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**Notes for contributors to the Bulletin**
The Bulletin depends on the good will of BFSA members and correspondents to provide contributions. News, items of general interest, details of completed postgraduate research, forthcoming conferences, meetings and special events are welcome. Please email: current_research@thebfsa.org

**Grants in aid of research**
The grants scheme has been reformulated and details, including deadlines are announced on the BFSA website [https://www.thebfsa.org/content/grants](https://www.thebfsa.org/content/grants)

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

**For other enquiries, contact:**
The Hon. Secretary, Mr Michael Macdonald, The British Foundation for the Study of Arabia, c/o The Department of the Middle East, The British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG or email: contact@thebfsa.org

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**On the cover:** Discovering porcelain bowls off the coast of Jeddah
*Photo: Chiara Zazzaro and Romolo Loreto*

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**WELCOME**

As this edition of the BFSA Bulletin was going to press we received the sad news that our President, Beatrice De Cardi, had passed away, one month after her 102nd birthday. An obituary for Beatrice appears in this Bulletin. She will be greatly missed by us all.

The 2016 Bulletin contains a wealth of information on Arabia related conferences and lectures, publications, resources and funding bodies, and our Last Word article from Dr St John Simpson documents the terrible destruction of the cultural heritage of Yemen.

New discoveries include our ‘cover story’ - the exciting work of the Umm Lajj 1 shipwreck team discovering wrecks off the coast of Jeddah: a write-up of their work appears on page 31. Other discoveries and developments also feature in the News and Research by country section – from a round-up of Bahraini news from Prof Tim Insoll (page 12) to the water histories of Oman (page 16). Don’t miss Mark Evan’s article on the explorer Bertram Thomas (page 15) and an exciting new find of an Aramaic-Hasaitic Funerary Inscription Mentioning the King of ‘Umān by Bruno Overlaet (page 38).

You’ll also find information on BFSA such as our expanded grants scheme, monograph series and events.

If you have anything to contribute to next year’s Bulletin please email: current_research@thebfsa.org and stay up to date with BFSA on Facebook and on Twitter @TheBFSA.

Kind thanks also to all of the many contributors to the Bulletin, and to you, the reader, for your continued support of the BFSA. The BFSA is sincerely grateful to the MBI Al Jaber Foundation for supporting the Bulletin.

Dr Sarah K. Doherty (Editor) @sherd_nerd
The BFSA organises lectures, oversees the annual Seminar for Arabian Studies, publishes its own monograph series, and supports research and publications on the region. Full details can be found at our website: http://www.thebfsa.org. The following BFSA News pages will explore this work in more detail.

BFSA LECTURES

Lectures delivered

4 June 2015
Recent work in and around Petra
by Dr Lucy Wadens
The lecture was preceded by the BFSA AGM, Institute of Archaeology, UCL.

25 July 2015
Turning the World Upside Down: the Emergence of Camel Caravans and Overland Trade in the Ancient Near East
by Prof Peter Magee
Annual MBI Lecture at the Seminar for Arabian Studies. A write-up of the lecture appears on page 6 in the report of the Seminar.

15 October 2015
Digitising British Imperialism in the Gulf: The British Library – Qatar Foundation Partnership
by Louis Allday, PhD student at the Department of History, SOAS, University of London and Gulf History and Arabic Language Specialist for the British Library – Qatar Foundation Partnership.

Mr Allday discussed the work of the British Library-Qatar Foundation partnership (BLQFP) and the bi-lingual (English/Arabic) online portal that it has created, the Qatar Digital Library (QDL). The QDL was launched in November 2014 and can be found at www.qdl.qa. Since its launch, the QDL site has been used by an average 10-12,000 users per month, primarily in the US, UK and across the Gulf region (in Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and the UAE).

The BLQFP has two main branches: the enhanced cataloguing and digitization of a number of the library’s Arabic-language scientific manuscripts from around the Islamic World and the enhanced cataloguing and digitization of India Office Record (IOR) materials related to the history of the Persian Gulf and the broader Middle East. It was the latter aspect of the project that Louis introduced in the lecture.

The IOR files contain a wealth of information regarding Britain’s colonial role in the Gulf, notably in the archives of the numerous political agencies and residencies through which Britain administered its imperial empire in the region. They also contain earlier records related to the East India Company’s involvement in the Gulf (and broader region) that began in the 17th Century and which Britain’s later colonial domination grew out of. The private papers of relevant individuals (including Gertrude Bell and Lord Curzon) are also being uploaded on to the QDL site, as well as John Gordon Lorimer’s Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, a well-known, multi-volume intelligence report that was published in secret by the British Government in 1915.

Mr Allday explained the complex series of processes involved in a digitization project of this scale (including conservation, enhanced cataloguing, translation, imaging and quality assurance) and detailed the numerous benefits that enhanced cataloguing brings to researchers whether they are online using the QDL portal or using the British Library’s internal system to physically request files.

Using the example of Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo (a prominent Bahraini merchant in the early 20th Century), Louis explained how before the work of the BLQFP, a search for Kanoo’s name on the British Library’s system would have produced zero search results but now, following enhanced catalogue records written by himself and his colleagues, 25 entries are found. In this way, the project aims to increase not only the accessibility of the files (by putting them online) but also improve the discoverability of the varied and historically significant information contained within them.

Another example Mr Allday gave was the use of propaganda posters (produced by Britain’s Ministry of Information during WW2) as paper during a paper shortage in Bahrain.

These posters, previously hidden and not mentioned in the file’s catalogue description, are now online and fully discoverable in any searches for the keywords ‘propaganda’ or ‘poster’.

Mr Allday also discussed contextual articles written by himself and other BLQFP curators for the QDL site, and provided some examples of how these articles have led to interactions with members of the public who have personal and familial connections to the political history contained in the IOR files. He and other members of the team are keen to encourage more interactions of this kind. You can follow the project on Twitter at @BLQatar.

Report by Marilyn Whaymand

17 March 2016
Architecture that “fills the eye”: building traditions in highland Yemen
by Prof Trevor Marchand, Professor of Social Anthropology at SOAS.

For nearly two decades, headline news about Yemen has dwelt on Islamic extremists and political turmoil, and more recently on a Civil War that is destroying livelihoods and heritage. By contrast, this lecture celebrated one of the great cultural achievements of that country: namely its architecture.

21 April 2016
Oman’s unique position in the archaeology of pre-Islamic Arabia
by Carl Phillips

Carl Phillips spoke on Oman’s unique position in the archaeology of pre-Islamic Arabia. A joint lecture with the Anglo-Omani Society, this was held at the Anglo-Omani Headquarters.

22nd June 2016
Postcards from Arabia
by Dr St John Simpson
Following the BFSA AGM, Institute of Archaeology, UCL.

The 2015 Seminar

Dr Sarah Doherty provides a more detailed report on the papers given at the 49th Seminar for Arabian Studies held at the BP Lecture Theatre, Clore Centre, British Museum.

The 49th Seminar for Arabian Studies (SAS) organised by the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia and supported by both the MBI Al Jaber Foundation and the British Museum.

The 49th Seminar for Arabian Studies was held from Friday 29th to Sunday 31st July 2016 at the British Museum, London. The MBI Lecture was the UK Preview of the film ‘Voice of the Ocean: Oman’s Seafaring in the Indian Ocean’ by Eric Staples, Abdulrahman al-Salimi and David Willis. For further information see http://www.thebfsa.org/content/seminar-arabian-studies.
Neolithic Archaeology

The leading session of Saturday 25th July detailed the wealth of work going on throughout the Arabian Peninsula on sites dating to the Neolithic Period, mostly related to coastal sites. Various aspects were covered including seashore cemeteries, Abu Dhabi coastal heritage initiatives and subsistence and environmental change in Oman. During the coffee break some of the poster authors were on hand to speak to delegates about their research. The poster entries for this year were many and varied. They included Irrigation Systems in Qattara Oasis, Predynastic Egyptian Cultural Influences in North-west Arabia, Dilmun and Kassite Pottery, Iron Age Metalurgy, comparisons of Umm an Nar Domestic Architecture, monumental tomb towers in Mleiha...to name but a few!

Bronze and Iron Ages in Eastern Arabia

The mid-morning session was chaired by Christian Veld and discussed various aspects of archaeological excavations and research undertaken throughout Arabia. Papers included cairns and burial mounds of Dhaikan, Oman by Williams and Gregoricka, and 2 papers on ceramics from al-Ain, Al-Zebab and Bar. A highlight of the session was a visit by H.R.H. Shaikha Obaid Al Abbar and guests who arrived especially to wish to remember his grandfather who built the mosque in the Middle East and North Africa by Robert Bewley, and for the increasing number of participants confirms the relevance and the interest of this specific field of studies. The Red Sea 7th Conference

Dr. Ali al Ghabban suggested the possibility of organising the next conference in Egypt, in Quseir (Red Sea, Egypt). The importance of alternating a European hosting location for the conference with one in the Red Sea region was also made clear. With regard to possible topics for the next conference, three main themes were suggested: the relationships between the coastal area and the hinterland; Red Sea islands from past to present; and navigation techniques.

The Red Sea 7th Conference

The Red Sea 7th Conference “The Red Sea and the Gulf: Two Maritime Alternative Routes in the Development of Global Economy, from Late Prehistory to Modern Times” took place in Naples and Procida 26-30 May 2015. In total, 67 papers and 10 posters were accepted and presented after evaluation by the International Scientific Committee of the Conference. Topics of the VII Conference ranged from archaeology to linguistics, ethnography and history and from Prehistory to modern times. The conference was supported by the BFGA.

The main sessions were as follows: the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in antiquity; Pharaonic ports on the Red Sea and the Nile, and related nautical aspects; connections between the Horn of Africa and Southern Arabia in the 1st millennium BC; the Nabateans in the Red Sea; the Red Sea and the Greek-Roman world: historical and archaeological aspects with a particular focus on Berenike, Myos Hormos, Samburum and Leuke Kome; the Red Sea in Late Antiquity: Adulis and Aquaba, the Red Sea and the Islamic world; harbors, trade and pilgrimage; island and underwater archaeology in Saudi Arabia along the Red Sea Coast; heritage management and tourist development in Saudi Arabia (Red Sea coast), maritime ethnography in the Red Sea and the Gulf; and the route to the Indian and Pacific Oceans in modern times

As with the previous Red Sea conferences, the organisers intend to proceed with the publication of the Proceedings within the two years before the next conference. Papers submitted will undergo a process of peer review.

In the concluding remarks, the importance of continuing the series of conferences of the Red Sea Project was stressed, as the increasing number of participants confirms the relevance and the interest of this specific field of studies. The importance of keeping the window open on the Gulf and the Indian Ocean and of maintaining the broader perspective which characterised the 7th Conference was also stressed for future meetings. Moreover the importance of the involvement of institutions and scholars from the Red Sea countries also emerged clearly. Representatives of two institutions expressed their interest in hosting the next Red Sea conference, these are Prof. Pierre Schneider, Maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée (Lyon, France), and Mrs. Egdal Mohamed Osman, National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (Khartoum, Sudan).

One of the core activities of the BFGA is to contribute to the accessibility of research on the Arabian Peninsula, and this includes overseeing the publication of the monograph series originally begun by the Society for Arabian Studies. The series includes research-based studies, conference proceedings, archaeological excavation or survey reports, and MA or PhD theses where the contents mark an important synthesis or a significant addition to knowledge. The monographs are edited by Dr. Derek Kellen and Dr. St John Simpson and published and distributed by Archaeopress. A selection of titles can be found on page 74 and a full list on our website: https://www.thefbsa.org/content/monographs. All titles can be ordered from Archaeopress via bar@archaeopress.com.

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

Potential contributors should contact either of the co-editors in the first instance: Dr St John Simpson; stjohn@archaeopress.com or Dr Derek Kellen; derek.kellen@durham.ac.uk.
**Antiquities in Saudi Arabia**

by Virginia Casolla, PhD Candidate in Museum Studies and Archaeology, Ecole du Louvre – Université de Lorraine/Hisant-MA

**Collecting and exhibiting Pre-Islamic and Islamic antiquities in Saudi Arabian museum:**

This doctoral research addresses the processes of collecting and exhibiting antiquities to understand the Saudi Arabian concept of the museum. Before his death in 1953, HRH King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Al Sa’ud initiated a control of excavations and put an end to nearly two centuries of foreign explorations and the amassing of collections of ethnographic and archaeological data and artefacts. In the seventies, amidst great changes in the Kingdom, HRH King Faisal bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Al Sa’ud incorporated a complete archaeological policy within the framework of the five-year development plans. This included extensive excavations, object collection, restoration programmes, university courses and the creation of archaeological site museums. Along with the first public museum of archaeology and ethnography that opened in Riyadh in 1978, these museums would be delivering content about the archaeology of the Kingdom, the settlement of Prehistoric populations, the emergence of camel nomadism, the emergence of important Pre-Islamic cities along the trade routes and their connections with Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Levant. Today, fifteen of the sixty Saudi public museums are displaying Pre-Islamic and Islamic antiquities. Some are being renovated and refurbished according to the development of a national tourism industry.

At first, the development of archaeological museums in Saudi Arabia followed a general educational route that uses the museum to communicate scientific results based on objects discovered and documented. Current research is looking at how these archaeological sites and museums are dealing with both an Islamic tradition that may overshadow the Pre-Islamic period and the rejection of any sites or objects that may lead to veneration. This includes looking at how and why Saudi archaeologists succeeded in excavating and exhibiting Pre-Islamic and Islamic artefacts within public museums for more than thirty years. A methodology based on museographical displays analysis of five permanent exhibitions (the Museum of the College of Tourism and Antiquities, King Saud University [1967], the museums of archaeology and ethnography of Riyadh [1978] and al-‘Ula [1987], the National Museum in Riyadh [1999] and the Royal Olfactory Centre, individual travelling exhibition [2010]) is intended to also understand the implicit role Pre-Islamic antiquities play in Saudi Arabian museum policy.

**Dress, Embroidery and the TRC**

by Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, Director of the Textile Research Centre, Leiden

The Textile Research Centre (TRC), Leiden, is dedicated to the academic study of pre-industrial textiles and the concept of dress and identity. The TRC Collection includes over 11,000 items of men, women, and children’s garments and accessories from around the world, as well as numerous items of pre-industrial textile technology, with a special emphasis on embroidery.

Since 1997 the TRC has been deliberately building up a special collection of dress from various parts of the Islamic world. This includes items for men, women and children, and ranges from complete outfits to individual garments, through to accessories such as jewellery, walking sticks and daggers. In particular, the TRC Collection is strong on the diverse forms of garments from Afghanistan, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. The largest collection of Iranian dress, for example, outside of Iran is housed at the TRC and includes over 80 outfits as well as numerous individual garments, etc. The TRC Collection also includes examples of men and women’s hajj garments from around the world, including items from Suriname, Morocco, Egypt, Oman, Iran, and Indonesia.

The TRC collection is also very strong on North African and Middle Eastern embroidery, especially embroidered garments. For the last ten years the TRC has been involved in researching the background, historical forms and technical diversity of hand embroidery from North Africa and the Middle East, literally from Morocco to Iraq via Yemen. The research has been carried out with the active help of numerous specialists on regional embroidery from the relevant countries, including Widad Kawar, Tahani Al-Ajaji, Laila al-Bassam, Ghaith Al-Burayai, Alison Elliott, Somru Kroczy, Shahira Mehrz, Nour Majdalany, Layla Pio, Marjanne Ransom and Caroline Stone.


Work at the TRC on embroidery from the Middle East is continuing in the form of various workshops and courses, in order to help museum curators and others identify the type of embroidery they have in their collections and to build up a better understanding of the role of embroidery in the lives of men and women over the centuries.

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**Using L-Band Synthetic Aperture Radar to detect subsurface archaeological remains**

A BFSA grant report

**Frances Wiig**

The aim of my PhD research is to ascertain whether the new ALOS-2 Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite imagery will be able to identify and facilitate mapping of water control technologies of Bronze Age Southern Arabia. This supports one of the primary goals of a larger ongoing project, the Archaeological Water Histories of Oman (ArWHO), which strives to “evaluate satellite radar imagery as a means to detect and map ancient irrigation and field systems” (Harrower 2013:1).

Remotely sensed (air and space) imagery has become an important dataset for use in the discovery of archaeological sites and features, and research into past human behaviours (Comer & Blom 2007; Comer and Harrower 2013; El-Baz and Wiseman 2009). Synthetic aperture radar data can penetrate several metres into dry, homogenous fine-grained materials such as the aeolian sands of the Sahara and Arabian Peninsula (Blom et al 2007; Paillou et al 2008). These wavelengths are then reflected (backscattered) off subsurface features (Chapman and Blom 2013) such as bedrock, coherent fluvial deposits (paleochannels) or compacted surfaces, providing a picture of previously untraceable paleolandscapes or archaeological features. In regards to my research, this evaluation of radar imagery as an appropriate tool for the ArWHO project utilises the ability of ALOS-2 L-Band radar waves to penetrate the ground surface in order to detect falaj (channelled irrigation systems), or banked fields. Modern aflaj (plural of falaj) and banked fields can be seen at many places within the project area, but it is difficult to interpret the relationship...
As the new ALOS-2 imagery has only recently become available, during the field season I worked with archived ALOS imagery (the predecessor satellite) that I was able to obtain with the BFSA grant. Based on my preliminary analysis, it appears that this archived imagery lacks adequate resolution required to identify our targeted subsurface archaeological remains. For example, the falaj are usually less than 1m wide and the pixel size of the imagery is ~10m.

However, with a better understanding of the landscape within the study area, I will now be able to analyse the ALOS-2 imagery concentrating on the areas of high potential for subsurface archaeology (as recorded during this field season). Then, in the 2015/2016 field season, I plan to test the areas indicated by the results of my analysis, either by testpitting or using ground penetrating radar, in order to confirm or disprove my results.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia, the Near Eastern Archaeological Foundation (NEAF) at the University of Sydney, Prof. Michael Harrower (PI of the ArWHO project), Johns Hopkins University, the NASA ROSES grant funding for ArWHO, and the Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Culture and Heritage. The Grant-in-Aid that I received from BFSA allowed me to purchase the archived ALOS imagery and participate in the 2015 ArWHO field season which supported my initial research and has provided a strong foundation for the next years continuing work.

References


The BFSA Bulletin (British Foundation for the Study of Arabia) BFSA Trustees Number 21, 2016

Dr Derek Kennet Co-Editor of Monograph Series
I am currently taking two years out from my job in the Department of Archaeology, Durham University to teach in the Archaeology Department at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. I have been working on the archaeology of Islamic and pre-Islamic Eastern Arabia and the western Indian Ocean for almost 25 years. I am presently running field projects at Kadhimah in Kuwait (in cooperation with the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters), at Qarn al-Harf in Ras al-Khaimah (in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities and Museums, Government of Ras al-Khaimah) and on the Batinah in Oman (in collaboration with Dr Nasser al-Jabari of Sultan Qaboos University, the Anglo-Omani Society and the Oman Ministry of Heritage and Culture). At SQU I am teaching elective courses on the archaeology of Oman and Eastern Arabia. Meanwhile at Durham I continue to supervise six research students who are working on the archaeology of the region.

