperial history: that all of this 'unification' was for the benefit of the various regions acquired. There is even a self-congratulatory comment that the Saudis kindly refrained from taking over the whole of the Yemen. It is worth commenting that this expansionist tendency has continued. The Buraimi Dispute in the 1950s, when the Saudis, strongly supported by Aramco and George Rentz's Research Department, as well as the US State Department, laid claim to the village we now know as al-'Ain, was resisted by Shakhbut and Zaid of Abu Dhabi with British backing. More successfully, the Saudis later pushed the Abu Dhabi border northwards to give themselves control of the area now enclosing the massive Shaybah oilfield, and also took over the small stretch of Gulf coastline which had linked Abu Dhabi with Qatar. None of this is mentioned in the book.

Chapter 6 begins in 1932 with the newly unified Kingdom proclaimed, in the doldrums of the Great Depression but on the threshold of the oil era. The keynote, as so often in official publications, is the Saudi quest to reconcile cultural tradition with material modernization. The chapter brings the story right up to the present, and the narrative of the reign of King 'Abd al-'Aziz and his sons is told in a determinedly uncritical tone, as one would expect. 'Abd al-'Aziz himself is presented as one of the great figures of the 20th century, and the shortcomings of certain successors are glossed over. But we are given a picture of some of the challenges facing Saudi society today, particularly those around the economy, education and job prospects for the young.

Chapter 7 is an interesting account of the ecology and wildlife of the country, highlighting the efforts now being made in habitat and species conservation.

The final one-third of the book, by Tom Pledge, is a very detailed account of Saudi oil and its development. Labour difficulties in the Eastern Province are omitted. Instead the emphasis is doggedly on the positive, for example the very real education, training and social welfare offered to local people by Aramco, which from the start set out to be not just an oil company but also a friend and facilitator of government projects. The political aspect of this relationship is avoided. Indeed, throughout the book there is very little reference to Saudi dependence, up to the present day, on US support both politically and in defence matters. During the 1970s, as with other oil-producing countries, the Saudis eventually acquired 100 percent of Aramco (which thus became Saudi Aramco), but US influence and interest in maintaining the status quo has not been thereby diminished.

Saudi Arabia still boasts the largest oil reserves in the world and remains the most powerful member of the producers' cartel, OPEC, of which it was a founder member and instigator. There is much anxiety these days about 'peak oil' and the pending decline in world production. It may soothe some nerves (though not environmental ones) to read that, at the end of 2005, only 11 of the company's 82 oilfields and 14 gas fields were actually in production.

As an effort to provide a comprehensive account of the Muslim heartland that looks for continuities rather than disjunctions between the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, *A Land Transformed*, sanitized though it inevitably is, makes fascinating reading for anyone interested in the Middle East.

John Grundon

The Burial Mounds of Bahrain. Social Complexity in Early Dilmun

Flemming Højlund *et al.*

Jutland Archaeological Society, Moesgård 2008 (distributed by Aarhus University Press). 178 pp including illustrations. Hardback, ISBN 978-87-8841-545-7

The Tylos Period Burials in Bahrain. Volume 1, The Glass and Pottery Vessels. Søren Fredslund Andersen

Ministry of Culture & National Heritage, Bahrain, 2007 (distributed by Aarhus University Press); 262 pp including 626 b/w and colour illus. Hardback, ISBN 978-87-7934-373-3

The burial mounds of Bahrain are (or were, as they are now almost totally destroyed) one of the greatest mortuary landscapes of antiquity. Much attention has focused on the ca 172,000 tumuli associated with the early Dilmun period and broadly dating between ca 2200-1750 BC. Most of these are single burials within their own tumuli although a small number include secondary cists arranged around the central chamber and other presumably close family relations are suggested by clustering of tumuli in small groups or 'chains'. During the same period other groups of individuals were interred within honeycomb-like complexes of cists and these, like the large mound fields, were again situated off the fertile land but close to settlements (notably Saar). However, a strict exclusion policy on the interment of the dead within the agricultural belt was not exercised, either in this period or the periods which followed and our understanding of the distribution of burials is probably skewed by patterns of survival and visibility. The chance discovery of early and middle Dilmun period burials beneath modern fields (as at al-Maqsha 2) or accidentally sealed beneath later Tylos period tumuli (e.g. al-Hajjar 1-2) confirm the fact that other communities buried their dead nearby rather than transport them further afield. Furthermore, the later chronological development of mortuary practice is illustrated by the discovery of small Iron Age (late Dilmun) charnel houses at Aali and Diraz, which presumably served yet other unidentified local communities of these periods, a variety of pot and larnax burials of different periods at a number of sites across the northern part of the island (e.g. Granada Gardens, al-Hajjar 1, Jiddhafs, Jufair, al-Maqsha 2, Qala'at al-Bahrain) and the reappearance during the late third or early second century BC of large tumulus burials containing multiple burials but each within their own cist grave. This last type of burial is typical of the Tylos period of Bahrain and is the subject of the second book reviewed below.

The early Dilmun graves excavated by the Danish archaeological expedition form the basis of Flemming Højlund's volume on *The*

Burial Mounds of Bahrain. These totalled forty-nine mounds in two areas near Aali (including two of the so-called Royal Mounds), two at Saar, two at Dar Kulayb and one at Umm JiDr. One of the main problems facing researchers of this subject is that the looted contents and superficially repetitive nature of the tombs have contributed to a feeling that little can be added by detailed publication, whereas in reality only a few hundred of the estimated 8,000 or so excavated tumuli have been published at all. It may have taken more than fifty years for these excavations to be published but the present book demonstrates yet again how methodical the Danish archaeologists were and how new insights are still possible.