Dr St John Simpson Co-Editor of Monograph Series
Dr Simpson is a senior curator in the British Museum where his responsibilities include the collections from ancient Arabia in the Department of the Middle East. His main research area is Sasanian period material culture but other interests include early Middle Eastern tobacco pipes and the development of postcards in the Middle East. During 2015 he joined Dr Kennet’s study season in Kuwait where he oversaw the analysis of the small finds from a series of circa eighth century early medieval sites around Kuwait Bay. As a Trustee he co-edits the BFSA archaeological monograph series and is one of the organisers of the Seminar of Arabian Studies which has been held at the British Museum each year since 2002.

Dr Noel Brebony, CMG
I focus on Yemen, particularly the lands of the south – the former People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen. I was chairman of the British-Yemeni Society 2010-2015. My book on the PDY, Yemen Divided was published in 2011 (pb 2013). I co-edited Rebuilding Yemen (published in English and Arabic 2015) and edited Migration from Yemen to be published in 2016.
Dr Robert Carter

I am Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at UCL Qatar, where I run the MA in Archaeology of the Arab and Islamic World. I have broad interests in the archaeology and deep history of the region, from the Palaeolithic to the 20th century AD, particularly Neolithic seafaring, pearl-fishing and the foundation of the Gulf towns.

I currently have two research projects: The Origins of Doha Project, funded by the Qatar National Research Fund, which combines archaeology, oral history and historical research to examine the life of the city from its foundation through to the coming of oil; and the Shahrizor Prehistory Project, funded by UCL Qatar and the Institute of Archaeology UCL, which investigates prehistoric interactions in northern Iraq during the 6th and 5th millennia BC.

Mr Michael Crawford

I am an independent consultant on Middle East political risk, and I write on Saudi and Gulf history. After a 28-year career serving the British government, including in Egypt, Yemen and Saudi Arabia, I was a Visiting Fellow at Princeton in 2009 and a Senior Consulting Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2010-11. My introductory book on Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab came out in 2014.

Prof Clive Holes FBA

During the 1970s and early 80s, I was an Overseas Career Officer of the British Council, serving in Bahrain, Kuwait, Algeria, Iraq and Thailand. I was also involved in planning and setting up Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman, in the mid-80s and was the Director of its Language Centre 1985-7 whilst on leave from Salford University, where I was Lecturer in Arabic and Applied Linguistics 1983-7. In 1987 I returned to the UK to take up a Lectureship in Arabic at Cambridge and a Tutorial Fellowship at Trinity Hall, being promoted to Reader in Arabic in 1996. From late 2011 until early 2014, Aisa was a Research Fellow with the London Middle East Institute at SOAS and completed a monograph on embroidery and embellishment in Saudi women’s dress. During this time, she spent three months conducting fieldwork and travelling around Saudi Arabia. She is currently a project curator at the British Museum working on content development of the Zayed National Museum Project.

Mrs Ionis Thompson is stepping down from the BFSA Trustees this year after running the BFSA’s lecture programme and assisting the Bulletin’s Editor for many years.

Mr William Facey, writer, publisher and BFSA Bulletin book reviews collator is also retiring from Trustees this year. We thank Ionis and Will for many years of sterling service for the BFSA.

Dr Robert Wilson

I retired from the Foreign Office in 2014, after a career of 32 years as analyst and diplomat concentrating on the Arab World, with postings in the UAE, Bahrain and Yemen (in addition to Iraq and Libya). I first lived in Yemen, teaching English in the highland town of Hajjah (Yemen Arab Republic), from 1972 to 1973.

Ms Aisa Martinez

New Trustee Aisa began her journey in dress studies and adornment in the Arabian Peninsula in 2007 as a Fulbright research fellowship in Muscat, Oman. She did voluntary work at the Centre for Omani men’s national dress and costume. Consequently, she helped organise the British Museum’s 2011 display on Omani silver jewellery and costume. From late 2011 until early 2014, Aisa was a Research Fellow with the London Middle East Institute at SOAS and completed a monograph on embroidery and embellishment in Saudi women’s dress. During this time, she spent three months conducting fieldwork and travelling around Saudi Arabia. She is currently a project curator at the British Museum working on content development of the Zayed National Museum Project.

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News and Research

Bahrain

Prof Timothy Insoll updates us on the current research projects in Bahrain.

Islamic Funerary Inscriptions

The fieldwork for the “Bahrain Islamic Funerary Inscriptions Project”, reported on in the last issue of the Bulletin, has now been completed. In total, 143 gravestones were recorded in 23 cemeteries and shrines (132 gravestones), and 2 museums (11 gravestones). Of these, 30 were exposed through archaeological excavation and 103 have inscriptions. Thus the corpus of gravestones has expanded substantially in comparison to those previously published, notably by Kalus (1990, 1995) who recorded 26 examples in 6 locations, some of which have now disappeared. Each inscription has been added to a database and the inscriptions have been transcribed into modern Arabic by Sh. Bashar and Mr Ali-Abbas of the Jaffaria Authority. Dr Almahari of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) is currently translating the inscriptions into English, and a sample of transcriptions and translations will be checked against the inscriptions by Dr Ahmad al-Jallad (University of Leiden) and Prof. Frédéric Imbert (Aix-Marseille University). The results are being published as part of Brill’s Handbook of Oriental Studies series (Insoll, Almahari, and MacLean in preparation).

Excavations in Bilad al-Qadim

The excavations in Bilad al-Qadim undertaken as a correlate of the construction of a new visitor centre at the Al-Khamis Mosque site are also finished. As part of the preparatory work for the visitor centre, renewed excavations were completed to identify and display archaeological features associated with the Mosque site by a Bahraini team directed by Dr Muhammad Al-Maajar with Prof Timothy Insoll as advisor. Three features of particular interest were exposed; an artificially dug well of 3.2 m depth directly north of the mosque and accessed by three walled staircases (Figure 1); part of a structure formed of three small, connected rooms; and a shrine formed of an approximately square room with internal dimensions of c. 4 m x 3.9 m. Attached to this was a rectangular arcade with maximum dimensions of 10.35 m by 3.65 m. The well is likely contemporary with the mosque, the three-room building is undated but is similar to structures dated previously to between the 8th/early 9th and 14th centuries AD, and the date of the shrine is suggested by an inscribed gravestone inside the main room dated to 1105 AH or AD 1694 (Figure 2).

Figure 1: The well excavated north of the Al-Khamis Mosque (photo. T. Insoll)

Instead it was found to be a natural dune formation used for burial purposes, and no evidence for pre-Islamic use was found. Abu Anbra being a cemetery, the excavations were under the supervision of the Jaffaria Waqf Authority.

Historically, Ain Abu Zaydan is significant as the location of a spring that seems to have been one of the sources of water used during the Early (c.8th-10th centuries) and Middle Islamic (c.11th-14th centuries) periods in Bilad al-Qadim (e.g. Al-Doy 1993: 159). The presence of substantial pieces of seemingly pre-Islamic masonry in the well structure also suggested earlier usage of the spring (Insoll 2005). Two 2 x 2 m units were excavated west of the spring to obtain materials for dating. A radiocarbon date from the base of the second unit of the early to mid-8th BC provided the first indication of a possible pre-Islamic presence in Bilad al-Qadim. However no pre-Islamic ceramics or other artefacts were found. A second radiocarbon date of the late 9th to early 10th centuries AD from further up the sequence in the same unit correlated with the lower end of the ceramic assemblage.

Figure 2: The inscribed gravestone dated to 1105 AH or AD 1694 from the shrine at the Al-Khanmus Mosque (4th (photo. T. Insoll)

Figure 3: Excavations on the Abu Anbra mound (photo. T. Insoll)

Figure 4: Excavations in the same unit correlated with the lower end of the ceramic assemblage.
Abandoned is unclear, nor is it certain that all were occupied year-round, and the final interpretation will have to draw on the full range of historical, artefactual and environmental sources. The small finds are a modest part of this data set but important as they supplement excavated assemblages from Huayla and Kush (Ras al-Khaimah) and offer insights into life in eastern Arabia shortly after the Islamic Conquest. There are few finds, but high-value finds and exceptions include a small gold nose-ring, a garnet earing drop and glass beads. The latter have not yet been chemically analysed but some resemble traditional Mesopotamian wound or folded beads with weathered surfaces, suggesting that they may be made from plant ash, and others are brightly coloured monochrome micro-beads made by drawing and snapping long canes, and these must be of South or South-East Asian origin. Unsurprisingly, there is little metal as that often corrodes badly in these local conditions but the finds include knife/dag blades, iron rivets and bands for repairing broken chicken cooking bowls, nails, copper sheet and lead fishings weights. Although there are no fish bones there was a large amount of shell, so there was clearly exploitation of the nearby shallow marine environment. Rotary querns were presumably used to grind grain but a range of other heavy grinding stones may have been used in processing shellfish and other foodstuffs and used unmodified locally sourced materials. Perforated sherds testify to household spinning, glass kohl applicators give hints of personal appearance (although it could have been by either gender), and a double perforated sherd resembles a type of child’s toy popularly known in North America as a buzz and which is spun by means of a pair of stretched strings passing through the holes. Other chipped sherds may have been used in grinding but another possibility is that they were used in fortune telling as Dickson (1949: 52–21) describes how local Solabah women used to tell fortunes by scattering a combination of cowrie shells with rubbed backs, zababit shells, date-stones and potsherds onto the ground and making prophecies depending on how they fell. In short, there are snippets of detail suggesting families living off the land, herding and fishing, cooking and eating, spinning and playing.

A small number of other surface finds testify to Bedouin moving across this landscape in the later centuries – coins, polychrome glass bangles, clay tobacco pipes, even first World War military – and their low density resembles the highly transient debris left by more recent campers. There is a contrast with the earlier finds assemblage which makes it hard to believe that the earlier settlers were really Bedouin in the modern sense. Instead, we should probably look again at the proximity of this part of Kuwait with the Basra region, and it is probably in the famous Basra suqs that the glazed pottery, perfume and cosmetic bottles, beads and items of decoration used unmodified locally sourced materials. Perforated sherds may have been used in gaming but another possibility is that they were used in fortune telling as Dickson (1949: 52–21) describes how local Solabah women used to tell fortunes by scattering a combination of cowrie shells with rubbed backs, zababit shells, date-stones and potsherds onto the ground and making prophecies depending on how they fell. In short, there are snippets of detail suggesting families living off the land, herding and fishing, cooking and eating, spinning and playing.

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A great variety of archaeological and cultural work is underway across the Sultanate of Oman.

Wadi Al Jizzi Archaeological Project: The 2015 and 2016 Campaigns by Dr Brita During

The Wadi Al Jizzi Archaeological Project is a collaboration between Leiden University and the Ministry of Heritage and Culture of Oman. It is a systematic multi-period landscape archaeological project aiming to investigate material assemblages, settlement remains, funerary structures, farming infrastructure and metallurgical evidence from the Palaeolithic up to the Late Islamic period. At the core of the project is the question of how past societies engaged with their environment and why the evidence for some periods is much greater than for others.

In the 2015 and 2016 campaigns we have worked mainly in the Wadi Suq / Wadi Al Jizzi and the Wadi Fizh corridors connecting the Hajar Mountains to the coast. Interestingly, the archaeology of these two corridors differs markedly.

In the Wadi Al Jizzi we have large numbers of funerary monuments, dating to the Hafit, Umm an Nar, Wadi Suq, and the middle of the first millennium BCE. We also have a significant amount of Late Islamic settlement, field systems, and irrigation systems. By contrast, in the Wadi Fizh, there are far fewer funerary monuments, but a significant degree of Iron Age and Early Bronze Age settlement evidence, and a LBIA cemetery.

The project will further map such patterning of the archaeological remains in the Sohar hinterlands in future campaigns.

Dr Brita S. Døring is Associate Professor in Near Eastern Archaeology at the University of Leiden. He is director of Landscape Archaeology in the Wadi Al Jizzi, near the city of Sohar in Oman.

The Towers of Doha, and the first crossing of the Rub Al Khali by Mark Evans

“We were arriving. The Bedouin moved forward at a sharp pace, chanting the water chants. Our thirsty camels pricked up their ears with eager knowingness. The last sandhill was left behind. After the next undulation, we saw in the dip of the stony plain before us; Na‘ajia, where we had planned a final watering, and beyond it the towers of Doha silhouetted against the waters of the gulf. Half an hour later we entered the walls of the fort. The Rub Al Khali had been crossed.”

Bertram Thomas, Arabia Felix, 1932

Eighty five years ago, in February 1931, British Explorer Bertram Thomas and his Bedouin companions staggered into Doha. Sixty days before they had left the Sultan of Oman’s palace in Salalah, and had set off north in the hope of becoming the first people to cross the biggest sand desert on earth. For sixty days, no-one had known where they were, and they had no way of communicating with anyone. They would live, or die, on their own wits, and with the support of the local tribespeople.

After weeks living off dates, dried camel meat and whatever they could catch in the sands, the hospitality offered by the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, was a welcome and much needed relief. But still, in 1931, it was impossible for Thomas to share his great news from Doha. A show trip to Bahrain enabled him to reach a telegraph office, and to send out telegrams announcing that the Rub Al Khali had finally been crossed. The news spread like wildfire; the western world, thanks to the exploits of T. E. Lawrence of Arabia, was obsessed with the romance of Arabia. In 1932, the prestigious Explorers Club in New York described...
On January 27th 2016, some eighty five years later, a team of three people – two Omanis, Amur Al Wahaibi and Mohammed Al Zadjali, and Brit Mark Evans recreated this historic journey. There were several reasons for undertaking this new journey, long standing friendship between Oman, UK, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, to celebrate the 45th year of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Al Said as the Sultan of Oman. In cooperation with the University of East Anglia. An edited version on DVD is available to purchase from the Anglo Omani Society.

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The BFSA Bulletin (British Foundation for the Study of Arabia) described as ‘The Northward Dash’ to Doha, reaching the sands of Sanam enabled them to start what Thomas proudly carried visited; the team were even tracked down by the grandson days later they crossed the border into Saudi Arabia, and supported by three camels and two 4x4 support vehicles. The young people in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman, that little is the 45th year of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Al Said as the Sultan of Oman. In cooperation with the University of East Anglia. An edited version on DVD is available to purchase from the Anglo Omani Society.

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Khor Kharfot, Dhofar Archaeological Survey

A survey of the extensive human traces at the site was completed in 2014 by the Texas-based Khor Kharfot Foundation (www.khor-kharfot-foundation.com), which has had collaboration with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and assistance from Dhofar University. Fieldwork will commence in 2016 in collaboration with Oman’s Ministry of Heritage and Culture, as Warren Aston reports.

Khor Kharfot is the coastal mouth of Wadi Sayq which provides the principal drainage for the Qamar ranges in the extreme west of Dhofar, abutting the border with Yemen. The inlet, now closed to the ocean by a sandbar as are all Dhofar’s inlets, lies roughly equidistant between the fishing towns of Rakhyut and Dhalalqut. Accessible only through the 38 km long wadi from the interior or by sea, Kharfot has remained isolated and little-known until recent decades. Although presently uninhabited, the coastal plateaus abound in a variety of structures indicating periodic settlement. The human traces do not extend more than about 1 km inland.

Kharfot is visible at the coast at the extreme bottom of the view (Figure 1) Paolo Costa, former archaeological advisor to the government of Oman, made an initial assessment of the site in 1993, describing its physical setting and anchorage potential as comparable to Khor Rezi, albeit on a smaller scale. He presented a paper at the Arabian Seminar of that year, suggesting the “high possibility” that the site may once have served as a tiny port with a well-protected harbour, perhaps in connection with the incense trade. The paper was published in PSAS 24 in 1994.

Based on surface structures, Costa proposed 4 general habitation phases ranging from the Neolithic to the late Islamic, as illustrated in his map (Figure 2):

Due to the annual monsoon run-off from the Qamar ranges, Kharfot is uniquely fertile, containing remnants of the ancient forests once found in Arabia, a variety of wild fruits, a large lagoon and several permanent springs - all factors that would make it attractive for re-provisioning vessels. It is also home to some of Oman’s last surviving Arabian Leopards. This abundance of flora and fauna has attracted several research efforts in recent years, including 3 seasons work by British Exploring Society (BES) teams and a recent team largely consisting of SQU researchers.

However, systematic archaeology at Khor Kharfot did not resume until 2014. In April 2014, Carl Phillips and Michele Degli Esposti completed a more intensive analysis of the site, refining Costa’s findings and planning a selection of structures. Their findings will inform future work. A cave burial and an inscription in an unknown script also await further investigation. With its unique geography and resources, Kharfot offers multiple scientific fields a glimpse into Dhofar’s past in a setting that remains pristine.

While Nigel Groom’s suggestion that it could be the long-sought Moscha of the Periplus now seems most unlikely, any site that proves contemporary with Moscha and Cana might qualify as part of the “the spaces in between” the acknowledged ports and thus of immense interest.

Visitors to Kharfot soon recognize the challenges threatening the place. Water diversion from the wadi to nearby mountain villages is visibly affecting the vegetation, and local plans to construct a road along the coast would impact the integrity of the site. Additionally, the natural environment is highly dynamic, particularly during the 3 months of monsoon rain and wind. One result is erosion by the sea, leaving several ancient structures on the edge of the high cliffs on the western plateau (Figures 3 & 4). Some of the most intriguing structures are located on this plateau and it is here that forthcoming excavations will initially focus. Researchers plan to use a variety of techniques to date occupation phases more precisely. While the ongoing effort at the site has not been formally labelled as “rescue archaeology,” in many ways it is indeed a race against time to learn more about the past of this potentially significant place.

Warren Aston is an independent researcher residing in Brisbane, Australia. astonwarren@hotmail.com
QATAR

The Curious Case of the Palaeolithic of Qatar

The Arabian Peninsula is generally considered to have been a nexus of Palaeolithic activity with the exception of Qatar. However, this is now changing as Julie E. Scott-Jackson, and William B. Scott-Jackson, report.

The State of Qatar has been thought to lack any evidence of Palaeolithic occupation, with the earliest finds categorised as Neolithic. Many researchers, following the Danish Archaeological Expedition to Qatar during the 1950s-60s were identified as Palaeolithic by Holger Kapel. From the 1970s onwards, following a series of misinterpretations by others, this definition was generally dismissed by subsequent researchers, resulting in the curtailment of Palaeolithic research in Qatar and the region for over 30 years.

New research presented by the authors in January at the conference ‘Unravelling the Palaeolithic’ at Southampton University reports on the extensive fieldwork carried out by the PADMAC Unit, which has resulted, to date, in the identification of 35 Palaeolithic surface-scatters/sites, including five early Lower Palaeolithic knapping sites, and intriguing evidence of the Middle/Upper Palaeolithic transition in Arabia. Currently, no Acheulian or Middle Palaeolithic evidence has been identified. The Unit’s technological and typological analyses of the Qatar lithic assemblages, which affirm Kapel’s original interpretations, but new techniques and experimental methodologies developed and used by the PADMAC Unit have discovered these Palaeolithic surface-scatters/sites and explored their spatial, geological and geomorphological contexts. Surface-scatters/sites represent by far the greatest body of evidence for Palaeolithic occupation of Arabia and provide valuable insights into the landscape preferences of these early hominins, supplementing the environmental and dating evidence revealed by the few excavated sites investigated to date.

Julie E. Scott-Jackson, University of Oxford, Director of the PADMAC Unit. julie.scott-jackson@arch.ox.ac.uk

Qatar Museums and Ministry of Culture News

This opening report on the various archaeological and cultural activities in Qatar is the work of various authors: Dr Ferhan Sakal, Dr.Alice Bianchi, Maja Arslanagic Knezevic, Adel Al Moslemani, Essam Abbas Ismail, Dr Kristina Pfeiffer, Dr Philipp Drechsler, and Dr. Jose C. Carvajal Lopez.

The Qatar-Turkey Year of Culture was marked by a number of events that aimed at exploring the contemporary and traditional cultures of Turkey and in Qatar, including world class exhibitions, such as the exhibition “Pearls –Jewels from the Sea”, educational programmes and cultural exchanges across both countries.

The photography exhibition, “Artistic Journeys: New Angles, New Perspectives”, at the Qatar Photographic Society (Katara Cultural Village, Doha) offered a visual interpretation of the Qatar-Turkey Year of Culture: Four photographers from two different Muslim nations documented their journeys as moments captured in time, engaging in an inspiring exchange of artistic discovery and cultural dialogue.

Particularly noteworthy was the joint initiative of Qatar Museums and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey in partnership with UCL Qatar in organizing a six-part Archaeology and Heritage Conservation Lecture Series between September and December 2015. The lecturers, as explained by Dr Ferhan Sakal, aimed at introducing the works of major Turkish experts in the field of archaeology and heritage preservation to a Qatari audience.

The first lecture, “Phrygian Civilization and the Ancient Site of Gordium” by Dr Halil Demirdelen, the Vice Director of Museum of Anatolian Civilisations in Ankara, enlightened the audience about Phrygian civilisation in general and presented a selection of fascinating finds discovered at Gordium. Prof Emreçius Dr Mehmet Özdoğan of Istanbul University gave the second lecture entitled “Neolithic Cultures of Southeastern Turkey 10500 - 5500 BC: Redefining the Neolithic Period in View of Recent Excavations” and presented results from over 25 key Neolithic sites in Turkey. Prof Dr Vasif Sahoglu, the Director of the Research Center for Maritime Archaeology of Istanbul University, talked about the “Current State of Underwater Archaeological Research in Turkey” and discussed key maritime research and excavation projects across Turkey including excavations of submerged harbor facilities. Later on, Ms Zeynep Kızılan, Director of Istanbul Archaeological Museums, presented to the audience “Preventive and Rescue Archaeology Strategies in Turkey in the Light of Marmaray Project”, a fascinating site which was discovered during construction work on the metro. Her presentation about the approach to rescue archaeology during major infrastructure projects was particularly appreciated since the topic has a particular relevance in Qatar as work proceeds on Doha’s new rail project. Prof Dr Neslihan Dostoglu of Istanbul Kültepe University presented “Burusa and Cumalikizik: UNESCO World Heritage Site: Challenges of Preserving Architectural Heritage”; she illustrated the history of Bursa and the protection and management of this unique historical site, which was inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014 in Doha. The last lecture of the series was presented by Prof Dr Edhem Eldem of Bogazici University, who explored in “An Ottoman Archaeologist: Osman Hamdi Bey (1842-1910)” the life and work of this pioneer archaeologist, administrator and intellectual highlighting his legacy within Turkish archaeology today.

Exhibitions

A series of exhibitions, among others, characterized cultural offers in Qatar during the year 2015, as summarized by Dr Alice Bianchi.

The Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) presented two temporary exhibitions. “Marvellous Creatures: Animal Fables in Islamic Art” focused on real and mythical animals that appear in legends, tales and fables of the Islamic world. Attributed to the natural elements of earth, air, fire, and water, these marvelous creatures introduced timeless stories such as the well-known and beloved classics Shahnameh, Kalila wa Dimna and Arabian Nights.

“The Hunt: Princely Pursuits in Islamic Lands” exhibited objects dating from the 11th to the 20th centuries from the collections of Qatar and Turkish museums. The exhibition explored the power and bravery of royal hunters and celebrated the sport of hunting, as well as the related activities of polo, feasting and fighting, all of which feature richly in Islamic art.


The QM Gallery in Katara exhibited “Ismael Azzam: For Them”, charcoal portraits of 15 influential Arab painters and sculptors created especially for the exhibition, presenting a personal interpretation of the Arab world’s past great artists. “Here There” exhibited at QM Gallery Al Riwaq Art Space explored the environmental, cultural and social experience of life in Qatar and Brazil presented through the eyes of each country’s most promising and talented young artists.

The vibrant body of work from 42 Qatar and Brazilian artists ranged from pieces produced in traditional media such as paintings, drawings and printmaking to digital art, installations and interactive works.

A new hub for creative exchange, the Fire Station, opened in 2015 at the former Civil Defence building which is situated at the heart of Doha’s flourishing art community. Its Fire Station Artist in Residence programme serves as a forum for creativity and as a springboard for helping people take their passion to the next level. It offers nine-month programmes for artists who are resident in Qatar. During this time, they move into one of the studios, collaborate with fellow artists and develop their own technique. They meet curators, can access art exhibitions and are encouraged to join lectures. The Garage Gallery at the Fire Station promoted the “Exhibition 555” that paid homage to the very first artists in residency in Qatar 15 years ago. It included installations, photographs and videos of what Doha’s inaugural art residencies were like, introducing visitors to a part of Qatar’s recent history that had never been shared so extensively before.

On the sidelines of the 25th Men’s Handball Championship, the Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum featured “Dribbling 4 Success” at the Lusail Multipurpose Hall. The exhibition showed jerseys and videos from seven former IHF World Handball Players of the Year and explored the international and local history of handball, including memorabilia from Qatar's print Salem Hassan Buหลก from the 1970s, and from Boris Vrle Vrhovac, physical therapist of the Qatar national handball team.

Various activities of the QM Division of Cultural Heritage

During 2015 the efforts on rescue excavations and surveys of archaeological sites and heritage buildings continued. These activities were often dictated by new development projects across the whole country; research-oriented investigations took place as well.

Additionally, as explained by Dr Alice Bianchi, the Division dedicated efforts to the development of new governance guidelines for cooperative projects with Foreign Missions undertaking research in Qatar. Moreover, already existing regulations and internal operational procedures and guidelines were strengthened in order to standardize recording and documentation methodologies, maximize the work cooperation and efficacy, and harmonize already existing information.

Attention focused particularly on the management of artefacts and objects and related operational guidelines: from the first handling in situ, through the various documentation steps, further to research, conservation and storage. A separate module within the Qatar Cultural
pottery shape typology tool for Qatar was long overdue. The typology currently under development has its starting point in Prof Robert Carter’s (UCL Qatar) ware and shape typology based on the ceramics collection at the National Museum of Qatar. The ware typology is going to be refined by means of petrographic analysis in cooperation with UCL Qatar during the spring of 2016. The petrographic analysis aims to build a qualitative and quantitative data reference collection of the wares present in Qatar. At the same time, it will help grouping or singling out some problematic wares (e.g. so-called Pale Gritty ware, Red Gritty Ware, etc.). The shape typology will primarily include the types of the ODRE assemblage. Nonetheless, its architecture will allow for inclusion of types coming from other collections across the country.

Cultural Tourism organizes Cultural Indulgence workshop for tourism partners

Cultural Tourism and its potential for Qatar is one of the most important aspects of the country’s touristic development. This field holds great potential for Qatar with its mission to become a cultural hub and a centre for cultural exchange in the Gulf region. Over the past decades, globalization has put a strong impact on indigenous cultures and their preservation and has often caused the neglect and even disappearance of many old traditions across the world. At the same time, this has led to an increased effort to preserve original cultures by highlighting their national legacy and their significance for contemporary culture. Without activities related to cultural tourism, ancestral traditions can easily disappear and future generations will not have the possibility to experience them.

In 2015 the main task of Qatar Museum’s Cultural Tourism Unit (CTU) within the Division of Cultural Heritage, as reported by Maja Arslanagic Knezevic, was to develop a concept of cultural tourism through different projects, develop heritage sites and raise awareness of their importance. Therefore, sustainable development and management, education and creating partnerships were the main goals of the CTU in 2015. The focus is engaging and mobilizing local community, as the access to culture and participation in cultural life are two complementary aspects of the same concept. Raising awareness and educating local communities about their own heritage is the key task in order to make them ambassadors of the culture and heritage in their country. For this reason, the development of cultural tourism plays a major role in sustaining Qatar’s current culture and its preservation. Qatar is fostering its cultural identity by protecting, developing and promoting its national heritage, but also by enhancing Arab and Islamic values through diverse cultural activities and education.

With these goals in mind, the CTU created the Cultural Indulgence project targeting hotel guests but also residents. Twice a year, when the exhibitions change, a booklet with all the required information and QM cultural offers is produced. It includes exhibitions, workshops, events, opening hours, entrance fees, location map, membership benefits and a suggestion of how to spend 2/3/4 or 6 hours through self-guided tours. The booklet is distributed to the majority of hotels around Doha, as well as to the residential units.

At the launch of every new edition of the Cultural Indulgence (Self-guided Tours) booklet the CTU organizes an event to educate and inform tour operators, hotel concierges, tour guides and other tourism partners about the product. It is of mutual interest to keep informed, since hotels and tour operators are the main cultural ambassadors who are in direct contact with visitors and tourists. The future outlook of tourism in Qatar according to the United World Tourism Organization’s 2020 Tourism Vision, forecasts that the Middle East region, which currently receives 36 million visitors annually, will attract 69 million tourists by 2020, an average rate of 6.7% pa (QTA Press Release). This forecast was made prior to Qatar’s 2022 FIFA World Cup bid, which is expected to draw many more tourists to Qatar. The petrographic analysis in cooperation with UCL Museum of Qatar designed by renowned French architect Ziegert | Roswag | Seiler Architekten Ingenieure conducted the restoration and rehabilitation works according to the highest international standards in monument conservation. The palace, including several buildings and above all a large central Majlis, was restored in its original fabric without the use of air conditioning. Once the new National Museum of Qatar opens, the so-called Old Palace buildings will be living gallery exhibiting a way of Qatari life that has almost been lost amid the rapid expansion of the last 40 to 50 years. Since the Palace was restored, complemented and refurbished numerous times since its first construction, the various historic building elements have been kept and made visible so to witness the different phases of use and its historical significance; e.g. the 1970s elements are also important examples testifying the Qatari craft and skill. New, modern elements were also integrated; they would contribute to the living narrative of this project. They were implemented where structurally necessary or where the 1970’s concrete or cement materials would contribute to damaging the delicate historic structure. During the 1970s restoration, these materials were the most appropriate to be used in such a project. Nowadays it is clear that they caused major problems to the historic structure such as the rising of humidity and salinity in the walls or the uneven loading in the structures caused by the cement which is much stiffer than the softer earth and lime building materials traditionally used.

The conservation and rehabilitation of the Old Palace helped to consolidate the knowledge and the implementation of a series of “Conservation Guidelines” which include the importance to preserve, at all costs, the original historic material from the 1920’s building phase. Decorative and constructive elements from the 1970’s were preserved as far as possible. Those elements that no longer had a structural function and could be kept, were repaired appropriately, while elements that could not be repaired or were inappropriately constructed were replaced accordingly. The project was also the occasion to create a transfer of knowledge in order to strengthen and develop the local building traditions through the restoration process. Several workshops including wood treatment, restoration of ornaments and painted ceilings and treatment of historic plaster surfaces took place in the period of the conservation project to train the conservation workers and technicians from the QM team and the contractor team. During the main construction works, all elements that were beyond repair were removed. Additionally, all plaster, causing serious damages due to the ingress of humidity and salinity had to be dismantled up to a certain
height. The second phase involved the rebuilding of these elements using appropriate materials. For instance, stiff concrete ring beams damaged by carbonation and rusting were replaced with new truss lime elements, reinforced with glass fibre reinforcement. The truss and glass fibre beams are more flexible and breathable, making them far more compatible with the historic building fabric. Additionally, decorative elements and painted ceilings were rehabilitated and all timber fittings, beams and lintels were treated in situ against termites and other decay mechanisms. Finally, historically accurate plaster and mortars were developed and applied using the same traditional gypsum-based mixture (gypsum, sand, and clay) and new truss lime floor slabs installed to provide stability. The mixture of clay press with sand was used to aid the desalination process and to comply with the traditional wall fabric.

The documentation process was carried out parallel to the works on-site and formed an integral part of the project. All site activities, findings, recovered samples and removed elements were thoroughly and accurately documented. The final documentation will contain all the knowledge gathered throughout the course of the investigations as well as a record of the works themselves. It will aim to provide a kind of “road map” to anyone working on the Palace in the future. Following all these principles, the Old Palace will be a fitting central exhibit for the New Museum. Displaying valuable information about the foundation and abandonment with contemporary witnesses or their descendants that gave these interventions aimed at completing the record of oral tradition and interviews with the settlement and functional analysis. Due to the preservation was too poor for both stratigraphic connection in terms of marine subsistence and sea fare, their state of these two trenches in the mangroves seemed promising for the Middle Neolithic; flint scatters of primary production are indicative of an on the spot production of flint artefacts. In addition, the presence of a wide variety of flint tools also suggests tool use associated with a broad spectrum of economic tasks. Especially the iterative occurrence of arrowheads can be tentatively associated with the settlement and functional analysis. Due to the date of the settlement (mid-19th to mid-20th century CE) with the settlement and functional analysis. Due to the date of the settlement (mid-19th to mid-20th century CE) as well as the complete coverage of the area by the survey, the area has the potential to provide new insights into the flint technology of the Early Neolithic inhabitants of Qatar. In addition, the technological study of all of the artefacts will provide a valuable basis of data for any comparisons with contemporaneous assemblages in a wider geographical area. In central southern Qatar the flat topography is characterized by a high amount of riyad. Since these landscape features provide fresh water supply, they are ‘naturally favoured zones’ for settlement. Traces of long-duration human settlement and temporary camping were frequently found. This is reflected by both rich material culture, especially pottery finds, and a high density of recent, mobile camps or settlements.

Another important part of the Survey was the documentation of the vein Environs Survey. The documented wells, of which the majority have fallen dry due to ground water table drop in the 1960s, were often drilled down into the lime stone ground with a depth of 40 meters. The environmental conditions and the landscapes in which wells can be found are quite similar and in their surroundings many heritage features can be documented. Besides camp sites and other domestic structures such as open-air mosques, the material culture indicates that the places were repeatedly and temporarily used over a very long period of time.

The rescue activities at the endangered site of Umm Al Houl were concluded for a second season in which further trenches and test soundings were carried out as well as a complete aerial documentation of the site achieved (Figure 3). These interventions aimed at completing the documentation of the current state of preservation of the site. Additionally, features such as stratigraphy, function and building techniques and the greater layout of the settlement were investigated. The archaeological activities were concentrated on the main settlement area where a large courtyard house, a tower and a large hearth area were excavated. Seawards on an inactive spit, field work was extended towards the mangrove zone where architectural structures resemble a natural pier, a quarry site and possible boathouses and boat maintenance huts (Figure 4). Although these two trenches in the mangroves seemed promising in terms of marine subsistence and sea fare, their state of preservation was too poor for both stratigraphic connection with the settlement and functional analysis. Due to the date of the settlement (mid-19th to mid-20th century CE) complementary ethnoarchaeological studies were undertaken. These included the record of oral tradition and interviews with contemporary witnesses or their descendants that gave valuable information about the foundation and abandonment of the site, architectural layout and functions, water supply and subsistence.

German Archaeological Institute

The cooperation between the Oriental Department of the German Archaeological Institute and Qatar Museums was continued for another season of the South Qatar Survey Project from February to April 2015, as explained by Dr Kristina Pfeiffer, Dr Philipp Drechsler. The scheduled programme of the General Survey included a comprehensive survey of geo-archaeologically significant areas of South Qatar, the continuation of surveys of endangered places and the documentation of places that were discovered by QM employees. Additionally, a detailed survey (“buffer zone survey”) of two extended cairn clusters in the northern part of the Asaila depression was also part of the General Survey. Furthermore, with the aim of gaining information about the typology and function of cairns in the Asaila region, a group of three cairns was studied (Figure 2). Cairn fields and single cairns were predominantly found within the northern and western part of the South Qatar Survey Area. The round or oval structures made of stones were built directly on the natural ground and reveal different types of inner chambers. Most of them show traces of ancient plundering, are destroyed, decayed or were secondarily re-used as landmarks. Although the cairns can be classified by their size and shape, diagnostic finds are mostly lacking. Therefore, exact dating of cairns has not been possible yet. Even after archaeological soundings during the 2015 season, no datable material could be unearthed.

During the season further research was conducted in Asaila where some additional areas in the centre of the Asaila depression were surveyed in order to get more information on the Middle Neolithic occupation. This survey included surface cleaning and sieving of a Qatar-B related flint knapping site, since the artefact scatter showed increasing evidence for the spatial disintegration caused by car tracks running across the area. The complete coverage pedestrian surveys in the Asaila region revealed a wealth of archaeological remains, spanning at least for the time period between the Early Neolithic and modern times. In contrast to initial assumptions based on geomorphological studies, the flat basin of the eastern Asaila depression was densely occupied during the Middle Neolithic; flint scatters of primary production are indicative of an on the spot production of flint artefacts. In addition, the presence of a wide variety of flint tools also suggests tool use associated with a broad spectrum of economic tasks. Especially the iterative occurrence of arrowheads can be tentatively associated with hunting of wild animals. During times of moister climatic conditions and/or higher ground water discharge into the Asaila depression, the area has the potential of a denser plant cover, providing fodder for wild and domestic animals. The study of Qatar-B related sites has the potential to provide new insights into the flint technology and typology of the Early Neolithic inhabitants of Qatar. In addition, the technological study of all of the artefacts will provide a valuable basis of data for any comparisons with contemporaneous assemblages in a wider geographical area. In central southern Qatar the flat topography is characterized by a high amount of riyad. Since these landscape features provide fresh water supply, they are ‘naturally favoured zones’ for settling. Traces of long-duration human settlement and temporary camping were frequently found. This is reflected by both rich material culture, especially pottery finds, and a high density of recent, mobile camps or settlements.

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Cooperation with researchers and institutions actively working in the Levant and the Nile Valley offers the possibility of including comparative materials from key production sites and metallurgical workshops outside Arabia, in Cyprus (Almyras), Israel (i.e. Hazor, Rehov and Tel Dor) and Sudan (Dorginarti). In particular, metal artefacts and waste from Timna and near-by production sites in the Wadi Amram, as well as from the settlement of Tell el-Kheleifeh in the Arabah valley, will provide useful data for understanding the characteristics of metal production and trade during the Iron Age in the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant.