The book is divided into twelve chapters, four of which detail the individual tumuli excavated in each mound field. These are well illustrated and catalogue in detail the tomb architecture and their contents: a gold quadruple spiral (other gold ornaments were found by Prideaux), a copper ring, occasional carnelian beads, shell seals, two calcite bowls (presumably from eastern Iran), part of a knife, shattered sheet metal containers and their looped handles, local and Mesopotamian pottery, fragmentary ivories (recalling earlier finds made at Aali by the Bents), painted ostrich eggshell containers, asphalt-coated palm-leaf vessels, piles of *Veneridae* shells and offerings of meat and unidentified fish.

These chapters are prefaced by a synopsis and summary of pottery wares found in the tombs, a handy re-examination of the chronology of the early Dilmun period, a typology of the mounds (first attempted by Cornwall and Mrs Jefferson), a summary of previous finds from the 'Royal Mounds' at Aali, and a discussion of how the mounds may have originally appeared. The last portion of the book examines the dating evidence for the Danish-excavated mounds, outlines the development of early Dilmun society and evidence for social complexity within the mound fields.

The book closes with half a dozen appendices. The first of these details the exacting work by Steffen Laursen to map the mounds through aerial photographs taken before they began to be destroyed in the 1960s, and uses the Saar mound field as a preliminary case-study. This research is continuing as his PhD. Through a detailed zooarchaeological

analysis, Jacob Kveiborg shows that almost all of the animal-bone derives from roast joints of kid and lamb, and that the preference for goat over sheep contrasts with the settlement data. The selection of special tender meat was therefore deliberate and the act of slaughter, butchery and roasting gives a rare hint of post-mortem ceremonies carried out shortly before interment. (The human remains have been published elsewhere). Appendix 3 gives four new radiocarbon dates and a recalibration of previous dates. This is followed by a discussion by Poul Kjaerum of 13 Dilmun seals reportedly found with a mass of disarticulated human remains in a pit near the Budaiya Road (the latter is reminiscent of finds from Tell Abraq and Hili and underlines the diversity of mortuary behaviour on Bahrain). Appendix 5 identifies so-called 'omega-shaped' copper alloy fittings found in a number of tombs (including Aali, Saar and unpublished amateur digging at Dar Kulayb or Umm Jidr) as the looped handles of metal buckets, and Appendix 6 catalogues a small collection salvaged from burial mounds by John Hysore, a BAPCO employee during the 1960s. At first glance the book appears to be somewhat of a miscellaneous collection but appearances can be deceptive. It contains much of interest, whether for the tomb specialist or those interested in Dilmun, and is the latest in the impressive series of final reports to come out of Moesgård, many of which are due to the personal input of Flemming Højlund himself.

The second book is the product of the latest generation of Danish scholars working with Bahrainis and builds on the earlier research by re-examining finds from more recent excavations. *The Tylos Period Burials in Bahrain* is based on Søren Andersen's PhD thesis which was submitted in 2005 at the University of Aarhus and focuses on the abundant finds of pottery and glassware stored within the Bahrain National Museum, plus the small number of pieces in the British Museum. It is intended to be the first of two volumes, the second being on the burials themselves and by the author's colleague Mustafā Salman. It is published by the Ministry of Culture & National Heritage and closely follows the format established for the final reports of the Danish archaeological expedition to the Gulf.

Why is this book important? A small selection of Tylos period pottery, glass and other finds from Bahrain have been illustrated

or published in detail, beginning with the late E.C.L. Durrant-Caspers' two studies of finds from a large tumulus at Shakoura which was first investigated during the 1960s by Captain Higham (and which are part of the registered collections in the British Museum). Isolated finds or assemblages from other large tumuli along the Budaiya Road, near al-Maqsha and at Janussan, Karranah, Shakoura and Saar have been published or are in press (although others remain totally unpublished), remains of monumental architecture and statuary published from the nearby sites of Barbar and Janussan, and the sequence from the Qala'at al-Bahrain shown to continue until at least the early Sasanian period. However, the present volume gives a much wider range and more closely dated series of vessel types than previously, and corrects many of the rather general or simply wrong dates given in previous literature and exhibition catalogues. It salvages an important body of material and offers a reliable yardstick for comparison with the past and imminent publications of the Belgian excavations of graves at ed-Dur and a future re-analysis of pottery and glass from southern Iraq and south-west Iran.

The book is divided into five chapters, beginning with a brief survey of previous investigations of Tylos period remains. Chapters 2 and 3 are concerned with the glass and pottery vessels respectively, followed by a discussion of their chronology in Chapter 4 and a historical reconstruction in Chapter 5.

The primary data consists of a total of 320 glass vessels and 1827 complete pottery vessels from over 100 tumuli, each containing large numbers of tombs, which were mostly excavated between 1971 and 2002 in some twenty different locations. These were mostly situated in the northern part of the island (Abu Arshira, Abu Saybi, Barbar, al-Hajjar, Jannussan, Karranah, Manama Suq, Maqabah, al-Maqsha, Saar, Shakoura, Umm al-Hasam) but, like the Dilmun tumuli, also extended into the central and western regions (Aali, Buri, Isa Town, Jabal al-Dokan, Dar Kulayb, Hamad Town, Karzakan); some additional finds from tombs on the Hawar islands are also included. Vessel shapes are classified by form, arranged by period and the classes discussed individually and in detail. Key dimensions and provenances are tabulated for each. Most vessels have been drawn and the drawings and colour illustrations beautifully integrated into

the text. The layout is therefore very logical and the layout and quality of the illustrations make the book not only easy but a joy to consult (something of a rare species amongst archaeological reports).