This research was made possible by NPRP grant 6-813-2-06 from the Qatar National Research Fund. The statements made herein are solely the responsibility of the authors. The hospitality and academic generosity of our project partners in the mentioned case studies is gratefully acknowledged.

For more information on the project, see http://www.ucl.ac.uk/qatar/research/iron-age-metal-production-arabia

Visualising Qatar's Past – Aerial Mapping of Qatar's Archaeological Heritage

There now follows an update on the ongoing research of Dr Andrew Petersen with a new exciting development, using an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to document sites.

In November and December 2015 the University of Wales Trinity Saint Davids in collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar began a pilot project using a UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) to document historic sites in Qatar. This project builds on the successful aerial survey work at Ruwayda in northern Qatar where a large site covering an area of over 125 hectares was surveyed using aerial photogrammetry to produce a detailed 3Dmap accurate to within 1cm (this was reported in the 2015 issue of the Bulletin). Three sites were selected for the extension of the aerial survey Jazirat bin Ghanim, Murwab and Zubara. Each of these sites was very different in character with its own set of challenges and prospects. However the biggest challenge of the fieldwork was the very high winds which made flying the UAV impossible for at least ten days of the three week season. In addition there were technical problems with the UAV that could only be rectified by careful examination of the power systems.

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interestingly, the distribution of finds within these campsites shows different densities of occupation in different periods.

2. Although it is not possible to determine with accuracy which areas were the periods of occupation, most pottery finds date from the Late Sassanian to Early Islamic Period (fourth to eighth centuries) and then Late Islamic Period (fourteenth century to the present, with a particularly important presence of nineteenth and twentieth century finds). The analysis of glass found shows general dates between the very late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

3. Geo-Penetrating Radar surveys have shown the existence of stratigraphic sequences in parts of the Meleha Depression. This will allow targeted excavations with reasonable expectations of documenting different phases in future seasons.

The 2015 of the Crowded Desert was made possible with generous funding of UCL Qatar (Qatar Foundation) and the support of Qatar Museums. Future seasons have been already awarded funding from the Qatar National Research Fund (a member of the Qatar Foundation): NPRP8-1582-6-56.

Iron Age Metal Production in the Arabian Region and in the Levant: A Comparative Study

The Iron Age Arabian Metallurgy Project, carried out by Dr Martina Renzi and Prof Thilo Rehren of UCL Qatar, started in March 2014 and is generously supported by the Qatar National Research Fund, a member of Qatar Foundation.

The focus on the Iron Age is due to the important technological innovations and political and socio-economic changes which occurred in this period; moreover, very little is known about it in Arabia, particularly the early phases (IA I-II). Copper mining and production was the basis of trade and economic activity during the preceding periods in Eastern Arabia, but it is not clear whether this metal production continued during the Iron Age with similar economic significance and distribution patterns. This research will significantly contribute to this topic and might provide interesting data concerning the development of regional societies and cultural changes in previously isolated areas.

So far, the research suggests the existence of complex and articulated regional networks for ore and metal distribution. The project presently covers sites in Oman, UAE and Saudi Arabia, as well as in the Levant and the Nile Valley. Through the analysis of metal artefacts and production debris from these sites, it aims to shed light on the kinds of resources and level of technology employed at the time by identifying different production sites and workshops in the region, and possible connections between them. Work so far has shown that tin bronze was not a commonly used alloy in the Arabian Early Iron Age. Instead, tin- and arsenic-rich copper ores were smelted producing a natural alloy that appears to have been traded across Arabia during this period.

The project includes extensive collaboration with regional governmental and archaeological institutions who are granting access to sites and facilities for the collection and analysis of assemblage of metal production waste and metal artefacts. The analyses are done at the Archaeological Materials Science Laboratory of UCL Qatar and at the laboratories of the German Mining Museum (DBM Bochum) in Germany. Lead isotope analyses are conducted at the Institute of Geosciences of the J.W. Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main.

Thanks to collaborations with the German Archaeological Institute (DAI-Berlin) and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, a large set of metal objects from the important oasis site of Tayma in KSA is being examined. Collaborations with the Italian Mission to Oman (IMTO, Pisa University), the DBM Bochum, the Office of the Adviser to HM the Sultan for Cultural Affairs and Tourism and Antiquities, a large set of metal objects from the site of Salut and Raki. The latter is one of the main Iron Age smelting sites in the region and provides essential data to understand the copper production system at this time.

The metal production debris from the site of Kalba in the UAE is available through collaboration with Dr Carl Phillips and the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH).
Zubara damage to the site by a car track driven through the site prior excavated and non-excavated structures and also shows excavated part of the site shows the relationship between work on this site. Firstly the photogrammetry of the central was selected for UAV survey due to limitations of time the landscape. Although only a very small proportion of the site the site has been documenting the location of excavated (Richter et al 2011) have yielded a wealth of information the largest and best known early Islamic site on the peninsula. whilst Cardi and in the 1980’s French excavations revealed evidence of purple dye processing as well as early Dilmun pots and heartis dated to the second millennium BC. In the year 2000 a British team returned to the island to carry out a series of excavations as well as producing a map of the archaeological features on the island (Carter and Killick 2010). With the prospect of developing the island for tourist access they were asked to carry out a UAV survey of the island to provide a highly detailed 3D map which could be used in the development process. The island was an ideal size for high resolution UAV survey because it was of small size (1.67 square km) and entirely surrounded by the sea providing a clear boundary for the survey. In addition to providing a map for site development purposes it was hoped that the new photogrammetric 3D survey would reveal new features. Although detailed analysis of the composite image has not yet taken place so far no new features have been revealed. However the new 3D image has provided a much better map of natural features and has also revealed changes to the site over the last fifteen years demonstrating the heritage management potential of UAV technology.

Murwab is located in the north west of Qatar and is the largest and best known early Islamic site on the peninsula. The site was first discovered and partially excavated by the Danish archaeological expedition during the 1950’s. Subsequent excavations by two French teams have revealed an extensive settlement of more than 200 structures including a fort, mosque and many houses (Guerin and al-Naimi, 2009). One of the problems of researching the site has been documenting the location of excavated and non-excavated structures and their relationship to the landscape. Although only a very small proportion of the site was selected for UAV survey due to limitations of time the results from the survey clearly show the need for further work on this site. Firstly the photogrammetry of the central excavated part of the site shows the relationship between excavated and non-excavated structures and also shows damage to the site by a car track driven through the site prior to the construction of a fence by Qatar Museums.

Zubara is the largest and best known site in Qatar and is the only UNESCO World Heritage Site in Qatar. Whilst the recent Copenhagen University excavations at the site (Richter et al 2011) have yielded a wealth of information about the site both in terms of artefacts and excavated structures visualizing the chronological development of the site has been difficult using conventional survey methods. The UAV survey programme focussed on a small portion of the site roughly in the middle of the archaeological remains. The survey was able to document both the recent University of Copenhagen excavations and older excavations carried out during the 1980’s. The UAV images show changes to the site with older structures overlying the more recent buildings. In the future the UAV survey will be extended to cover all of the Zubara site both as an aid to developing visitor facilities and to aid research into this major port city.

In 2015, the BFSA Bulletin (British Foundation for the Study of Arabia) reported on several aspects of excavation work in Madain Sâlih, a Nabataean capital located in north-west Arabia.

**The BFSA Bulletin (British Foundation for the Study of Arabia)**

**Latest News and Research in Saudi Arabia**

**Number 21, 2016**

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**The Umm Lajj I Shipwreck:**

The First Underwater Survey of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage and of the Università di Napoli "L’Orienzale" by Chiara Zazzaro and Romolo Loreto

The first field season of the SChT and of the UNO joint underwater survey took place from the 13th to the 22nd of September 2015. The team included six archaeologists of the SChT, three archaeologists from the UNO, and one Italian photographer and video recorder (Figure 1).

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trench, in 2016, confirmed the existence of earlier remains and documented the presence of two earlier phases which are probably Nabataean. The earliest one, entirely built in mud bricks, seems to date back to the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD, based on a few pottery sherds discovered in the corresponding strata. This first phase was followed, probably during the second half of the 1st century AD, by a relatively monumental rebuilding, which made use of a fine stone masonry inserted in the earlier mud-brick masonry. Both phases were later severely dismantled when the current gate was built at its present location, because the building material of the structures was reused. It is possible, but not sure yet, that the remains of the two early phases represent traces of an early gate of the city wall.

**The so-called architectural unit**

This architectural unit, first excavated in 2003 and the excavation of which resumed in 2014 under the supervision of Dr al-Talhi, is located east of the residential area, a few metres to the south-west of sandstone hill IGN 132 (Areas 64 and 65). The area where it was built slopes from east to west and its walls have suffered from water runoff. The aims of the 2016 season were the following: determine the limits of the unit through the extension of the excavations on the west, south and south-eastern sides and the removal of the baulks which had been left between some squares; determine the function of this unit and its date; start the restoration work in some places.

The excavation (figure 4) revealed that this unit is rectangular (11 x 10 m) and that it can be reached from a narrow, 2 m, east-west street, through a door. The latter, 3.3 m wide, is almost in the middle of the northern wall.

The main element of this unit is a large hall with a flagstone flooring surrounded by stone and mud-brick walls. The size of the tiles vary from 0.30 to 0.80 m. Note that the tiles on the western side of the hall have disappeared. A trench (filled with sand at the end of the season and therefore not visible on the photograph) showed that the building activities started immediately above the bedrock, which has a typical yellowish colour. The builders first obtained a flat level, visible on the photograph) showed that the building activities (filled with sand at the end of the season and therefore not on the western side of the hall have disappeared. A trench, in 2016, confirmed the existence of earlier remains and documented the presence of two earlier phases which are probably Nabataean. The earliest one, entirely built in mud bricks, seems to date back to the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD, based on a few pottery sherds discovered in the corresponding strata. This first phase was followed, probably during the second half of the 1st century AD, by a relatively monumental rebuilding, which made use of a fine stone masonry inserted in the earlier mud-brick masonry. Both phases were later severely dismantled when the current gate was built at its present location, because the building material of the structures was reused. It is possible, but not sure yet, that the remains of the two early phases represent traces of an early gate of the city wall.

**Excavations east of IGN 132**

At the end of the 2015 season, L. Tholbecq had noticed what could be the southern temenos wall of the large sacred area in the middle of which stands sandstone hill IGN 132, with the paved tetrapylon at its top. Since the chronology of the occupation at the bottom of IGN 132, on its eastern side, had been determined during the 2010 to 2015 excavation seasons (see Bulletin 2015: 37), it was decided, in 2016, to undertake a large surface clearance of the area further east of the hill (Damien Gazagne, Laila Nehmé). First, the dump from the previous excavation seasons was moved down the small tell formed by IGN 132 and its surroundings. Second, a surface clearance of the whole area between Area 63 to the west and the eastern end of the “tell” was undertaken. Also, the supposed southern temenos wall was cleared and can now be followed for more than 40 m (figure 5). Apart from the latter, several walls belonging to a building, which underwent several phases of occupation, were brought to light and a limited sounding down to the bedrock revealed the existence of several floor levels.

The first occupation level of the building is made of a pavement built with relatively good quality but badly preserved limestone flagstones. It is associated, outside the room, with three carefully packed beaten earth floors, one original and two refurbishments, the latest having a terminus post quem of the 2nd century AD (provisional date). It was unfortunately not possible this year to determine the function of the room to which these first phase floors belong. After a phase of abandonment, the room was reoccupied (in the 3rd century?). A beaten earth floor was built inside the room, the threshold of the door which gave access was raised and a wall, 60804, was built, thus narrowing the room. At that time, the room almost certainly had a domestic function. Indeed, a stone mortar and a square stone basin (for water) were discovered in situ on the floor of the room, as well as numerous animal bones which have not been studied yet.

After a relatively long period of abandonment of the area, marked by various deposits, the room was occupied one last time, at a late period and in a sporadic form. This level is characterised by the presence of a hearth and of three reused column drums which may have been used as seats.

A Nabataean capital, which belonged to the upper left part of a doortamb, and two fragments of frieze, were found in fallen positions. They probably belong to the original building. The detail of the occupation sequence of the area still needs to be worked out but there seems to have been at least three phases of occupation separated by periods of abandonment.

**Studies**

The textile specialist, P. Dal-Prá, examined the material which was brought to light in 2014 in tombs IGN 88 and 97, and in 2015 in the newly discovered tomb IGN 116 (see Bulletin 2015: 37), in order to compare it with the material unearthed in tombs IGN 20 and IGN 117, which had been excavated during previous fieldwork seasons. Considering that these five tombs belong to different architectural types and vary considerably in size – which suggests that their owners had different sociological backgrounds – the issue of the study was to answer the following question: is the textile material homogeneous whatever the type and size of the tombs, or are there differences? In other words, is the funerary ritual identical or roughly identical in the tombs excavated at Madain Sâlih, which would mean that there is a fundamental, unchanged funerary ritual, whatever the sociological background of the owner? Or is the material sufficiently different from one tomb to the other to consider that there were several categories of funerary rituals which depended on the sociological background of the owners? The preliminary conclusions show that there seems to have been slight differences in the kind of material but that the rituals and the use of various layers of textiles (two or three) of various degrees of fineness, separated by a compound of resins and fatty acids, wrapped around the body were fundamentally the same.

It is too early to give conclusions on the pottery, fauna and coins. The number of coins recorded at Madain Sâlih now reaches 833, 200 of which belong to the so-called “Athena/owl” group, i.e. a very stylized type of coin derived from the Athenian tetradrachms of the classical period, with the head of a helmeted Athena on the obverse, a standing owl with olive-branch, crescent and the letters ΑΘΕ on the reverse. These coins have almost certainly been produced in north-west Arabia and Madain Sâlih is the site which has yielded the greatest number of them, in large quantities and on the surface. These coins appear in Madain Sâlih at the latest in the second century BC and are almost the only coins in circulation before the first appearance of the Nabataean coins at the end of the first century BC. It is possible that they were produced there.

Several very interesting bronze objects were brought to light in 2016, particularly in the area of the Roman fortified camp (Area 34, see above), including a fibula and other objects which belonged probably to the soldiers’ equipment. These objects can be added to the ones discovered in 2015, among which an oversized finger of a statue well paralleled by numerous such finds from Roman military camps on the Rhine/Danube where imperial statuary is usually preserved only in the form of cut-off fingers, unsuitable for remelting.

J. Studer, the project’s fauna specialist, devoted most of her time in the field to the study of the animal bones which came from Area 34. The preliminary analysis of the 3,000 bones she examined showed that the fauna collected in the area of the camp is represented by a percentage of species which differ from those discovered in other parts of the residential area. One notices, for instance, the presence of the horse, evidence of which had not been found before in Hegra, and a meat diet based primarily on the dromedary, whereas sheep and goat meat seems to have been preferred by the inhabitants of the central quarters of the ancient city.

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Figure 3: Area 35 (South-East gate), 2016 season, deep trench “BE” in front of Tower T13. Remainder of early buildings (Area 64, IGN 131 and 132) were excavated towards the Roman, 2nd century, stone revetment of the gate’s front wall. They include a high quality pavement wall inserted in the mud-brick masonry of an earlier phase. Photo: P.-M. Blanc

Figure 4: The so-called architectural unit from the north-east. Photo: D. al-Talhi

Figure 5: The area east of IGN 132 during the excavations. Photo: L. Nehmé

Photo: D. al-Talhi
from the sandy bottom with frames and stringers running
gains or water for the crew. Part of the hull emerged
of circa one thousand qulal.

A preliminary analysis of the wreck and its cargo suggests
that it was a merchant ship dating to the 18th century, very
similar to the Sadana shipwreck excavated in Egypt in the
1990s. The ship was sailing up to the north of the Red Sea,
carrying exotic products from the Far East, such as Chinese
porcelain and coconuts, but also perhaps coffee from Mocha
(Yemen). The final destination of the ship may have been
Egypt. If the dating is confirmed, the ship could represent
the last evidence of the Egyptian-Arabian trade circuit in the
Red Sea before the opening of the Suez canal.

The Umm Lajj 1 shipwreck has a great potential both
for conducting a long term scientific investigation and
underwater excavation training for archaeologists and
students. The cargo, and the ship in itself, could be of
great impact for a local or national museum considering
that a large part of the cargo is well preserved and that this
previously unknown type of ship could be reconstructed on
the basis of archaeological remains.

The Saudi-Italian team recommend the competent authorities
to forbid sport divers to visit the archaeological area in order
to prevent further looting of this important cargo.

Yanbu Al Bahr, a Study of the Old Town
and its Architectural Characteristics

The study of traditionally built coral houses is the topic of
this article by Aylin Orbasli. This construction technique is
being increasingly abandoned in favour of modern concrete,
but as a result a great skill is being lost.

As part of a project advising the then Supreme Commission
for Tourism (now Saudi Commission for Tourism and
Antiquities) in 2007 I surveyed the remaining and largely
abandoned traditional buildings in Yanbu Al Bahr. The
surveys were used to inform a masterplan and tourism
development options for the area, but the survey information
itself holds valuable data and evidence of an architecture that
is fast disappearing on both sides of the Red Sea. A small
internal research grant from Oxford Brookes University has
enabled us to start interrogating the survey information with
a view to identifying morphological and typological patterns
of this unique settlement.

Located on Saudi Arabia’s Red Sea coast in the province
of Al Madinah Al Munawarah, Yanbu Al Bahr is one of
the few remaining settlements on the Red Sea coast with
a substantial concentration of traditional coral houses of
a high quality, and an urban form and organisation that relates
to the functioning of a major commercial and strategic port
that rose to prominence in the late 19th century following
the opening of the Suez Canal in 1870.

The exact origins of the settlement are unknown, but its
importance as a port of entry into the Hijaz, including
Madinah, are well documented from the 12th century. What
remains today in the old town, however 2-3 storey coral
houses with elaborate timberwork projections (rowashin),
balconies and trellises, is most likely a late 19th century
evolution of the more modest settlement pattern described
in 18th and early 19th century sources. The older city walls,
regularly mentioned in travellers’ accounts, no longer
survive. A new port and road have also resulted in the loss
of a number of major buildings such as the Ottoman era
governor’s house and customs house that characterised the
waterfront view of the town.

In its heyday the port town attracted a diverse mix of users
and was home to a Turkish garrison, Indian Muslim traders
and Egyptian migrants, amongst others. In the early 20th
century it was also home to T.E. Lawrence. The economy
of the town at the time was dependent on trade and the pilgrims
travelling from the Suez through to Jeddah. Following
changes in maritime trade routes and practices, the revival
of Yanbu’s fortunes as an industrial city, however, placed
development away from the historic area and to some extent
played an important role in its demise.

The population of the historic area, reported to have fallen
to around 3,000 by 1973, had almost completely disappeared at
the start of the millennium. The site work carried out in 2007 consisted of a survey
of some 300 abandoned properties in the old town and
documented all the external features and some internal
features where access was safe and possible. The survey
was supported by interviews with local officials, informants
and craftsmen. An understanding of the history was based
on published literature, including accounts by European
travellers and local sources.