The classification of the glass follows that established by Isings for Roman glass forms. Only 1 of the defined 49 glass types is purely Hellenistic and consists of a core-formed amphoriskos with coloured trails: only 3 examples were found and they date between 200-50 BC. Glassware starts to become more common following the use of casting and blowing and this is reflected by the present evidence. Types 2–23 date between the first century BC and second century AD and are almost all early Roman Imperial products of the Mediterranean and familiar within this region from ed-Dur. They include a small number of ‘pillar-moulded’ bowls, a large number of small plain unguentaria and amphoriskoi, and mould-blown unguentaria, date-flasks, bottles and a beaker. These are not particularly exceptional types but were very widely traded at this period. The remainder are late Parthian – early Sasanian types, and include small plain, trailed or mould-blown unguentaria, conical beakers and deep bowls (some with separated cut facets or pinched ribs). The recognition of some of the canonical Sasanian types is important as they confirm earlier reports of occupation of this period at Saar (including a purported fire-temple); another example of this type of cut glass drinking-bowl being placed in a grave has been previously published from Dhahran. The latest group (Types 44–47) consists of a very distinct class of small closed forms with opaque grey weathering layers and thick trails or applied pellets: they are again familiar from Iraq and belong to a late Sasanian tradition continuing into the Umayyad period and imply a very late date for some of the tombs at al-Hajjar and al-Maqsha. These were wrongly attributed in the initial exhibition catalogues and questioned by the reviewer twenty years ago. The re-dating of these is particularly important as this is still one of the least well-understood periods on the island and one where the impact of state Zoroastrian belief and Christian proselytisation may have led to the gradual abandonment of the old mortuary practices on the eve of the Islamic conquest. The surprising absence of highly diagnostic and rather common Late Sasanian types of mould-blown re-blown

ribbed unguentaria or faceted hemispherical bowls may reflect these factors (especially as pottery grave-goods show a marked decrease in the late Parthian-early Sasanian periods and are totally lacking from the late Sasanian period).

Mesopotamian glazed wares dominated the pottery assemblage at 76% of the total, followed by plain wares and small quantities of grey ware, red ware, sand-tempered ware (possibly from Thaj), hard-fired ware (from the UAE) and imported fine ware. There is no Roman sigillata (unlike ed-Dur) or Iranian Fine Orange Painted Ware (although sherds of this are known from the Qala‘at al-Bahrain), and lamps are surprisingly rare (they are ubiquitous in Parthian/Elymaian graves in southern Iraq and south-west Iran). The export of Mesopotamian glazed wares – including small to medium-sized bottles and amphorae which were presumably valued as much for their contents as they were for their colourful glaze – along the Persian Gulf and around the Indian Ocean is known from other published and unpublished finds from ed-Dur, Yemen and eastern Somalia but the dating of particular types has been seriously enhanced by the present study. The author is at pains to avoid interpreting possible burial customs and the reader is sometimes left wanting to know exactly what else was found in the individual graves as the small finds remain unpublished and unquantified. Nevertheless Andersen does graph the changing frequency of shapes and functions of vessel to illustrate changes through time and argues that there is a shift from assemblages dominated by serving food (Hellenistic period) to an emphasis on drinking (*ca.* 50 BC–AD 150) and finally personal adornment through the preference for unguentaria (*ca.* AD 150–450). This is a provoking chapter and one where the reader may prefer to see all of the tomb data (for instance the anthropological analyses and small finds) before making an inter-regional comparison.

The book concludes with two appendices and a comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography. The first appendix lists those tombs containing more than one vessel and the second gives compositional analyses carried out by Ulrich Schnell at the Nationalmuseet Copenhagen of 15 incomplete vessels which were sampled with the generous permission of the museum authorities in Bahrain. One of

these vessels was typologically attributed to Roman production whereas the remainder were suggested on the basis of technique, form and parallels to belong to contemporary Mesopotamian glass traditions. These conclusions were confirmed by the compositional analyses as the first was natron-based and the remainder had plant-ash compositions typical of Mesopotamian production.

Dr Søren Andersen and his colleagues should be very proud of this book. It is a serious addition to the growing literature on the archaeology of Bahrain and has a direct relevance to anyone researching eastern Roman trade, Parthian or Sasanian material culture and the history of the Gulf in these late periods. The analysis of museum collections of finds from rescue excavations conducted by others over many years is never easy and the author has succeeded where others would have failed. It is a great loss to the field and to me personally that the author has not managed to continue within archaeology.

St John Simpson

Funeral Monuments and Human Remains from Jebel al-Buhais Eds. Hans-Peter Uerpman, Margarethe Uerpman and Sabah Abboud Jasim

Vol. 1 in the Series: The Archaeology of Jebel al-Buhais, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Foreword by HH Shaikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi

Sharjah: Department of Culture and Information, Government of Sharjah, UAE, in collaboration with Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters, Universität Tübingen, Germany, and Kerns Verlag, Tübingen, 2006. 386 pp. Hardback. 183 illustrations, 53 tables, 2 appendices. Price: 69.95 Euros.. ISBN: 978-3-935751-06-3

At nearly 400 pages, replete with data and abundantly supplied with black and white and colour illustrations, this is an impressive piece of work. The quality of its content more than matches its magnitude. It is, moreover, merely the first of a series of volumes which will detail the archaeology of Jebel al-Buhais, and which record the excavations of teams from the Sharjah Directorate of Antiquities, led by Dr Sabah Abboud Jasim, and the University of Tübingen, led by Professor Hans-Peter Uerpman and Dr Margarethe Uerpman. The

second volume (*The Natural Environment of Jebel al-Buhais*) has recently been published, and must await a separate review.

The book is divided into three sections. The first covers the work of a Sharjah team at a series of tombs in the al-Buhais region, which mainly date to between the Early Bronze Age and the Iron Age. The second part is an analysis of the human remains associated with those excavations. The third gives a detailed analysis of the human remains from the Neolithic cemetery at al-Buhais 18 (henceforth BHS 18), while the two appendices give its grave catalogue and tables.

Part 1, by Dr Sabah Abboud Jasim, details discoveries made since 1994 by the Sharjah team. 29 tombs are presented, some reused. Bronze Age collective tombs of the first half of the 3rd millennium BC are the first to be discussed. As well as a couple which may be broadly described as Hafit-type (though they appear to lack entrances), these include several above-ground collective burials representing a transitional phase between Hafit and Umm an-Nar tombs. As yet, no satisfactory terminology has been developed for this disparate group of chambered cairn monuments, found elsewhere in Sharjah, at Jebel al-Emelah and Kalba. A modification of existing cultural designations (e.g. Late Hafit or Early Umm an-Nar) seems inappropriate given that those terms are specifically based on tomb types with demonstrably different architecture. The author does not enter into such a discussion. The finds are generally well presented and discussed, but the drawings of some flint objects appear to have been done by an untrained illustrator and provide no technical or functional information.

The next section of Part 1 covers above-ground and subterranean tombs of the 2nd millennium BC, built in the Wadi Suq Period but often containing material of the Iron Age and Late Bronze Age (aka Late Wadi Suq). These collective tombs underline the remarkable variation in the architecture of Wadi Suq tombs. Quite why such variation occurs remains a matter of speculation, and chronological differences may not provide the whole answer. Dr Abboud compares the architecture with examples elsewhere, though not exhaustively, and also makes artefactual comparisons for the metalwork, softstone, pottery and jewellery. The clover-leaf tomb BHS 66 is particularly spectacular, and the

author speculates that it may have been used for privileged members of society.

The publication of the Iron Age tombs adds significantly to our understanding of funerary practices of the time, which included not only the reuse of older structures, but also the building of simple subterranean cist burials capped with cairns, extensive graves of conjoined chambers, and the use of rock shelters. A fine selection of Iron Age softstone and metalwork is shown, including an iron spearhead, a remarkable lion-headed bronze bracelet, bronze bowls and unusual stone jewellery. Finally, some fine glass vessels of the Hellenistic period are presented.

This material will greatly facilitate future research and help us disentangle the complex chronology of the period, but more information on the exact provenance of the finds would have been useful, particularly with regard to those tombs with extended periods of usage. It is, for example, particularly difficult to distinguish material of the Late Bronze Age in the region, and a detailed stratigraphic exposition of the tombs and their finds would have helped. The author notes when different layers relating to the Iron Age and the Wadi Suq Period were apparent, but tends not to relate the finds to each layer in the text or on the illustration captions. While the assignation of most artefacts, especially pottery and softstone, can be attributed by the knowledgeable reader on stylistic grounds, this is not always possible with the items of jewellery. It is also apparent from this text and displays in the Sharjah Archaeology Museum that there are numerous objects from Bronze Age and Iron Age burials, including tombs covered in this volume, which are not presented. This is therefore only a partial record, and the researcher is not given the information to draw his or her own conclusions regarding the stratigraphy of the tombs and the date of the artefacts.

Part 2 of the book, by Adelina Uerpmann, Johannes Schmidt, Nicole Nicklish and Michaela Binder, deals with the human remains from some of the tombs in Part 1. Further valuable photographs and descriptions of the relevant tombs are given. Information is then presented on the skeletal remains. This data is sometimes incomplete, as analysis was in some cases restricted to examination of human remains which had been left exposed in situ in the tombs for some years after

excavation. Nearly all the burials examined in this section that were sufficiently preserved to provide age, sex and pathological data, belonged to the Iron Age. Although the sample was small (9 individuals providing dental data), the evidence of tooth attrition, ante-mortem tooth loss, dental caries and calculus implied high date consumption and relatively stressful conditions in childhood. Occupational stress markers on the bones indicated regular involvement in several different kinds of heavy physical labour. Two burials cut into older tombs, whose accompanying grave goods implied warrior status, showed signs of having been habitual riders.

Part 3 comprises Henrike Kiesewetter's PhD, and is a detailed analysis of the Neolithic skeletal remains found at BHS 18 between 1996 and 2000. The site itself was originally discovered by the team from the Sharjah Directorate of Antiquities, who started excavations in 1995 and then invited the University of Tübingen to join the project. This section is nearly 280 pages long, divided into seven chapters with a summary and appendices. It is an account of around 500 primary and secondary burials, estimated to be around half of the total individuals in the cemetery, and is a resource of incalculable value. It is the most significant contribution to the volume, and to our understanding of Arabian prehistory, specifically of Neolithic demographics and burial practices. It provides not only much-needed basic information on the burial practices of the Neolithic herders themselves, their adornments, their demographics and their health, but also data on their social structure, their movement patterns and trading relationships, their attitudes to place or *domus*, and their relations with their neighbours and the environment.

The Introduction and the first two chapters give accounts of excavations at the site, details of the funerary practices and the methodology used in the bones analysis, while the next three cover demographic aspects, interpretations of behaviour and ancestry, and palaeopathology. The final chapter draws significant conclusions regarding the social structure of the Neolithic population, its diet and way of life, and its relationship with the environment. The settlement remains of BHS 18 are not covered in detail here, but will be presented in a later volume, as will a full account of the of the finds associated with the burial. A significant

body of published information on these aspects has already been published.

Chapter 2 (The Archaeology) contextualizes the finds, briefly summarizing the state of knowledge on Neolithic cemeteries, and setting BHS 18 within its cultural and environmental framework. The account of the cemetery itself is clear and concise, a difficult task given the nature of the site, which consists of both primary and secondary burials, some multiple, and mostly dug into or disturbed by other burials, beneath and interspersed with numerous contemporary firepits and domestic deposits. The successful disentanglement of this highly complex situation is a testament to the direction of the project leaders and the skill of the excavators, not to mention the work of Kiesewetter herself. An individual account of each of the burials is not given in the main text, a sensible decision given the numbers involved, but a representative sample is presented (7 burials, comprising 16 individuals). Information on the others is summarized in Appendix A, which is 64 pages long and provides all the information that any specialist may need.