In 1973, the French artist Jean-Pierre Greenlaw published a
detailed account of the coral buildings of Suakin in Sudan
including construction techniques and details. Interestingly
the architectural features and characteristics that he depicted
show a striking resemblance to the properties in Yanbu Al
Bahr, more so even than Yanbu’s similarities to its more
immediate neighbours of Jeddah to the south and Al Wajh to
the north.

Our current study of the 2007 survey database is enabling
us to document in some detail the character and unique
detailing of architectural elements in Yanbu Al Bahr in a
systematic manner, identifying characteristic features across
the historic town and also placing them in a broader regional
context. Despite recent and ongoing conservation efforts,
the buildings of the old town are a diminishing asset and every
year more of the vulnerable coral buildings are collapsing
and disappearing. This study, intended as a full monograph
following further field work (to record floor plans where
possible) and documentary research, will form a valuable
evidence base of a place and architectural character that
defines what is often referred to the Red Sea style of coral
buildings as well as inform conservation projects.

Aylin Orbasli is a Reader at Oxford Brookes University
and has been working on projects in the Kingdom of Saudi
Arabia as a consultant since 2001. aorbasli@brookes.ac.uk
Contemporary Collective Launches to Support the Next Generation of Women Driving Saudi Arabia’s Visual Arts Industry

A new study programme launched by the British Council to build skills of the next generation of curators and arts managers writes Mohammad Doughan.

The British Council is launching a new study programme for Saudi women, CONTEMPORARY COLLECTIVE, focusing on contemporary curating and arts management. Launched on International Women’s Day and designed to inspire self-motivated, aspiring female curators and arts administrators, the six month programme will start in August 2016.

Developed as part of the British Council’s ongoing commitment to supporting diverse opportunities for young people across the Kingdom and the GCC, and in response to the growing interest in contemporary art in KSA, the programme focuses on the selection and presentation of modern and contemporary art, with close attention to the specifics of presenting art in the MENA region.

Emma Dexter, Director of Visual Arts, British Council, UK said; “This exciting and interactive programme supports young women on the path to building a dynamic, resilient creative economy in Saudi Arabia, and ultimately forges new connections between Saudi, the UK and the wider region. With support, access and mentoring with visiting tutors, through a series of public presentations that provide first-hand insights and practical advice to inspire and guide them.

Participants will also get the opportunity to collaborate on an exhibition concept that will be developed and realized in Jeddah and Riyadh in 2017. They will have the British Council’s extensive historic art collection of more than 8,500 artworks at their disposal.

A wider audience will be given access to the expertise of our visiting tutors, through a series of public presentations that will take place in tandem with the course, providing a deeper awareness of contemporary and modern visual arts practice open to all.

For more information, please contact:

Mohammad Doughan – Account Manager
09066 55 936 8665
Mohammad.Doughan@hktstrategies.com

Sharjah Fort (Al Hisn) Re-Opening: A Remarkable Addition to Sharjah’s Cultural Scene

The official re-opening of the Sharjah Fort (Al Hisn) in April 2015 marks the 16th cultural institution to open under the direction of Sharjah Museums Department (SMD). Al Hisn is Sharjah’s most important historic building. Constructed in 1823 in the heart of Sharjah both then and until the 1960s it functioned as the seat of governance and was the private home to Al Qasimi, the ruling family of Sharjah.

Al Hisn, which witnessed pivotal political, military and social events was partially demolished in 1969 but now this classic structure that exemplifies traditional design principles has been painstakingly restored by a team of expert historians. “Visitors will be able to tour the fort’s galleries and get a real feel for what life was like here. We have used technology and new interactive elements to enrich the visitor experience and create a modern museum of international standard,” said Khouloud Al Houli, Curator of Sharjah Al Hisn Museum.

Efforts to Save Al Hisn

As part of the efforts to modernize Sharjah, various construction projects were taking place around Sharjah city during the 1960s. One of the areas under redevelopment was the Heart of Sharjah. Old homes and buildings were being razed to make way for new developments.

In 1969, most of Al Hisn was demolished. At the time, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi was attending university in Cairo. He immediately returned to Sharjah to prevent any further destruction of the fort. When he arrived on site, few things were left standing; Al Kabs tower and two badly damaged outer walls. He was able to save some of the gates, including the main entrance. The fort’s foundations also remained intact which His Highness measured and which would eventually prove useful in the fort’s reconstruction.

The 1969 demolition was certainly not the first time the fort had undergone significant changes. Earlier renovations and alterations had been made particularly to the facade and Al Mahawasa tower in order to make use of the fort as the local police station. Aside from intentional alterations, the fort would have suffered damage and minor reconstructions throughout its working life as a result of battle and the changing needs of its inhabitants.

Decades after its destruction, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi began the process of restoring Al Hisn in 1995. As a child, he spent time exploring and learning about Al Hisn under the guidance of his uncles and his father, Sheikh Mohammed bin Saqr bin Khalid Al Qasimi. His connection to the building and his love of local history and culture contributed to his vision to restore and preserve the fort as a museum. The restoration was completed in 1997 and shortly thereafter, it opened as a museum. Al Hisn underwent a second major renovation between 2013 and 2014. Today, the fort stands as a reminder of Sharjah’s history and its evolution into a modern, cosmopolitan city.

Restoring the Fort

The restoration of Al Hisn has employed traditional techniques and materials. Documents, photographs, drawings and recollections from some of Sharjah’s older residents were used as references to recreate the old features of the fort.

The most recent restoration took 15 months of continual work to complete. Special care was taken to understand and restore the original appearance of the building in terms of colour and texture of the render. Care was also taken to accurately portray the fort’s unique features to better reflect Al Hisn’s architecture and appearance during the reign of Sheikh Sultan bin Saqr II, 1924 to 1951.

Figure 1: The restored Sharjah Fort (Al Hisn).
Rebirth of a Museum by Khuloud Al Houli, Curator of Sharjah Fort (Al Hisn), Sharjah Museums Department kalhouli@smd.gov.ae

The 2013/2014 reinterpretation of Al Hisn was the result of the combined effort of five years research conducted by the SMD team of researchers and curators. With this came the opportunity to tell new and interesting facts and narratives and present unique objects connected to Al Hisn and Sharjah.

The Museum’s galleries have been updated to include exciting interactive features, audio-visuals, reconstructions and stories taking visitors on an engaging journey through the last two centuries offering a unique opportunity to experience the history that has shaped the emirate and its people. Visitors wishing to explore this unique cultural gem are welcomed throughout the week, Saturday to Thursday from 8am till 8pm and Friday from 4pm till 8pm.

Exhibition - Ed Dur: A Glimpse into Civilizations by Khaled Hussein, General Coordinator of Research, Sharjah Archaeology Museum

Sharjah Archaeology Museum (SAM) in collaboration with Umm Al Quwain Archaeology and Heritage Department, represented by Umm Al Quwain Archaeology Museum, hosted the exhibition “Ed Dur: A Glimpse into Civilizations”, as part of the programme to celebrate the selection of Sharjah as the Capital of Arab Tourism for 2015.

The exhibition showcased selected Umm Al Quwain collections to narrate the story of life on the coast of the emirate from the Neolithic period until the disappearance of the port of Ed Dur during the first Gregorian century and highlighted how the local people of what is now the UAE maintained links with global civilizations making the ports of the region important commercial hubs between the east and west.

The first team to excavate in Umm Al Quwain was an Iraqi archaeological expedition in 1973 that explored both the Ed Dur and Tell Abraq sites. By the 1980s, many international teams had also excavated these sites under the supervision of Dr Dur and Tell Abraq sites. The exhibition included ornamental pendants similar to those found in Mesopotamia from the first millennium BC and an Iron Age cylindrical stamp depicting the sun and a plant design. The site also revealed cube-shaped weights similar to those found in the Indus valley. These discoveries suggest Tell Abraq was a port on a trade route between the Indus Valley in the east and Mesopotamia in the north.

Slightly further down the coast from Tell Abraq was the port of Ed Dur that flourished during the period from the first century BC until the first century A.D. Ships coming from India in the east and Yemen in the south, met here with vessels arriving from Mesopotamia. They exchanged goods and were supplied with food and water for their return journeys.

Considering the foreign goods and relics found by archaeologists, some researchers suggest that Ed Dur was possibly the famous but now unidentified port of Oman mentioned by ancient historians earlier in the first century AD, including Pliny and the unknown author of “The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” who considered it as the most important port in the Gulf at that time. Objects presented included carved bone pendants, obol, drachma and tetra-drachma coins, some of which were made locally, ceramic and glass vessels.

The final part of the exhibition was dedicated to the temple found at Ed Dur. The two headless eagles were displayed in front of an enlarged plan of the building to give the impression that they might have sat either side of the entrance. A small stone font with an Aramaic inscription including the word ‘Shams’, the sun deity was also included.
The Belgian Excavations at Mleiha, Sharjah

The discovery of an Aramaic-Hasaitic Funerary Inscription Mentioning the King of Umán

The team of the Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, continued its excavations in collaboration with Sharjah’s Department of Antiquities at the graveyard zone Z of area AV at Mleiha (as seen in The BFSA Bulletin 20, 2015: 43). Mission Director Bruno Overlaet introduces us to an exciting new find.

The findings confirmed the results of the earlier excavations. The monumental tombs of Area AV are all of similar construction. They have a rectangular underground pit that was covered with beams and on top a mud brick square tower-shaped monument was erected. Lime-plaster stepped crenellations and ridges decorated the top. Rhodian amphora fragments of the first half of the 2nd century BCE provide a clear time frame for the Area AV tombs.

The upper structure was a square room measuring 5.20m by 5.20m build with lime-plaster bricks. Fragments of stepped crenellations point to a similar decoration as on the Area AV monuments. Part of the East wall must still have stood more than half a meter before it was flattened by a bulldozer in the 1960s. A plastered “platform” at the Northern side may have been a step to enter the room. Inside, the floor was made of mud brick. Only the SW quarter of the floor was well preserved, the remainder was completely lost. This SW part of the room remains to be excavated, work started on the Northern Half and SE quarter. The floor of the underground tomb chamber has not yet been reached but its outline is clear. The walls are made with rocks like those of the adjacent four tombs. The more or less square underground construction is divided into two parallel rooms. Dugout steps lead to the southern room, a second (later?) entrance seems to be present at the North side. At the centre of the underground construction a large lime-plaster brick was discovered, resting on some rocks and leaning upside down against a brick wall. The profile shows that it tumbled down from above.

The lime plaster brick has a raised border with an Aramaic inscription that states “This is the memorial of Amid son of Gur [which] his son Amid son of Amid [built] over him year 90 [or 97]”. The central panel has an Old South Arabian inscription that largely repeats this. It omits the date, however, and adds that both father and son Amid are bp (an unidentified function) of the King of Umán (a full study by Overlaet, Macdonald and Stein will be published in Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy, 2016).

To extend the chronological spread of the tombs in the ongoing research project, it was decided to excavate a tomb in Area F, at the SW end of the site. A French team had excavated 4 tombs at Area F in 1986-89 which had more complex underground chambers. They were dated slightly later than the Area AV and C tombs, to the mid 2nd century BCE. The presence of amphora fragments that were recently identified as of 3rd century BCE date, however, suggested that the Area F tombs might be older than previously thought. Tomb F5 lies immediately next to the 4 excavated ones.

The excavation of Tomb F5 could not be completed within the 2015 excavation season and will be continued in 2016. Some preliminary notes can be made about its construction, however, and the discovery of a bilingual funerary inscription warrants this note.

The Periplos Maris Erythraei and the Naturalis Historia by Pliny the Elder both refer to Omana as to a port, usually identified with the site of Ed Dur. This inscription testifies to the existence of an Umán kingdom already at the end of the 3rd century BCE. It seems probable that Mleiha was, if not its capital, at least part of it.

De Bruno Overlaet, Curator of Ancient Near East and Iran, Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels.

The Mleiha Archaeological and Eco-tourism Project, Sharjah

BFSA Chair Carolyn Perry gives us an insight into the latest plans for the new Eco-tourism Project in Sharjah Museum.

The first phase of The Mleiha Archaeological and Eco-tourism Project opened earlier this year. This phase includes the opening of the Mleiha Archaeological Centre, which houses archaeological finds from the area. The Centre will be constantly updated as new finds are uncovered through ongoing excavation work. There are also information displays, interactives and screens with documentaries about Mleiha’s story. The Centre is also the starting point for people visiting the Archaeological and Eco-tourism sites in the area. Sites featured in the first phase include Umán-Nar Tombs, the Valley of the Caves, the Mleiha Fort, historic horse and camel graveyard, the ancient farmhouse with kitchen, the pre-Islamic Mleiha Palace.

The second phase of the project will involve the construction of Mleiha National Desert Park over an area of 450 square kilometres. The park will serve as a wildlife reserve that will see the release of a range of animals such as the Oryx, gazelles and the mountain deer, in collaboration with the Sharjah Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA).

There are also plans for the establishment of an astronomy observatory in cooperation with the Sharjah Centre for Astronomy and Space Sciences, allowing for enthusiasts to enjoy the stars and sky from the centre of Mleiha. Telescopes will be installed on the roof to allow tourists to get a glimpse of the stars and the wonders of space from Mleiha’s location.

The Mleiha Archaeological and Eco-tourism Project is a collaboration by Shurooq with the Planning and Survey Department, the Environment and Protected Areas Authority in Sharjah, and the Directorate of Antiquities at the Sharjah Department of Culture and Information. It is a unique tourist destination due to its natural beauty, diversity of rare wildlife and its archaeological discoveries which has seen it nominated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

The project will also help preserve the outstanding archaeological sites and protect rare wild animals such as the Arabian Tahr, the Arabian Oryx, sand gazelles (Al Reem), Damani gazelles and ostriches.
Ras al-Khaimah: Latest News from the Department of Antiquities and Museums

An update on the latest developments by Christian Velde, Imke Moellering, Ahmad Hilal, Archaeologists at the Department of Antiquities and Museums, Ras al-Khaimah.

Jazirat Al-Hamra: The UAE’s last surviving traditional pearl fishing town.

A long term project was started in Jazirat Al-Hamra, the only surviving pearling town in the United Arab Emirates from pre-oil times. In addition to its architectural legacy with more than 200 abandoned buildings, a dozen mosques, suq, fort and watchtowers, the town provides a unique insight into the rich mosaic of traditional coastal life along the Arabian Gulf and its eventual demise after the discovery and prosperity of oil called for change and modernity.

The Department’s careful documentation, excavation and restoration work aims to better understand and keep the unique history of Jazirat Al-Hamra for future generations. The town had originally gained prosperity through pearl fishing and pearl trading, the main economic sources of income in the Arabian Gulf until the early 20th century. But the negative effects of overfishing, in combination with a global economic recession and the introduction of cheaper, cultured pearls in Japan eventually made it unfeasible by the late 1940s. After the Gulf witnessed a period of intense hardships and struggle for survival, the situation finally started to improve with the help of incoming oil revenues. When Jazirat Al-Hamra’s Za’ab tribe was invited by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, the first President of the newly founded United Arab Emirates, to move to the modern capital Abu Dhabi, the island was left for good during the early 1970s. Although many Za’ab returned, they resettled on the mainland, to which the island is today attached by landfill.

Geographical and Historical Background

The 45 ha large island was originally situated inside a lagoon off the southern coast of Ras al-Khaimah. Its southwestern end was almost connected to the mainland and fordable at all times. Due to its marine environment the town itself had no drinking water, as the wells inside the courtyard houses could only provide brackish water for domestic use. Sweet water had to be brought by donkey from wells at the foot of the large sand dunes in the south, outside of the island. Today they are still crowned by two watchtowers which originally defended Jazirat Al-Hamra towards the desert. We assume that it was founded in the 17th century, as it is not mentioned in Gasparo Balbi’s list of coastal towns from 1580. Baron von Kniphousen, director of the Dutch East India Company, provided the first description of Jazirat Al-Hamra in 1756, before the British mention it after their attacks on Ras-al-Khaimah in 1809 and 1819 and produce the first map of the island, town and sea view in 1820. By 1908 John Lorimer estimates 500 houses divided in two quarters and calls it the main settlement of the Za’ab tribe, whose livelihood depends mainly on pearl diving.

The Project

Today Jazirat Al-Hamra’s narrow alleyways connect a conglomerate of courtyard houses, suq buildings, mosques and a fort with watchtowers, all built from coral stones and fossil beach rock in layer technique. Where time, neglect and the harsh climate have removed the traditional, outer plaster from the walls, the different types of corals appear like a beautiful piece of art from the bottom of the sea. This significant type of construction is combined with plain and ornamental arches and elaborate plaster screens, which represent the main decorative elements of its architecture. While the majority of buildings are modest summer and winter houses surrounding a courtyard, examples of rich residences and homes of pearl traders can also be found, like the impressive two-storey ‘Bait Omran’ or the wind tower residence ‘Bait Abdul Karim’, where three barjeel cooled the different family quarters.

After light rainfalls the Department was furthermore able to discover traces of a significant mosque, pictured on the British 1820 map and originally covered with 20 domes.

In a unique way both the past and the recent transformation of the UAE is reflected and preserved in the architecture and structural setup of this abandoned town: the traditional life of the Arabian Gulf, the first changes through modern building materials (sand bricks, cement, paint) and finally the abandonment and departure for new beginnings. The Department started working simultaneously at several communal buildings: two mosques, the fort and its two watchtowers, while suq and pearl trader residences will follow at a later stage. In the light of increasing restoration activities on the Arabian Peninsula, which too often have at will altered original, traditional architecture, we see the need to stress the following, significant aspects of our work:

To keep the visual appearance, texture and overall atmosphere as authentic as possible, only original and traditional materials (coral stones, fossil beach rock, traditional mixtures of mortar and plaster, palm trunks, mangrove wood) and traditional techniques are used during our project. All restoration and/or rebuilding work is based on a detailed documentation (descriptive, photographic, architectural drawings, 3D) in combination with the archaeological excavation results and historical photographs of Jazirat Al-Hamra for reference.

Al Ain and Buraimi: Work Continues on the Historic Buildings and Landscapes of the Oasis

The modern towns of Al Ain and Buraimi sit on the border between the United Arab Emirates and Oman. These towns have grown exponentially in the past forty years but, as Dr Timothy Power and Dr Peter Sheehan have been discovering, the origins of these towns are much older.

Archaeological work in Al Ain continues to focus on more detailed mapping and investigations of the historic oasis landscape of the city. Work in 2015 saw the inception of the Oases Mapping Project, with students from Zayed University joining the TCA Historic Environment team in fieldwalking, survey and gathering oral histories in Qattara Oasis. The students’ work later formed the basis of a poster presentation at the Seminar for Arabian Studies in London in July.

In 2016 the mapping project will move from Qattara to the...
adjacent Jimi Oasis to continue studying the various processes at work in the creation of the oasis and its expansion and contraction over time. Detailed mapping and condition survey of the many surviving historic earthen walls in the oasis will be used as the basis of a plan for their conservation.