The following chapters are naturally more specialist in nature. The methodology set out in Chapter 3 is clear and comprehensive, while the following demographic, physical and pathological analyses are excellent. If a problem is to be found in the demographic analysis, it is in the uncertainty regarding the exact length of use of the cemetery, resulting from difficulties in obtaining C14 dates from the human bones. If the range were more tightly constrained, currently standing at between 300 and 1000 years, then it would have been possible to obtain a clearer idea of the size of the Neolithic group (currently thought to be 50–150). No blame should be attached to this situation.

The study presents such a high number of significant advances in our understanding that they cannot be listed in detail. The following results stand out. Compared to other Neolithic populations, life expectancy at birth was relatively high. This is despite the comparatively high incidence of death rate among young adults (aged 20–35), usually considered the strongest members of the community. Most individuals (44%) died between the ages of 20 and 35. The incidences of violent death and injury were extremely high in both sexes, which is logically

interpreted as the outcome of long-term conflict with an external group (or groups) rather than internal strife. Injuries typically consisted of blunt trauma to the head, cutting injuries, and small piercings of the front of the skull, perhaps caused respectively by maces, stone axes, and slingshots, arrows or spears. Some individuals showed parrying injuries to the arm. Males, who were twice as likely to have head injuries than females, tended to be injured to the front of the skull, whereas females were attacked from behind, as if struck down while fleeing. Women over 40, it seems, were not attacked, perhaps being viewed as of lesser significance, being past child-bearing age. Some of the head injuries proved fatal, while others healed. Of particular interest is the evidence for trepanation in three individuals, in two cases to treat head injuries, and in one perhaps to relieve symptoms of a tumour. Two of the patients survived. This denotes an impressive level of medical skill. It was also noted that fractured long-bones in the community appeared well healed, and may have been set by skilled medical practitioners.

In terms of health, the results revealed what would be expected of a mobile pastoral community, and suggested that life was easier for the herders of al-Buhais than for the later agriculturalists of the region. The people were relatively muscular but lacked the bone robusticity seen in agricultural communities whose members were subjected to heavy labour. The palaeopathology study, aided by CT scans, showed that health was good compared to other Neolithic and later populations. Both adult males and females were tall (averaging 170 and 160 cm respectively), some 10cm taller than the modern Omani population. Stature is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors, and members of pastoral and hunter-gather communities will often be healthier and taller than their farming or urban counterparts, owing to better diet and living conditions.

The sex ratio was balanced, indicating no differences in the funerary treatment of men and women, a situation reflected in the provision of jewellery. One of the most interesting outcomes of the study is the low level of sexual dimorphism in the BHS 18 population, implying that tasks were shared and living/working conditions were similar for both sexes.

Some small criticisms may be made. In the cranial study (Chapter 5), more variability is noted than seen at RH5, Oman, but this surely indicates only that the population was not highly inbred, rather than that two separate groups had merged to form the al-Buhais community. The author additionally does not discuss the possibility of intentional skull deformation, despite the observed presence of post-bregmatic flattening in some cases. It is left for the reader to assume that there was no clear evidence for this practice. Another minor criticism is that, in many of the chapters, there is too much information presented on the terminology, methodologies and backgrounds to the techniques. The level of detail is a legacy of having been adapted from a PhD thesis, and more ruthless editing would have helped. Finally, the evidence for good nutrition, low workloads and excellent health is perhaps at odds with the conclusion that the high incidence of violence resulted from competition over limited resources. One might expect more signs of stress in the bones if resources were limited, or less signs of violence if there was plenty. Meanwhile, there is ample anthropological evidence elsewhere

for high levels of violence between groups who are not obviously in competition for land or resources. There is a great deal of potential in this topic, which is not covered here.

Further information is sure to derive from the ongoing analysis of the BHS 18 burials. It appears that DNA analysis was not successful, but trace element and stable isotope analyses are in progress, so further data is soon to be expected on the diet and movements of the Neolithic population. The recent discovery of a similar cemetery nearby at Jebel Faya, apparently of the same date, promises to add further to our understanding of the Neolithic, and will provide valuable comparative data. If the results are anywhere near as valuable as the ones presented here, then we have much to look forward to.

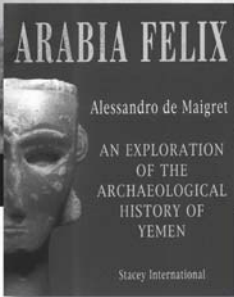
Robert Carter

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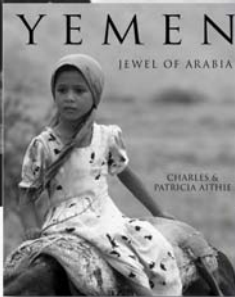


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Craze, J. (eds) 2009. *The Kingdom: Saudi Arabia and the Challenge of the 21st Century*. Hurst Publishers Ltd ISBNs 978-1-85065-902-0 hardback and 978-1-85065-897-9 paperback

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Egan, D. 2007. *Snakes of Arabia: A Field Guide to the Snakes of the Arabian Peninsula and its Shores* (Motivate Publishing) ISBN 978 1 86063 239 6

Gillespie, F. 2008. (second printing). *Discovering Qatar*. Published by Creative Writing and Photography, 1 LD Fougirard, 33580 Rimons, France. ISBN 99921-70-32-8

Hellyer, P. & Ziolkowski, M.C. (eds.) 2008. *Emirates Heritage Volume Two: Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Symposium on Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Emirates and of the Symposium on the History of the Emirates, Al Ain, 2004*. Zayed Centre for History and Heritage, PO Box 23888, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. ISBN: 978-9949-06-

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JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES

Adumatu

www.adumatu.com

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

Arabia Felix Magazine

www.arabia-felix.com

Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy

www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0905-7196

ISSN: 0905-7196. E-ISSN: 1600-0471. This journal serves as a forum for study in archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, and early history of countries in the Arabian peninsula. Editor: Daniel T. Potts.

Aram

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.

Atlat: Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology

ISSN 1319-8351. Ministry of Education, PO Box 3734, Riyadh 11481.

Banipal: Magazine of Modern Arabic Literature

<http://www.banipal.co.uk/home/index.php>

In its latest issue Banipal celebrates ten years of publishing – translating and showcasing hundreds of Arab authors who have never had their works published in English before, presenting newly emerging and well-established writers.

Bulletin of the Society for Arabian Studies

Past and present issues of our very own Bulletin can now be found online.

www.societyforarabianstudies.org/bulletin.shtml

Chroniques Yémenites

cy.revues.org

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@revues.org

Current World Archaeology

www.archaeology.co.uk

Published 6 times a year. Subscriptions to: CWA, Barley Mow Centre, 10 Barley Mow Passage, London W4 4PH. Tel: 08456 447707. Email cwa@archaeology.co.uk

Fauna of Arabia

www.libri.ch/agency/services/faunaofarabia.htm

A continuous 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, Tel. ++41 61 306 15 23. Email a.murdoch@libri.ch

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

www.brill.nl/m_catalogue_sub6_id10263.htm

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

IJMES is a quarterly journal publishing 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. Email ijmes@georgetown.edu

Journal of the British-Yemeni Society

www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/douglas06.htm

ISSN 1356-0229. Contact the Honorary Secretary, British-Yemeni Society, 2 Lisgar Terrace, London W14 8SJ. Tel: 020 7603 8895.

Journal of Near Eastern Studies

<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

Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

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 labeled as the Orient: the Ancient Near East, the World of Islam, and South, Southeast, and East Asia. Contact 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

Order through: marketing@brill.nl

Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication.

www.brill.nl/mjcc

Order through 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

www.mae.u-paris10.fr/paleo_index.htm

ISSN 0153-9345. A multidisciplinary six-monthly CNRS journal with an international audience, devoted to a number of aspects of the prehistory and protohistory of southwestern Asia, including Arabia. CNRS Editions, 15 rue Malebranche, F-75005 Paris. Further information from Genevieve Dollfus, dollfus@mae.u-paris10.fr

Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies

www.arabianseminar.org.uk/proceedings.html

ISBN 190573901X. £45.00. 299 pages; numerous figures, plans, maps, drawings and photographs.

Saudi Aramco World

www.saudiaramcoworld.com

The Arab

www.the-arab.com

Newly launched in January 2008, The Arab is an English language magazine on the most topical issues and under-reported stories in the Middle East & North Africa today. It is published six times a year, and provides a balanced understanding of the political, cultural and social landscape of a region at the top of the international news agenda, through thought-provoking, erudite, good quality journalism.

The Arab magazine has some spare back issues of the hard copy version from our first year of publication (2008). We would like to offer some complimentary copies to members of this society. If you would like to receive a couple of issues please email your postal address to info@the-arab.com or telephone 020 7100

Tribulus, Journal of the Emirates Natural History Group

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

www.wmenews.com%20

SOCIETIES, ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

Significant information is only given below for new organisations. For further details on organisations which have been described in previous editions, please see either the websites listed or the Bulletin online at :

www.societyforarabianstudies.org/bulletin.shtml

Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH)

www.cultural.org.ae

Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey

www.adias-uae.com

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

Al Ain National Museum

www.aam.gov.ae

Al-Bab

www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/douglas06.htm

Abundant data relating to the Arab world, aiming to introduce non-Arabs to the Arabs and their culture.

American Institute for Yemeni Studies

www.aiys.org

Arab-British Centre

www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk/default2.html

Arabian Wildlife

www.arabianwildlife.com

Archaeozoology of Southwest Asia and Adjacent Areas (ASWA[AA])

www.alexandriaarchive.org/icaaz/workaswa.htm

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

www.astene.org.uk

Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia

www.dspace.dial.pipex.com/arabian.birds%20

Bahrain Society

www.bhainsociety.com

Barakat Trust

www.barakat.org

British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology

www.banea.org

British Council, Middle East pages

www.britishcouncil.org/me.htm

British Institute of Persian Studies

www.bips.ac.uk

British Institute for the Study of Iraq

www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

www.dur.ac.uk/brismes

British-Iraqi Friendship Society

www.britishiraqi.co.uk

BIFS aims to inform the British public about all aspects of Iraqi life and culture, including its history, heritage, art, performing arts, language and traditions.

British-Yemeni Society

www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/douglas06.htm

Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World

www.casaw.org

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

www.cefass.com.ye/homeng.html

Council for Arab-British Understanding

www.caabu.org

Council for British Research in the Levant

www.cbri.org.uk

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient Department

www.dainst.org/abteilung.php?id=270

Friends of the Hadhramaut

www.hadhramaut.co.uk

Hadhramaut Flood Appeal

The Governorate of Hadhramaut was the worst region of Yemen affected by the storms which lashed the area on 23rd October 2008, leaving over 20,000 people without shelter and many trapped in their homes by the floods which swept through the wadis. Electricity and telephone lines were disrupted and thousands of homes were either destroyed or damaged. Schools and clinics suffered enormous damage. Large areas of farmland and large numbers of livestock were also destroyed. Wells have been contaminated. Over 37,000 beehives, a major source of income for the area, were washed away.

Friends of Hadhramaut URGENTLY NEEDS funds to help rebuild lives and property in the area: please donate generously to Friends of Hadhramaut (registered charity 1062560).