The works in and around Qattara and Jimi Oases form part of an ongoing program in collaboration with Al Ain Municipality to enhance the educational and visitor experience of the oasis environment. This has included the creation of a walking trail using the historic pathways through Qattara Oasis, now linked with educational and cultural activities centered around the Qattara Arts Center (QAC) and Soq Al-Qattara. Detailed design work has now also begun on the archaeological interpretation within the basement of QAC. This display will present the archaeological sequence and related finds from the Iron Age through to the present day revealed during excavations there in 2009-11. Work on the interpretation and related publication has been informed by a range of specialist teams and individuals who have been looking at finds and ceramics from the site, and who have so far examined copper objects and residues (Julie Goy, Thilo Rehren & Martina Renzi), as well as ceramics from the Iron Age (Anne Benoist), Early and Late Islamic periods (Tim Power, Omar Al-Kaabi, Jelena Zirkovic, Benedict Leight), Late Trade Wares and glass from 19th century Europe (Alsadair Brooks) and Chinese/Far Eastern imports (Ran Zhang).

Our understanding of the more recent phases in the development of the oasis landscape continues to be informed by excavations and investigations (Mohammed Khalilif & Mohammed Al Daheri) at a number of historic buildings. These archaeological works accompany and inform ongoing preservation and conservation works that are currently concentrated at Bin Bidowa House in Qattara and Muraijib Fort to the west of Jimi Oasis that represent two of the oldest and most significant historic earthen buildings in Al Ain. This research into the upper levels of the archaeological sequence will soon be complemented by geoarchaeological investigations into the natural and anthropogenic formation processes at work in the landscape that are planned for 2016, and that will be able to take advantage of existing geotechnical and geophysical information gained from the many construction projects in and around the city that require development review by TCA.

Another site where we have carried out extensive archaeological and conservation works is Qasr Al Muwaiji, birthplace of the President of the UAE, HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and the location of the diwan of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan from 1946 until the early 1960s. The restored Qasr Al Muwaiji opened to the public in November 2015, and visitors will be able to see that much of the content of the exhibition is based on the archaeological investigations which provided evidence for the different phases of the fort’s development.

Our research into the wider oasis landscape also extended across the border into Buraimi in 2015, with a season carried out in collaboration with the Oman Ministry of Culture and Nasser Jahwari of Sultan Qaboos University. Work focusing on rescue excavations at an important and well-preserved Early Islamic settlement site, as well as airborne LiDAR survey of the Late Islamic buildings of Hamaas village, the last remaining settlement of the historic Buraimi Oasis. As with other areas of the oasis landscape our aim is to continue fieldwalking and other surveys aimed at a more detailed characterization of settlement patterns and the changing uses of the landscape at different periods from the Bronze Age onwards. The results of the excavations at the Early Islamic settlement were particularly impressive. A number of mudbrick buildings arranged around two streets were found, dating to between the early 9th and late 10th / early 11th centuries, with evidence of a relatively dense settlement in the underlying deposits. Finds from the site include high quality ‘Samarra Horizon’ classes, together with Indian and Chinese imports, which point to close contacts with Sohar. A large assemblage of glass vessels was retrieved which is now being studied by Carolyn Swan and Thilo Rehren from UCL Qatar, whilst the carved stone vessels, now being examined by Stremen le Maguer, comprise one of the most complete such assemblages from the region. Conservation work was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry and the site has been registered and protected.

For more information see http://arabianandtheliedworld/

YEMEN

Please see the Last Word section where Yemen is highlighted.

UNESCO’s Yemen Heritage Week and the British Museum

British Museum Curator and BFSA Trustee Dr St John Simpson updates us on the work that the British Museum is doing to highlight the heritage of Yemen.

Britain has a long and deep association with Yemen through its historical connections with Aden and it was due to the personal interest and intervention of several of its Political Residents that some of the first Ancient South Arabian inscriptions on bronze and stone were acquired by the British Museum in the nineteenth century. We have continued to develop this collection where objects have secure provenances so it is particularly appropriate to record here some recent donations.

In 2002 we received a very generous donation from Jonathan Hassell of 13 ancient South Arabian antiquities to mark the fact that the British Museum was planning its exhibition Queen of Sheba: Treasures from Ancient Yemen, which ran from June to October that year. Three of these were placed in that exhibition and published in the catalogue, and the remainder were exhibited in a separate display which lasted until the relevant upper galleries were re-organised in 2005. Jonathan Hassell sadly passed away in 2015 after a long illness but we were delighted to receive a second donation from him: this consists of a dozen more pieces, including funerary busts, a small inscribed statue and a fine footed bowl, all carved from attractive veined calcite. The collection has now been registered and photographed, and will complete the Jonathan Hassell Collection displayed on the Collections Online section of the British Museum’s website. We are still hoping that the Catalogue of the Ancient South Arabian Collection at the British Museum which we began some years ago with Professor Avanzini of the University of Pisa, will be brought to completion in the near future and these pieces will be added to it.

In the meantime, there are two other recent developments, both triggered by international concern over the ongoing situation in Yemen and the terrible plight the war is having on its cultural heritage as well as the population and rest of the economy. The first was UNESCO’s Yemen Heritage Week – Museums United for Yemen, where we have released additional content onto social media about our collections from this important region. Secondly, we are leading a group of experts on the creation of an ICOM Red List for Yemen to help identify and safeguard items in case of looting.

However, our interest with Yemen is not limited to Ancient South Arabia but also extends to modern collections. As some of the readers will know, we began collecting and registering modern ephemera of the Middle East many years ago and this includes Hollywood film stills, North Yemeni postage stamps and other modern printed items relating to the Queen of Sheba. More recently we began to seriously collect postcards and we already have several hundred old views of Aden. On 20th August 2015 The Evening Standard ran an unexpected editorial article entitled “Why the British Museum wants your postcards” and this led to a huge flurry of donations of old and modern postcards, photographs, watercolours and ephemera relating to places across the Middle East. Among these was a large collection created by Mr Alan Wyle who served in Aden as part of his National Service. This included postcards of Aden and ephemera, including photographs, buttons and enameled lighters showing camels! This is the first time that we have been able to acquire these other aspects of colonial life in Aden, and
they help extend our collection of this part of Aden’s past.

Finally, earlier last year after the unexpected death of Leila Ingams (1940-2015), we were contacted by her family and generously offered more material which supplements her already considerable previous donations. These include the ceremonial gowns made for and worn by her parents, Harold and Doreen Ingams, a large collection of ethnographic items, several interesting antiquities and the famous stela from Shubwa which was first published in 1976 by Jacques Ryeckmans, temporarily exhibited at the British Museum as part of our Queen of Sheba: Treasures from ancient Yemen exhibition in 2002 and which is presently displayed with other ancient South Arabian antiquities in GS3. Among the latest additions is her large collection of modern unused postcards from Yemen, especially the Hadhramawt, that she made during her repeated visits there. They are mostly views of traditional architecture and were mainly published in Yemen during the 1980s and 1990s. Most collectors of postcards are only interested in those dating to the so-called “Golden Age” of pictorial postcards produced between the 1890s and 1940 but this overlooks the fact that all topographic views are interesting and important photographic records, even more so given the dire situation in Yemen today. Through these images we can make connections to the past and celebrate that country’s rich cultural heritage, and in so doing honour the memory of someone who loved that country very dearly.

St John Simpson
ssimson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

AWARDS AND PRIZES

The International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF)
The 2016 International Prize for Arabic Fiction is the ninth edition of the prize. 159 novels by authors from 18 countries were submitted this year. The longest of 16 novels was announced on 12 January and includes a number of younger writers and debut novelists. Three longlisted writers are under the age of 40, and first novels by Tareq Bakari and Abdennour Mezine have been included. The 6 shortlisted novels and the 2016 panel of judges will subsequently be announced on 9 February 2016.

IPAF recognises the literary achievements of authors from across the Arab world and, each year, hosts the shortlist announcement in a different culturally-significant location. IPAF is pleased to announce that this year’s shortlisted novels will be revealed at a press conference in Muscat, Oman. More details: http://arabicfiction.org/bmpq.htm

The Banipal Trust for Arab Literature: The Safi Gobash–Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation

This annual award of £3,000 is made to the translator(s) of a published translation in English of a full-length imaginative or creative Arabic work of literary merit (published after, or during, the year 1967 and first published in English translation in the year prior to the award). Works are judged by a panel of four distinguished authors, critics and literary experts, two of whom read and consider both the Arabic original and the English translation. Twenty-nine entries were received for the 2015 Safi Gobash Banipal Prize (26 novels and 3 collections of poetry). This is the highest number of entries in the history of the prize. The 2015 prize was awarded to Paul Starkey for his translation of the novel The Book of the Sultan’s Seal: Strange Incidents from History in the City of Mars by Youssif Rakha, published by Interlink Books. The 2014 winner was Sinan Antoon for the translation of his novel The Corpse Washer. Yale University Press


British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize in Middle Eastern Studies

The BRISMES Book Prize administered the British-Kuwait Friendship Society Prize in Middle Eastern Studies from its inception until the end of 2010. The prize was funded by an endowment from the Abdullah Mubarak Charitable Foundation and is now administered by the University of Cambridge. The prize is awarded for the best scholarly work on the Middle East each year. In each of the years since the prize commenced, it has attracted around 50 nominations from some 20 publishers and the overall standard of entries has been extremely high. It is awarded for the best scholarly work on the Middle East each year. Normally the chronological remit of the prize will be from the rise of Islam until the present day; but outstanding scholarly entries from the pre-Islamic era may also be considered. The winners of the 2015 book prize were announced at a ceremony hosted by HE Mr Khalid Al-Duwaissen at the Kuwaiti Embassy on 22nd October. They were Pascal Menoret ‘Joy Riding in Riyadh: Oil, Urbanism, and Road Revol’ and the runners up Christina Riggs ‘Unwrapping Ancient Egypt’ and Yonatan Mendel ‘The Creation of Israeli Arabic’. See http://www.bfksprize.co.uk/ for more information.

Rawabi Holding Awards

These awards, hosted by the Saudi-British Society, are presented annually to two British individuals who have made a significant contribution to Saudi-British cultural relations. The awards, for making a significant contribution to Saudi-British relations, are presented by the donor, Mr. Abdulaziz al-Turki.

The 2016 winners of the awards are Ms. Judy Houry MBE and Mr. Ali Almhaidar LLB PhD.

Barakat Trust

The Trust awards a number of scholarships and grants to students and scholars of Islamic art history, architecture and archaeology including conservation and post-doctoral fellowships. Grants have covered conservation programmes, documentation of archives, events, exhibitions and museums, lectures, colloquia and conferences, scholarships towards a Master of Studies course in Islamic Art History and Architecture at the University of Oxford, scholarships and grants for post-graduate and post-doctoral study and research fellowships, travel and field trips, archaeological projects, and prizes to students at accredited schools and universities. The Barakat Trust does not support the applied arts.

The closing date for applications is 15 February each year and the Advisory Committee meets in the early spring.

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

All applications must be submitted online via the Barakat applications portal, available here: http://krfm.orinst.ox.ac.uk/You can also send the Barakat Trust email at submissions. If you have any trouble using the online portal please contact daniel.batx@orinst.ox.ac.uk

British Academy

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

The BFSA Bulletin (British Foundation for the Study of Arabia)

In order to bring the students and scholars of Arabia in the United Kingdom together, the BFSA awards a number of scholarships to students, postgraduate and post-doctoral candidates. The BFSA invites applications every year. Successful applicants are awarded scholarships for one year. The Institute offers assistance to the award-holder in drafting a full research proposal to submit jointly to other funding bodies. Two academic references are required. All applications and references must be received by 1st February. Decisions will be announced in March. Only one BISI Pilot Project Grant can be made annually. However, the BISI also awards several Research Grants for short-term projects costing no more than £4,000. Conditions and application forms can be found on: www.bisi.ac.uk/content/academic-grants

British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BISI)

BISI Pilot Project Grants. The Institute welcomes funding applications for pilot projects in all fields of the arts, humanities or social sciences, concerned with any time period from prehistory to the present day. Funding of up to £8,000 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. Two academic references are required. All applications and references must be received by 1 February. Decisions will be announced in March. Only one BISI Pilot Project Grant can be made annually. However, the BISI also awards several Research Grants for short-term projects costing no more than £4,000. Conditions and application forms can be found on: www.bisi.ac.uk/content/academic-grants

BISI Research and Conference Grants. The Institute invites funding applications once a year to support research or conferences on Iraq and neighbouring countries not covered by the British Academy’s BASIS-sponsored institutions, in any field of the humanities or social sciences, concerned with any time period from prehistory to the present day. A list

AWARDS AND PRIZES

Available Grants

The BFSA Bulletin (British Foundation for the Study of Arabia)

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of the British Academy-sponsored Institutes and Societies (BASIS) can be found on the following link: www.britac.ac.uk/intl/index-basis.cfm. BSI can only fund direct costs such as equipment, travel expenses, and consultancy fees, normally not to exceed £4,000 — although more substantial awards may exceptionally be made. BSI cannot pay institutional overheads, salary costs, PhD studentships, or other normal living costs. Applications must be received by 1 February annually with two academic references. Decisions will be announced in March.

BSI Visiting Iraqi Scholar Grants. Two grants are offered each year to Iraqi scholars visiting the UK and working in all disciplines within humanities and social sciences. These grants include a joint arrangement with the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society). Preference is given to Iraqi scholars who have established links with UK institutions and would like to carry out collaborative projects with academics or heritage professionals in the UK. All applications and references must be received by 1 February annually. Candidates will be informed of the decision by early July. Please note that the next scholarship will be reassessed in the months of February to June and October to early December 2016. However, if you have already received an invitation or made arrangements with a UK institution, there may be the possibility of taking up a scholarship in October to early December 2016. Formal leave of absence from the scholar’s own institution or employer is required before an award is made; a copy of the permission for a leave of absence is required with the application. An acceptance form is required from each applicant in advance of making travel arrangements. All scholars must be able to converse in English and understand English to a working level to ensure the placement is a success. For further information see: www.bisi.ac.uk/content/visiting-iraqi-scholar.

BSI Outreach Grants. Grants are available to support outreach and public engagement events and projects such as lectures, study days, and popular publications that relate directly to the Middle East from earliest times to the modern day; the development and practice of economic and social policies in the Middle East; from earliest times to the modern day; the development and practice of economic and social policies in the Middle East; and is for a specific qualification (e.g. BA, MA, PhD etc.) Available Grants Number 21, 2016

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 successful applicant will be able to contribute to the advancement of research through workshops or conferences, or visits by or to partner scholars. Applicants may seek support for any combination of eligible activity. Individual applications are available from a minimum of £200 up to a maximum of £3,000. Deadlines are the 16th February of each year.

For more information: http://bips.ac.uk/grants/

British-Yemeni Society Annual Academic Grant

Applications are invited from anyone carrying out research in Yemen or on a Yemen-related subject at a British or Yemeni University. Applicants’ nationality is irrelevant. Applications may be made to assist with travel to Yemen and vice versa. The trustees of the BRISMES Research Committee will announce the award or divided (max. three).

Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Foundation BRISMES Scholarships. The purpose of the scholarships is to encourage more people to pursue postgraduate studies in disciplines related to the Middle East in British universities. The scholarships will be for one academic year. The value of each scholarship will be £2,000. Two scholarships will be awarded. Applications should be made to the BRISMES Administrative office. The deadline for round 1 is 31 March. The applications have to be registered at any UK university, a paid-up member of BRISMES (Student membership suffices), submit an application of 600–1000 words and email the BRISMES research committee and obtain a brief supporting statement from their supervisor. The announcement of the award will be made in June and published in the July edition of the BRISMES newsletter.

For full details, deadlines and conditions of all the above see the website www.brismes.ac.uk/student-area/scholarships or email a.l.haysey@dur.ac.uk.

British-Yemeni Society Academic Grant

Available Grants

The Committee will consider the applications and make the grant at the AGM in June. As a condition of the grant, the successful applicant will be required to make an acknowledgement of the grant in their thesis or dissertation. The applicant will also be expected to make a presentation to the Society (to be summarised in the Society’s Journal) on the results of the research assisted by the grant.

Submissions and any queries are to be addressed to the Honorary Secretary, The British-Yemeni Society, 210 Stephendale Road, London SW6 2PP, email afiffea@gmail.com. For full details see the website: www.bys.org.uk A direct link will be in the newsletter under the title ‘The British-Yemeni Society Academic Grant’. Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World (CASAW)

CASAW, a language-based area studies initiative funded by the AHRC, ESRC, HEFCE and SFC, offers funding for research internships, postgraduate internships and fellowships in publishing literary translations (Arabic) at the Universities of Edinburgh, Durham and Manchester. Website: www.casaw.ac.uk/.

Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL)

CBRL currently offers Travel Grants, Team-based Fieldwork Awards, Pilot Study Awards, Visiting Research Fellowships and Scholarships, Project Completion Awards 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 policies 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.

The CBRL provides funding to research projects awards made available from the funds it receives from the British Academy through its grant-in-aid. To apply for CBRL funding, honorary positions and unfunded affiliations please see detailed information about each application process follow the relevant links below. Please note that only CBRL members are eligible to apply for funding. The number of awards made depends on the level of funding available.

1. Fellowships: these include Senior Visiting Fellowships, Visiting Research Fellowships and Visiting Scholarships. http://cbrl.org.uk/funding-and-jobs/fellowships-and-scholarships

2. Project Awards: these include Pilot Project Awards,
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 winner of the best PhD dissertation on a Middle Eastern topic in the Social Sciences or Humanities. The current value of the prize is £600 for the winner and £150 for the runner up. Anyone wishing to submit his/her dissertation for consideration should send a copy, together with an accompanying letter or recommendation from their professor to Professor Charles Trott, O.A.S., Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1X 0NG, UK. The deadline for submission of entries is 31 January. See: www.britis.ac.uk/students-award-leigh-douglas-memorial-prize for more information.

Grants for Yemeni Students: 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, London WC1X 0BN, UK. Deadline: 31 January. See: www.leighdouglasfund.co.uk for more information.

Available Grants

Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund

Sir William Luce Fellowship

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

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

Sir William Luce Fellowship

SOAS Scholarships and Studentships

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

Thesiger-Oman Fellowships

By the kind generosity of the His Majesty Qaboos bin Said Al-Said, Sultan of Oman, the Royal Geographical Society offers one annual fellowship of up to £8,000 for geographical research in the arid and semi-arid regions of the world, as a memorial to Sir Wilfred Thesiger. The fellowship will focus either on the physical aspects or on the human dimension of arid environments. The fellowship funds a researcher with an outstanding research proposal, including periods of arid environment fieldwork. To reflect Thesiger's interests, research within the Middle East and other arid regions he visited will be given priority, but applications for work in the world's other arid regions is also welcomed. The deadline is 23 November each year.

For further information see: www.rgs.org/OurWork/Grants/research/Thesiger-Oman-Fellowships.htm

Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Award for Natural History

This award is intended to acknowledge the contributions made by an individual, primarily through original research and publication, to the scientific study of the archaeology, history and natural history of the UAE. This award is in

Annual Awards: The Abu Dhabi Natural History Group gives two awards each year. Nominations for both awards can be made by members of any of the UAE’s three natural history groups, in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Al-Ain. Nominees, however, need not be members of any of the Groups, although serving officers of the Abu Dhabi ENHG (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary) are not eligible. The winners are selected by the committee of the Abu Dhabi ENHG early each year. The winners are usually announced at the Inter Emirates Weekend (IEW). Nominations may be sent by post to The Chairman, ENHG, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, by 15th December each year.

Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammed Award for Natural History

This award is intended to acknowledge the contributions made by an individual, primarily through original research and publication, to the scientific study of the archaeology, history and natural history of the UAE. This award is in

history and natural history of the UAE. This award is in place of the Jashanmal Award that was presented for several years after the introduction of the ENHG in the UAE. The Award consists of an inscribed silver dhow and a cash sum.

Elphinstone Scholarships

A number of Elphinstone PhD Scholarships at Aberdeen University are available across the arts, humanities and social sciences, linked to specific, individual research projects. These Scholarships cover the entirety of tuition fees for a PhD student of any nationality commencing full-time study in October 2016, for the three-year duration of their studies. For further details please contact Dr Zohar Hadar-Afhouche (zohar@abdn.ac.uk).

Fully Funded Two-year Masters Scholarships, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

The scholarships are offered for high-achieving students from anywhere in the world. Proficiency in both Arabic and English is required. Students who graduated in recent years, or who are now studying for their bachelor’s degree in their final year, are eligible to apply for admission for the coming academic year. Scholarships are available in Politics and IR; Sociology & Anthropology; Media & Cultural Studies; Legal Studies; Comparative Literature; History; Philosophy; and Arabic Language & Linguistics. Information: www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/EN/Academics/ School/SSH/Pages/Default.aspx

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. Applicants for the Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship have until 14 February to propose their project. Research Grant deadlines are on 1 April and 1 October. Visit the website for application forms and guidelines: www.krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/wainwright/.

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

International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF)

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

Completed in 2015/16

DASI workshop: Aramaic inscriptions of the Gulf 27 January - 3 February 2015, Pisa, Dipartimento di Civilta e Forme del Sapere

A workshop on the Aramaic inscriptions of the Gulf was held in Pisa from January, 27th to February, 3rd. Dr. Maria Gorea, researcher of the Université de Paris VIII - Département d’Hébreu, took part of the workshop and explained the peculiarities of those inscriptions. Particular requirements for their digitization were investigated. The DASI system was also described and tested for entering of those inscriptions in view to a possible future collaboration. http://arabiantica.humnet.unipi.it/

Leiden Center for the Study of Ancient Arabia Launched 17 March, Leiden University

On March, 17th 2015, Leiden announced the establishment of the Leiden Center for the Study of Ancient Arabia (LeiCenSAA) to promote the ancient languages and cultures of Arabia, and to disseminate this knowledge to the broader public. The inauguration of the Center was celebrated with an evening event in the National Museum of Antiquities (RMO) in Leiden. On display were several specimens of Abydos Institute’s collection of Ancient South Arabian miniscule inscriptions. VIP guests were treated to an up-close examination of the artifacts, and enjoyed a short lecture on the history of their discovery and decipherment. After a few remarks by the Center’s Director, A. Al-Jallad, and an opening ceremony by the Dean of Humanities at Leiden University, Prof. H.W. van den Doel, BFSA Hon. Sec. Macdonald gave the keynote Leiden-Aramco Lecture on Ancient Arabian Civilization: “Forgotten Civilizations at the Heart of the Arabian Near East”.

LeiCenSAA is a meeting place for those interested in Arabia’s ancient heritage. Each year, the Center will organize a public lecture by a high-profile international scholar on Ancient Arabia, which will be followed by an annual conference. Beirut-Semites Languages and Linguistics Series will publish the proceedings. The Center, with the support of the Leiden University Library, publishes a peer-reviewed, open-access journal, entitled Arabian Epigraphic Notes (AEN). AEN is a forum for the publication of new epigraphic finds and for the discussion of relevant historical and linguistic issues. The first volume will appear in 3rd quarter 2015.

To help train the next generation of scholars of Ancient Arabia, the Center organizes an “Epigraphic Summer School” in conjunction with the Leiden Linguistic Summer School. Students will have the opportunity to train in some of the epigraphic languages of Arabia – such as Nabataean Aramaic, Safaitic, Dadanitic, and the non-Sabaic Ancient South Arabian languages – which are rarely, if ever, on the curriculum of Western Universities. We hope to expand this learning opportunity to include a field school in Jordan, where students are able to learn the methods of carrying out an epigraphic survey.

The Center’s board will each year award a prize to the best PhD thesis written on a subject dealing with Ancient Arabia. This important recognition of young talent also hopes to promote the study of the cultures and languages of Ancient Arabia across disciplines.

One of the goals of the Center is to communicate important discoveries and advances from the field to the broader public. The Center’s blog will contain popularizing entries and updates about current excavations and new journal articles, and book reviews geared towards non-specialists. Our event calendar will gather in one place the dates of all conferences relevant to the study of Ancient Arabia, but also the release dates of publications in the field.

The Center is located in the same building on the Leiden University Campus as the Library of the Netherlands Institute for Oriental Studies (NIAS). To augment this, the Center is currently building a research library of hard-to-access works on Ancient Arabia, including out-of-print books, research notes, databases, photographs, etc. The preliminary collection includes parts of the libraries of Professor A. Drewes and Dr. G.M.H. King.

For more information about the Center, its activities and publications, and to learn how to become a sponsor, please visit https://www.arabiantica.humnet.unipi.it/, our Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/pages/Leiden-Center-for-the-Study-of-Ancient-Arabia/804197999659178, or email the Center’s director, Dr. A. Al-Jallad at a.m.al-jallad@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Report by Wise Singel-Complex

The Lost Dhôw: A Discovery of the Maritime Silk Route 15 March-26th April 2015, Toronto Museum, Canada

In 1998, an Arab ship carrying goods from China was discovered at the bottom of the Indian Ocean off Bellingtun Island, Indonesia. Dating from the 9th century (China’s Tang Dynasty), the Bellingtun shipwreck is the earliest Arab vessel of this period to be found with a complete cargo, including silver ingots, bronze mirrors, spice-filled jars, intricately worked vessels of silver and gold, and thousands of ceramic bowls, ewers, and other vessels. Uncovering its mysterious origins reveals the interconnections between two great powers, the Tang and Abbasid Empires, whose influence coincided spatially and temporally from the East China Sea to North Africa. The Lost Dhôw: A Discovery from the Maritime Silk Route provides the earliest evidence of a maritime silk route — and confirms the vibrant exchange of ideas and technologies that occurred centuries before the Portuguese encountered the region in the late 15th century. Through the display of approximately 300 objects from its cargo, this exhibition tells compelling stories about the ship, its crew, and the treacherous movement by sea of domestic and luxury wares between continents 1,200 years ago.

Sharjah Biennial 12: The Past, the Present, the Possible. 7 June 2015, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE

Sharjah Biennial 12: The Past, the Present, the Possible began to take shape in private conversation between Danh Vo and curator Europie Joo in early 2013. They discussed the relevance of contemporary art; and the potential or artistic positions to imagine something beyond current states of social and political confinement; and the need for artists to play active roles in imagining the possible. “SB12” showcases more than 50 artists and cultural practitioners from approximately 25 countries who participate in the process of imagining Sharjah through education, culture, religion, heritage and science by introducing ideas of the possible through art and work.


Wendell Phillips headed the largest archaeological expedition to South Arabia (present-day Yemen) from 1949-1952, accompanied by leading scholars, military, technicians, and other professionals. His quest was to uncover ancient cities — Tamma, the capital of the once-prosperous Qataban kingdom, and Marib, the reputed home of the legendary Queen of Sheba—that had flourished along the fabled incense road some 2500 years earlier. Through a selection of undated objects as well as film and photography shot by the exhibition team, the collection highlights Phillips’ key finds, recreates his adventures and conveys the thrill of discovery on the last great archeological front.

PEF Annual Conference: Crisis Through the Ages 3-7 July 2015, British Museum

The PEF Anniversary 1 day conference took place between 3rd-5th July at the British Museum, and in association with the Department of Middle East, on the theme of “Crisis Through the Ages”. Each speaker focused on an issue of crisis in the region relevant to their specialist area, which ranged in time from the earliest periods of human history right through to the modern era. See http://www.pef.org

Eleventh Biennial ASTENE Conference 17 - 20 July, 2015, University of Exeter

The conference included submissions on the following themes:

• ASTENE travellers in both directions: visitors from the Middle East in Europe (and America) and visitors from the West in the East.
• Travels in tandem, or group travels that were not a package tour.
• Something to write home about — what travellers chose to write about their travels and how they related their adventures to their friends and family — what was to be omitted and what to be emphasized.
• Solo travellers — in search of knowledge, adventures, business, leisure.
• Professionals and dilettanti in the art of travel — what makes a traveller, a traveller’s identity.
• Tracking a traveller — in other people’s notes, diaries, and memoirs.

On 18 July there was a screening of ‘Death on the Nile’ with Peter Ustinov as Hercule Poirot, and a talk by Elizabeth Woodhorpe. 19 July concluded with a talk on ‘The Early Members of the Travellers Club, London’. On 20 July there was a private visit to the former home of Agatha Christie and Henrietta McColl gave a talk about Agatha’s husband archaeologist Max Mallowan.


ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies organized its Forty First International Conference on the River Jordan. It was held at the Oriental Institute, the University of Oxford, 13-15 July 2015.

The conference aimed to focus its attention on the three northern rivers of the river Jordan (the Dan, Baniyas, and Hashamni streams) and the area of the Sea of Galilee (the sea itself not a topic of the conference) and the Jordan river’s southern course up to where it enters the Dead Sea (the sea itself not a topic of the conference). Essentially, the conference has focused on the river Jordan (not the hinterland of the riparian countries). If you wish to participate in future conferences, please contact Tel. 01865-514041 Email: aram@orinst.ox.ac.uk

ARAM Society: Travellers, Pilgrims and Orientalists during the 1st Millennium in the Levant 20-22 July 2015, University of Oxford

ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies organised its Forty Second International Conference on Travellers, Pilgrims and Orientalists during the 1st Millennium in the Levant, held at the Oriental Institute, the University of Oxford, 20-22 July 2015. If you wish to participate in future conferences, please contact Tel. 01865-514041 Email: aram@orinst.ox.ac.uk

LUCIS-LeiCenSAA Conference | Arabian Archaeology in the 21st Century

On Wednesday 9 December, 2015, the Leiden University Centre for the Study of Islam and Society and the Leiden Center for the Study of Ancient Arabia hosted a joint
conference to highlight the state-of-the-art in Arabian Archaeology in the 21st century. The venue of this event was the Vossiuszaal in the University Library.

On Thursday 10 December 2015, Laila Nehme (French National Centre for Scientific Research) delivered the Leiden-Aramco Lecture on Ancient Arabian Civilization: The Nabataeans in the Arabian Peninsula: An Overview“

This lecture presented, for the first time extensively, what we know of the Nabataean presence in the Arabian Peninsula, based on the literary, archaeological and epigraphic sources. The traces the Nabataeans left were examined in the context of the trans-Arabian incense trade in order to reassess their involvement in it. The speaker took into account the most recent discoveries related to contacts between the Nabataeans and South Arabia and focused on the results of the currently ongoing excavation projects in several oases of the north-western part of the Peninsula, where the Nabataeans exerted political control.

Forthcoming Events

Early and Late Prehistory of territories and interactions 14-15th February 2016, National Library of Kuwait

For this second workshop, in February 2016, the CEFAS and The National Council for Culture, Arts & Letters organized a meeting in Kuwait, with international researchers, a large part of them being directors of archaeological operations and actors of archaeology and heritage in the region, dealing with new data, new methods and recent works.

The dichotomic theme was focused on “territories, settlement patterns and interactions in Arabic Peninsula”, including the questions of sedentism and nomadism, from Neolithic to the eve of the Islamic period.


The Song of Sanaa, the classical tradition of Yemeni music“ 30 March 2016, Beit al Badr, Kuwait

De Juan Lambert

The Song of Sanaa is the oldest musical tradition in Yemen and the whole Arabian Peninsula. Until the mid-20th century, the singers were accompanying themselves with a special lute, the qamis or tarab, which was characterized by a monosyllable soundbox covered with an animal skin. The presence of this instrument in Yemen is probably a historical testimony of a wider presence in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula in older periods. As an ethnomusicologist, Jean Lambert tries to revive this instrument both by his scientific analyses and his musical practice which he inherited from the last great masters in Yemen. Thus he presents this instrument both by a lecture (in Arabic) and a sung performance where he accompanies himself with qamis.


Islamic Heritage Architecture 2016
17 - 19 May 2016, Valencia, Spain

The Conference aimed to highlight the importance of Islamic Heritage Architecture to the world and its influence across different regions.

The Meeting dealt with the design of many types of buildings in Islamic countries, including not only the better known public buildings such as mosques, mausolea, citadels and forts, but also houses and gardens, engineering works such as bridges and dams, irrigation systems and many others which have also had a profound impact on society. Islamic Architecture has enriched design with a wide variety of structural shapes, including among others, unique arches, a wide variety of domes and domes, which allow for new forms to be developed. The influence that these structural forms have in non-Islamic countries was one of the themes of the Conference.

http://www.wesse.sx/uk/conferences/2016/islamic-heritage-architecture-2016

Amulets and Talismans in the Muslim World
19-20th May 2016, University of Leiden

Located at the interchange of the studies of material culture, history, religion, and anthropology, this multi-disciplinary conference focused on the role amulets and talismans have played in the Muslim world. We seek to understand how different Muslim communities and individuals pursue their religiosity when unstated from specific local and temporal settings and how amulets and talismans become articulated with other elements of local religiosities in rural, urban and different social contexts by exploring local ways of engagement with the sacred space, natural forces and unexplainable phenomena and their impact to devotional experiences where amulets play a role. The conference addressed the following lines of inquiry in 6 panels:

1. The study of amulets and talismans comprised in collections.
2. Methodological approaches that different disciplines have proposed for the study of amulets and talismans.
3. Different kinds of power that amulets and talismans bear and convey.
4. Physical features and materiality of amulets and talismans.
5. Amulets and talismans within ritual processes.


ARAM Society: The Araamic Kingdoms and the Araamic culture in the ancient Near East
18-20 July 2016, University of Oxford

ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies organized its 44th International Conference on the Comparative Studies of the Classical Semitic Languages, to be held at the Oriental Institute, the University of Oxford, 21-22 July 2016. The conference aimed to study the common elements and parallel developments of the different Semitic languages and their strong support to a linguistic family-tree.

The 2016 Seminar for Arabian Studies
29-31st July 2016, British Museum

This year’s Special Session was “Textiles and Personal Adornment in the Arabian Peninsula”. Other featured subject areas included Pre-Historic and Islamic Archaeology, History and Ethnography, and papers on late pre-Islamic Arabia. For further information see www.thefbsa.org/content/about-the-seminar

The 8th Modern Conflict Archaeology Conference
15 October 2016, University of Bristol

This one day conference is aimed toward postgraduates and early career researchers exploring areas pertaining to 20th and 21st century conflict. The conference will be a forum for critical and theoretical discussion and provide an opportunity for both research presentation and to meet with people working or studying in similar fields. Members of the public are also welcome to attend the conference.

Those wishing to attend will need to register for FREE tickets using Eventbrite at this link: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/8th-annual-modern-conflict-archaeology-conference-tickets-24190231634

For further information please contact the organisers at team@meaconf.com or visit the conference website at http://www.meaconf.com.
NEW PUBLICATIONS ON ARABIA


Eigeld, T. 2015. When All the lands were Sea: A Photographic Journey into the lives of the Marsh Arabs of Iraq. Interlink. £18.99 ISBN 978-7-5666-982-8


JOURNALS & MAGAZINES

Adumatu
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www.tandfonline.com/jab  
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Journal of the British-Yemeni Society  
www.al-bah.com/byn/journal.htm  
ISSN 1356-0229. Contact the Honorary Secretary, British-Yemeni Society, 2 Lugard Terrace, London W14 8SJ. Tel: 020 7560 8995.

Journal of Near Eastern Studies  
www.journals.uchicago.edu/toe/jnes/current  
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ISSN 0022-4995. E-ISSN: 1568-5209. JESH contains studies extending our knowledge of the economic and social history of what was once labelled as the Orient: the Ancient Near East, the World of Islam, and South, Southeast, and East Asia. Contact: jesho@let.leidenuniv.nl

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 Persiansate Studies  
www.brill.nl/jps  
ISSN 1874-7094 and E-ISSN 1874-7167. Edited by Sadik Amir Arjomand. Order through: marketing@brill.nl

Levant  
www.maney.co.uk/index.php/journals/lev/  
ISSN: 0075-4914; E-ISSN: 1756-3801. Levant is the international peer-reviewed journal of the Council for British Research in the Levant (CBLR), a British Academy-sponsored institute with research centres in Amman and Jerusalem, but which also supports research in Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus. Contributions from a wide variety of areas, including anthropology, archaeology, geography, history, language and literature, political studies, religion, sociology and tourism, are encouraged. Editor: Graham Philip.

Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication.  
www.brill.nl/mjcc  
ISSN: 1873-9857 and E-ISSN: 1873-9865  
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.

Palorient  
www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/revue/paleo  
ISSN 0153-9345. A multidisciplinary six-monthly CNRS journal with an international audience, devoted to a number of aspects of the prehistory and proto-history of southwestern Asia, including Arabia. CNRS Editions, 15 rue Malebranche, F-75005 Paris. Further information email: paleorient@mae.a-paris10.fr

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

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

Syria  
www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/revue/syria  
E-ISSN 1957-701X. Syria is an annual journal, launched in 1920 by the French Institute of the Near East. It is dedicated to the history and archaeology of the Semitic Near East from Prehistory to the Islamic conquest.

Tribulus, Journal of the Emirates Natural History Group  
www.astene.org.uk  
To the history and archaeology of the Semitic Near East from Prehistory to the Islamic conquest.

Wildlife Middle East News  
www.wmenews.com  
There are great pressures on the environment and wildlife throughout the Middle East. The rapid pace of economic development, the fragility of the natural ecosystems and low population densities are factors making many indigenous species vulnerable to extinction. The expansion of human populations and the increasing contact between domestic and wild animals has also increased disease transmission between wild and domestic species, including humans. An extremely useful quarterly bulletin of wildlife news, Wild Life Middle East keeps abreast of the situation and also reviews new publications.

Societies and Online Resources  
Number 21, 2016

Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH)  
www.adach.ac  

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.