Friends of Soqatra

www.friendsofsoqatra.org

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University

www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais

Janet Rady Fine Art

Janet Rady is dedicated to representing Middle Eastern Artists in the broadest possible sense,

and now produces a monthly newsletter.

Contact janet@janetradyfineart.com or see:

www.janetradyfineart.com/html/home.asp

London Centre for the Ancient Near East

www.soas.ac.uk/academics/departments/nme/ane/lcane

London Middle East Institute

www.lmei.soas.ac.uk

MBI Al Jaber Foundation

www.mbifoundation.com

National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah

www.rakmuseum.gov.ae%20

Oman & Arabia Natural History

www.oman.org/nath00.htm

Ornithological Society of the Middle East

www.osme.org

See this page for the latest editions of OSME's journal, *Sandgrouse*

Oxford Brookes Archaeology and Heritage (OBAH)

heritage.brookes.ac.uk/Home.html

A new grouping offering specialist consultancy in Arabian archaeology, heritage and environments.

Palestine Exploration Fund

www.pef.org.uk

Royal Asiatic Society

royalasiaticsociety.org

Saudi Arabian Natural History Society

For further information contact the acting coordinator Margaret Thomson, on margthomza@yahoo.com, or the Secretary Janet Jacobsen, jan_jacobsen24@hotmail.com

Saudi-British Society

www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk

Seminar for Arabian Studies

www.arabianseminar.org.uk/aboutus.html

Society for Arabian Studies

www.societyforarabianstudies.org

UAE Interact, Culture Pages

www.uaeinteract.com/culture

OBITUARIES

Abdelmalik Eagle, who died in November 2008 at the age of 69, was a longstanding and

conscientious member of the Society for Arabian Studies. He was first confirmed an

Anglican, then became a Roman Catholic and finally converted to Islam. He was a champion of dialogue between Islam and the west and was also a major contributor to the newsletter published by Al-Khoei Foundation of London. After graduating from Cambridge, he took a job in Saudi Arabia in 1964, learned Arabic and converted to Islam, changing his name from Donald Rossley Eagle to Abdelmalik Badruddin. He took English to Saudi children but eventually returned to the UK to care for his elderly parents, despite being offered Saudi citizenship.

As a devout Shia Muslim he was deeply troubled by the suffering of the Iraqi people and summarised the tragedy unfolding there as 'from Saddam's tyranny to the gates of hell.' He was buried in the Yemeni cemetery in South Shields, the Yemeni community of which was the subject of a photographic exhibition in Newcastle last year.

Karen Dabrowska

Ralph Pinder-Wilson was a distinguished Persian scholar, Islamic archaeologist and museum curator. He was born in 1919 in Wimbledon. His family had historical connections with the East India Company, and his father, a naval officer, compiled several pilot's guides to the West African and South American coasts. He was educated at Westminster School and in 1937 he was elected Westminster Scholar at Christ Church, Oxford, where he read history and was granted a war emergency honours degree.

On the outbreak of war he was attached to the Indian Army and posted to India, where he learnt Urdu. He was later posted to Tripolitania (in what is now Libya) and Egypt, and served in Palestine, Jordan, Italy and Greece, ending the war as a captain. On demobilisation he returned to Oxford to read Oriental languages, Arabic and Persian.

On graduating in 1949 he joined the Department of Oriental Antiquities in the British Museum, first as assistant and then as deputy keeper, and remained there till 1976. India, Oxford and the British Museum were the three loves of his life.

The department in his time, and the neighbouring Department of Prints and Drawings, was full of larger-than-life characters, with a fair degree of eccentricity, as well as outstanding scholarship. Though modest and self-effacing by disposition,

Pinder-Wilson was admirably suited for the post, having as sharp an eye for objects as he had for people. Like his colleagues, the Indianist Douglas Barrett, the sinologist William Watson and Basil Gray during his long keepership, he was of a time when scholarship was defined not by narrow specialisation but by a comprehensive knowledge of art and artefacts from the whole of what, in those innocent days, was known as 'the Orient'.

One of his outstanding exploits was, with Douglas Barrett, the identification of a long-lost masterpiece of Islamic art, the Vaso Vescovali, a silver-inlaid Persian bronze of the early 13th century which had been published by the Vatican librarian, Michelangelo Lanci, in 1845 but had then disappeared. It is now one of the treasures of the British Museum and was published by Pinder-Wilson in the *British Museum Quarterly* in 1951.

His skill as an epigraphist made him a valued colleague on excavations. He spent a season (1959) on Storm Rice's excavations at Harran in southeastern Turkey, a site that in Late Antiquity had been notorious as a stronghold of the star-worshipping Sabaeans who nevertheless achieved prominence in the Baghdad Caliphate in the ninth century. In 1966 he took part in the first season of the British Institute of Persian Studies' excavations at Siraf on the Persian Gulf, a port that had flourished in the early centuries of Islam as a commercial centre rivalling medieval Basra and controlling the rich trade between the caliphate in Baghdad, the Indian sub-continent and the Far East. He dug for several seasons at Fustat (Old Cairo) and later in his career took a close interest in the British excavations of the late 1970s of the citadel of Kandahar in Afghanistan.

It was not merely his wide expertise, however, that made him so welcome as a colleague: he had an on-the-spot knowledge of much of the Middle East, he had an enviable command of the languages, he submitted to the hardships of excavation life without complaint and by his example did much to maintain morale in campaigns that frequently provoked controversy and at times may have appeared to lack direction.

In 1976 Pinder-Wilson was appointed Director of the British Institute of Afghan Studies in Kabul. It was a return to the Greater India that he had come to love during the war.

He cannot, however, have had many illusions. Afghanistan, which was already showing signs of instability, has always struck travellers as immensely odd and distinctly reminiscent of the North-West Frontier under the Raj. Movement within the country was still largely unrestricted, however, and he exploited thoroughly the opportunities his position afforded of travel to its remotest corners. Among the chief achievements of his time as director were the restoration of the Buddhist stupa at Guldara and surveys of Ghaznavid and Ghurid monuments in Afghanistan, which were particularly dear to his heart.

The situation changed radically with the Russian invasion of 1979 and the establishment of a puppet Government under Babrak Karmal. In these conditions it is doubtful that the institute could have continued to operate satisfactorily for long, but he remained as one of the few Westerners in Kabul. Matters were brought to a head by its closure early in 1982, on the ground that it was a cover for espionage, and his trial and a ten-year prison sentence on a trumped-up charge of attempting to smuggle Afghans out of the country. He shared his cell with a stool-pigeon, a taxi-driver from Panjhir, with whom he would converse to improve his already impressive command of the Afghan Persian dialect, Dari. His captors, trained in the already outmoded techniques of brain-washing, tried to make him incriminate himself by writing confessions of guilt, which because his offences were imaginary, and his imagination inevitably failed him, all displeased them. He was not conspicuously ill-treated, though once, he said, in the course of an interrogation that was going nowhere, the interrogator threw a piece of chalk at him. In later years he was quite ready to speak of his experiences but he was never heard to utter any complaint about his ordeal, proof of exemplary fortitude, in ultimately ludicrous but frightening and depressing conditions.

His family and friends campaigned energetically for his release. The effectiveness of any riposte by the British Government — which did not recognise the Karmal regime — was hampered by the lack of information, which had mostly to be gleaned from the

Soviet news agency, Tass, and the Kabul press, and by the refusal of consular access to him, while protests through official channels were simply ignored. Freedom came unexpectedly. The MP, George Galloway, who was about to go to Kabul, was asked to raise the case with the authorities. His intervention was successful, and Pinder-Wilson was released on 15 July 1982.

For the first six months of 1968 he had been a visiting Fellow of All Souls, working on a monograph on Islamic glass. After his return to England from Afghanistan he also spent a profitable year (1982-1983) as visiting Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, and the year after a semester as Regent Professor at UCLA Berkeley.

The following two decades were especially fruitful. He was much in demand as an examiner and although he did not hold a teaching position he put his great knowledge and experience at the disposition of colleagues and countless graduate students.

He continued to work on some of the more recondite aspects of the Islamic arts — ivory, jade, rock-crystal and glass — of which he had in the course of his career made a speciality, though, sadly, his important work on monuments and memorials in the Khalili Collection remains incomplete.

He was a valued consultant on Islamic art at Christie's, the auction house, and to the collection of Shaykh Nasser al-Sabah in Kuwait. But, rather than these activities and his written works, his true memorial is his unfailing kindness and generosity to so many friends and colleagues.

He was an enthusiastic chamber musician, playing both the violin and the clavichord, in an ensemble directed by the ebullient Teddy Croft-Murray, the former Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. He converted to Catholicism at the age of 18 and remained a devout Catholic for the rest of his life.

Ralph Pinder-Wilson, Persian scholar, Islamic archaeologist and museum curator, was born on 17 January 1919. He died on 6 October 2008, aged 89.

This obituary first appeared in The Times on 10 November 2008.

Society for Arabian Studies Monograph Series

Series editors: D. Kennet & St J. Simpson

The *Society for Arabian Studies Monograph Series* was launched in 2004 with the intention of encouraging the publication of peer-reviewed monographs on the archaeology, early history, ethnography, epigraphy and numismatics of the Arabian Peninsula and related matters. Creating a specific monograph series within the *British Archaeological Reports International Series* is intended to allow libraries, institutions and individuals to keep abreast of work that is specifically related to their areas of research. While research and conference volumes in the series will be peer-reviewed according to normal academic procedures, the decision was taken to allow the publication of doctoral theses, field reports, catalogues and other data-rich work without peer review where this will permit the publication of information that might not otherwise be available.

PUBLISHED MONOGRAPHS

Derek Kennet, with a contribution by Regina Krahl

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Classification, chronology and analysis of trade in the Western Indian Ocean

Archaeopress: BAR S1248 (2004). Society for Arabian Studies Monographs, No. 1, ISBN: 1-84171-608-1
£32.00

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***Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region: Proceedings of Red Sea Project I
held in the British Museum, October 2002***

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£33.00

Janet C. M. Starkey (ed.)

People of the Red Sea: Proceedings of Red Sea Project II held in the British Museum, October 2004

Archaeopress: BAR S1395 (2005). Society for Arabian Studies Monographs, No. 3. ISBN: 1-8417-18335
£30.00. iv+176 pages; 35 figures, plans, drawings and photographs; 7 maps; 7 tables; index.

Nadia Durrani

The Tihamah Coastal Plain of South-west Arabia in its Regional Context c. 6000 BC – AD 600

Archaeopress: BAR S1456 (2005). Society for Arabian Studies Monographs, No. 4. ISBN: 1-84171-8947
£32.00. 164 pages, b/w tables, figs, pls.

Janet C. M. Starkey, Paul Starkey & Tony Wilkinson (eds)

***Natural Resources and Cultural Connections of the Red Sea: Proceedings of Red Sea Project III
held in the British Museum, October 2006.***

Archaeopress; BAR S1661, Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 5. ISBN: 9781407300979. £36.00.

Michel Mouton

La Péninsule d'Oman de la fin de l'Age du Fer au début de la période sassanide

Archaeopress; BAR –S1776, (2008) Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 6. ISBN 978 1 4073 0264 5
£55.00. (250 av. – 350 ap. JC)

Eric Olijdam & Richard. H. Spoor (eds)

***Intercultural Relations between South and Southwest Asia Studies in commemoration of E.C.L. During
Caspers (1934-1996)***

BAR –S1826, (2008) Society for Arabian Studies Monographs No. 7. ISBN 9781407303123. £54.00.

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