American Institute for Yemeni Studies  
www.ays.org  

Arab-British Centre  
www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk/  

Arab World Institute  
www.imarabe.org/  

Arabian Wildlife  
www.arabianwildlife.com  

Archaeology of Southwest Asia and Adjacent Areas (ASWA [AJ])  
www.alexandriarchive.org/icaz/workawha.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.bahrainsociety.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.bisi.ac.uk/  

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies  
www.bsms.ac.uk  

British-Yemeni Society  
http://www.al-bah.com/bsy/  

Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World  
www.casaw.ac.uk/  

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

Council for British Research in the Levant  
www.cbfl.org.uk  

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient Department  
www.dainst.org  

French Institute of the Near-East (Ifpo)  
www.ifiporigent.org/  

Friends of the Hadramant  
www.hadramant.co.uk  

Friends of Soqotra  
www.friendsofsoqotra.org  

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University  
www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais  

George Lewis Fine Art  

Janet Rady Fine Art  

London Centre for the Ancient Near East  
www.soas.ac.uk/nme/anc/kane/  

London Middle East Institute  
www.lmei.soas.ac.uk  

Mathaf Gallery  
www.mathafgallery.com  

MBI Al Jaber Foundation  
www.mbfoundation.com  

Oman & Arabia Natural History  
www.oman.org/nath00.htm  

Ornithological Society of the Middle East  
www.osme.org  

Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia  
http://krcfm.orient.onyx.ac.uk/fmi/webd/ociana  

Oxford Brookes Archaeology and Heritage (OBAH)  
http://heritage.brookes.ac.uk/  

Palestine Exploration Fund  
www.pef.org.uk  

Palaeodeserts  
http://www.palaeodeserts.com/
The Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA)
http://timea.rice.edu/
The Qantara Project
http://www.qantara-med.org

UAE Interact, Culture Pages
www.uaeculture.com

The Yemen Manuscript Digitization Initiative
http://ymdi.soregon.edu/

Review Essays
Book Reviews are collated by William Facey.

This year’s Books section opens with a Review Essay by William Facey who writes on Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab by Michael Crawford

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab
Michael Crawford

This significant contribution to Arabian studies comes at a timely moment as so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) seeks to overrun the apparent similarities between this movement and the Wahhabism that gave rise to the First Saudi State in the 18th century. There is certainly a need for an account of the latter that enables a general reader to compare and contrast the two ideologies.

This task Michael Crawford is well equipped to take on. Having qualified as a lawyer before choosing a diplomatic career in the Middle East, he has made something of a specialism of the development of Wahhabism and the three successive Saudi states with which it has been intertwined over the last two and a half centuries. OneWorld have made an excellent choice in publishing this, his first book, in their ‘Makers of the Muslim World’ series. It is clearly presented and dispassionate, combining impressive scholarship (the author has read all the grey sources) and an accessible style. The volume is nicely produced and carefully edited – this reader spotted only a single misprint. Scholarly apparatus is kept to a minimum: there is a short bibliography but no notes, only citations in the text. The author has cunningly made up for the publisher’s refusal to include his extensive scholarly paraphernalia by making his full notes available on the internet at: www.oneworld-publications.com/books/michael-crawford/ibn-abd-al-wahhab.

The first chapter gives us an overview of the Wahhabi phenomenon as created in the 18th century by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703/4–1792). It arose in an isolated society beyond the fringes of the Ottoman Empire and the reach of colonial powers. Comparisons with other early nationalist or resistance movements in the Muslim world miss the point: the Shaykh’s call was a theological one, for a return to the correct belief and practice of the first Muslims, based on upholding the overriding doctrine of the Oneness (tawhid) of God. This in his view rendered the medieval society beyond the reach of colonial powers. Comparisons with other early nationalist or resistance movements in the Muslim world miss the point: the Shaykh’s call was a theological one, for a return to the correct belief and practice of the first Muslims, based on upholding the overriding doctrine of the Oneness (tawhid) of God. This in his view rendered heretical any intercession involving saints, shrines, holy men or sacred sites. Such practices were prevalent in Najd as in the Muslim world at large, but those who indulged in them were polytheists guilty of shirk, or ‘associating’ other beings with God; they were to be persuaded on to the right path, or else subjected to the extreme measure of takfiri – excommunication as infidels.

This in the Shaykh’s view, was or ought to be, self-evident to anybody reading the Qur’an. An essential part of his stance was a dismissal of religious hierarchies on the grounds that they served to mediate between God and the individual: he held that the self-evident message of the Qur’an should be directly accessed. In thus privileging personal access to the sacred text, he could be perceived simultaneously as orthodox by his followers and as sectarian by the religious establishment. He was at once backward-looking and, in his emphasis on the individual, curiously modern – in a sense the hallmark of all modern Salafist movements of which Wahhabism is an early example. Wahhabism’s challenge to contemporary elites also exerted a popular appeal based on a fundamentalist return to the egalitarianism of the first Muslim community. Social barriers counted for nothing, and salvation was open to all on an equal basis. Despite all this, the Shaykh was no pluralist. Because of his insistence on a sole, self-evident interpretation of the Qur’an’s revelation, he had to take the authoritarian line that no deviation was permissible. And herein lies a paradox at the heart of his movement.

In challenging the authority and status of the clerical class and championing the individual’s direct relationship with the scriptures, he inevitably founded a new orthodoxy laying claim to a monopoly of correct dogma.

A strength of this book is its presentation in Chapters 2 and 3 of the Shaykh’s small-town background in a family of prominent qadis and mufisits, the Hanbali milieu in which he grew up and whose quietist streak he reacted against, and his stern but not always unbending personality. His travels to Mecca, Medina, Basra and al-Hasa are described and the intellectual influences he was exposed to – a case if ever there was one of travel failing to broaden the mind. This account is based not only on the chronicles of Ibn Ghanam and Ibn Bihr but also on the Shaykh’s own writings in the form of tracts, rulings and letters of advice. There is nothing conceptually or theologically original in his ideas. Crawford, who has a gift for the apt phrase, sums him up as less an intellectual theologian than an ‘agitator for God’ with a moral mission to bring people back to correct practice and behaviour in their daily lives, based on belief in tawhid, on an activist commitment to its promulgation, and on adherence to Shar’a. Anyone who has read the Shaykh’s most famous work, the Kitab al-Dhayl, has the point: the Shaykh’s stance is one of preaching rather than argument. Interestingly, Crawford suggests his animus may in part have been kindled by fear of an Islamic ecumenical drive by Nadir Shah to reconcile Sunni and Shi’i rites.

Chapter 3 traces Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s evolution from a lone voice in the small, insular towns of Najd to mentor of successive Saudi rulers and guide of the emergent Saudi state. He had got into trouble at al-‘Uyayna for his uncompromising stance, and was expelled by the ruler to al-Dir’iyya in 1744/5. Thus, though personally modest and championing the individual’s direct relationship with the scriptures, he inevitably founded a new orthodoxy laying claim to a monopoly of correct dogma.
for a system of government or social institutions, other than what followed from the egalitarianism implied by the concept of the community of upholders of twelvism. Mechanisms (such as the mutawwini) for enforcing the teaching of the truth and living by the truth came later. His political ambition seems to have extended no further than to place himself in league with a reliable protector and champion of that community. In this Wahhabism can be contrasted with ISIS. He was able to work on a small scale, and to compromise with temporal power, provided only that the ruler subscribed to the principles of twelvism. So long as that was so, the ruler was owed unreserved obedience: here a legacy of Hanbali quietism can be detected. It was vital to avoid fitna, disension within the community. The result of this view was that the scholars and princes developed separate spheres of responsibility.

Also absent from Wahhabism was any concept of the Caliphate. In this last aspect at least, and in its lack of millenarianism, it is notably at variance with other Salafist movements such as ISIS. However, it does seem to have promoted the idea of death in battle being the gateway to paradise, as evidenced for example by the warriors found slain after the defeat at Bisal in 1814 who had roped themselves together so as made it virtually impossible, and by the Ikhwan war cry a century later: “The winds of Paradise are blowing: where are you who hanker after Paradise?” To that extent Wahhabism appears to have shared with ISIS a dangerous cult of martyrdom. This aspect of it Crawford does not explore.

After the Shaykh’s death, the application of Wahhabism became more nuanced in response to circumstance as the religious establishment became ever more subordinate to government, a phenomenon about which other Salafist movements such as ISIS. However, it does seem to have promoted the idea of death in battle being the gateway to paradise, as evidenced for example by the warriors found slain after the defeat at Bisal in 1814 who had roped themselves together so as made it virtually impossible, and by the Ikhwan war cry a century later: “The winds of Paradise are blowing: where are you who hanker after Paradise?” To that extent Wahhabism appears to have shared with ISIS a dangerous cult of martyrdom. This aspect of it Crawford does not explore.

Writing with a conciseness worthy of Tacitus, Crawford has produced a masterpiece of compression, especially considering the research on which it is based. Occasionally the strain shows and the reader craves a little more explanation. One senses there is a much bigger book bursting to get out. The rise and development of Wahhabism can have been historically drawing upon English-language works and translations interspersed with personal reflections from his five years at the Hajj Research Centre and subsequent visits to the city.

Sardar begins with biblical and Greek references to Mecca, which had endured encouraged its inhabitants to feel extra-special.” He has a lot of ground to cover, commencing with pre-Islamic times and ending at around 2010. Throughout it all, Sardar aims to extend the Sacred Mosque to accommodate two million worshippers. It is soon apparent that to tell the history of Mecca is to tell the history of Islam, and much of what follows is familiar, albeit reframed in the context of the city, its environs and peoples. Sardar synthesizes existing research and contemporaneous travels; his erudition is expertly curating at the Royal Geographical Society. The latter opened in 1853 and has long been a Think Tank of ideas about the meaning and significance of Mecca, and early on we realize that this is not going to be an altogether comforting read. For Sardar, the Muslim attachment to Mecca is deep-rooted and profound: “It is a love and devotion, a yearning and a dream that I share with more than a billion others. It is a common bond between Muslims: Mecca and I is at one and the same time Sardar for all that.

The book opens with Sardar on a pilgrim bus during his first hajj in 1975, stuck in yet another traffic jam: “Already I have become one of the millions who travel to Mecca every year, a number that reflects the fascination that I have with the Sacred Mosque. It is a place that has captured my imagination, and I am drawn to its mysteries.” He has a lot of ground to cover, commencing with pre-Islamic times and ending at around 2010. Throughout it all, Sardar aims to extend the Sacred Mosque to accommodate two million worshippers. It is soon apparent that to tell the history of Mecca is to tell the history of Islam, and much of what follows is familiar, albeit reframed in the context of the city, its environs and peoples. Sardar synthesizes existing research and contemporaneous travels; his erudition is expertly curating at the Royal Geographical Society. The latter opened in 1853 and has long been a Think Tank of ideas about the meaning and significance of Mecca, and early on we realize that this is not going to be an altogether comforting read. For Sardar, the Muslim attachment to Mecca is deep-rooted and profound: “It is a love and devotion, a yearning and a dream that I share with more than a billion others. It is a common bond between Muslims: Mecca and I is at one and the same time Sardar for all that.

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and the cultural vibrancy they introduced largely left the city with them: "The more Mecca became part of the celestial realm the less need it had to conform to earthy norms." Mecca was certainly not, however, immune to the ascendency of Europe in the 18th century, or the impact of colonialism in the 19th, when rivalries between European powers were fought in terms of possession of foreign lands and domination over non-European peoples. Sardar rightly sees the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 as having a profound impact on Mecca, both in terms of an influx of ethnically diverse pilgrims and settlers, and European colonial penetration. He devotes a chapter to the numerous European travellers who visited Mecca in the empire of imperialist powers: men like the Dutch Orientalist Snouck Hurgronje, the English spy Arthur J. B. Wavell and, famously, the polymath explorer Sir Richard Francis Burton. But Sardar also mentions a number of mainly British converts to Islam who made the hajj in the early 20th century, including Lord Headley in 1923 (but not also in 1927 as Sardar suggests), Eldon Rutter in 1925–26 (and whom Sardar wrongly assumes was another spy – see the new edition of Rutter’s The Holy Cities of Arabia, reviewed in this Bulletin), and Lady Evelyn Cobbold in 1933.

Lord Headley made the hajj months before Husayn ibn Ali, ‘King of the Hijja’, abdicated, ushering in the Saudi era. King ‘Abd al-’Aziz Ibn Saud introduced to Mecca the trappings of modernity in line with the Wahhabi worldview. As the century wore on and oil wealth accumulated, the Saudis eased restrictions and set about the redevelopment of Mecca. As it is at this point, as we reach the end of the chronology, that Sardar delivers a scathing indictment of the Saudis in Mecca. He is especially critical of their bulldozing of the city’s historic fabric in favour of “ugly high-rise buildings, spaghetti junctions and high-mast lighting”; the ‘manic consumption’ that envelops the city, lighting; the ‘manic consumption’ that envelops the city, especially from India and West Africa, who certainly did nothing for the Empire’s prestige, and the spread of disease, because of Muslim rejection of the principle of quarantine. This concern was far from illogical – more than 200,000 had

died in the 1865 cholera epidemic in the Hijaz. There was also a fear that the Hajj would provide an opportunity for the spread of fundamentalist doctrine and, more particularly, anti-colonial rhetoric.

This volume like many Harvard U.P. books is handsomely produced. It is impressively researched, drawing on a wide range of sources, including archives from the Sudan to Singapore, and the text is supported by more than 75 pages of notes. Good maps of the Hajj routes and a properly arranged bibliography would have been useful additions. However, there are more substantive criticisms.

Despite the fascinating subject matter, the book makes for a tedious read. The style is clumsy and, more tiresomely, extremely repetitive. Very simple points are repeated over and over again, either through poor editing or because of a serious miscalculation as to the likely readership; few GCSE students will find their way to this volume. Space saved from these repetitions could usefully have been given over to longer quotations from original sources, many of which are only cited as half sentences, leaving the reader in doubt as to the context.

Perhaps more serious is the very obvious bias throughout the volume. The author clearly dislikes and rather despises the British and their colonial policies. In this he is not alone – many millions, perhaps billions, would agree with him – but this purports to be a work of history rather than polemic and his frequently expressed prejudices are not helpful in understanding a phenomenon of extreme complexity, throwing up issues that even Britain’s many excellent Muslim advisors were at a loss how to resolve.

The British fear of the spread of fundamentalism, for example, was no more irrational than it is today. Of course they were concerned with their grasp on power, but they were also desperately afraid of destabilizing the precarious social equilibrium in a number of multicultural countries under their control. The disasters that were to attend Partition and events of more recent times have illustrated just how such destabilization might unfold.

The wish to make a snide remark about the British at every opportunity has the perhaps unintended effect of presenting the Muslims world in an infantilizing light. The raids on pilgrims by the Bedouin – a historic problem connived at by the Sharifs of Mecca, who often took their cut – or the enslavement of African pilgrims by Muslim slavers, are presented not as social problems of the Muslim world but as the result of British weakness and incompetence.

Muslims employed by the British to try and find solutions to the problems of the pilgrims at Jiddah and the holy cities, men who in many cases worked tirelessly for both their masters and their co-religionists, are often spoken of in the same disparaging terms as the British, simply because of their association with the Empire. Again, it is implied – not stated – that the Nizam of Hyderabad, perhaps the richest man in the world and ruler of a vast area of non-Raj India, and the Nawab Begums of Bhopal, four female rulers remarkable for their energy, their far-reaching reforms in numerous fields, and their literary and architectural creations, who were much decorated and, incidentally, major contributors to the Woking Mosque, trembled before the jackbooted British. They would not have been amused.

Part of the problem is that the book tries to make moral attitudes and politically correct mindsets retroactive. This is a common error, but one that is not so easily understood. The dynamics of the past. The Mughal Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire were not regarded as ‘wrong’ at their inception. Of course the people conquered hated their conquerors, but the concept of empire was not seen as intrinsically immoral. Attitudes change – as with smoking – and what was once normal has become unacceptable. It is misleading to imply that modern attitudes were generally held and flouted; they did not exist at the period under discussion.

Caroline Stone

THE SUBJECT OF The British Empire and the Hajj is an important one though not often considered. At its height, Britain, although explicitly Christian, ruled over more Muslims than any Islamic power of the time. Since the Hajj was of prime importance, both as a religious duty and, secondarily, as a way of drawing the far-flung Muslim world together, the ability to organize a successful pilgrimage had traditionally been an indicator of fitness to rule.

The book begins with some introductory remarks on the Hajj and on other colonial powers’ relationship with it, and then focuses on it in the mid to late Victorian (1865–1900) and Edwardian (1901–14) era. One section in the latter chapter is particularly interesting, since the Hajj from Nigeria and the Sudan, the complicated relationship with the Mahdist movement, and the emigration from northern Nigeria, especially Bornu – now the cradle of Boko Haram – to escape living under Christian rule, are topics little known to the non-specialist.

The period of World War I follows with the – on the whole – ineffectual – Hashemite control of the holy cities replacing that of the Ottomans; itself being replaced in turn by the Saudi dynasty after 1924. The book concludes with an interesting comparison of the Hajj from Malaya and from West Africa (1924–39), and finally with the period of World War II and immediately after.

The changes in Britain’s attitude to the Hajj and the pilgrims is charted, from an initial indifference to increasing attempts at control and a wish to be perceived as facilitators of their Muslim subjects’ religious duties. The latter point is in itself remarkable: it is hard to imagine the Ottomans subsidizing Armenian pilgrimages to Jerusalem, or the Government of Pakistan helping its Hindu subjects attend the Khumb Mela.

In fact, the British were grappling with an impossible situation: on the one hand delivering the promised non-intervention in religious affairs, on the other controlling – often at the request of Muslim powers – the more unfortunate aspects of the Hajj: hordes of destitute pilgrims, especially from India and West Africa, who certainly did nothing for the Empire’s prestige, and the spread of disease, because of Muslim rejection of the principle of quarantine.

ABARIA HAS LONG held a fascination for the British, and accounts in English of Arabian travel and exploration build into a considerable library. To now see one of the lesser-known classics of that genre made more widely available is to be celebrated. The republication of The Holy Cities of Arabia for the first time since its previous editions in 1928 and 1930 is a notable event, bringing this forgotten classic of Arabian travel to a whole new generation of readers.

The lautde endeavours of the publisher, coupled with the research of Sharon Sharpe, have also ensured that we finally have a proper portrait of this fascinating Arabian traveller, who has languished in obscurity for far too long. The biographical material presented here for the first time fills a significant gap in the story of exploration. Rutter himself would certainly have been delighted with this edition.
produced to a standard matching the handsome first edition and including photographs, maps and plans, a jacket showing him in Arab dress drawn by society portraitist Sava Botsaris for the original publication, and a thorough scholarly apparatus.

Though his Hijaz journey brought him a brief celebrity, little else was known about Rutter even in his own lifetime. Now we learn that he was born not into the educated elite but in Camberwell, south London, in 1894, the son of a clerk and a seamstress. His family suffered hard times especially after his father committed suicide in 1901. Rutter’s journey from Britain to Arabia’s holy cities was made possible only via his service in the First World War which took him first – to Egypt. He joined the British army in November 1917, he was fighting with the Desert Mounted Corps at Beersheba and Gaza. He was injured and evacuated to hospital in Cairo, and it was probably during his extended recovery that he began his study of Arabic. Rutter’s rise from humble origins to become one, and so well-versed in Muslim mirrors that of Bertram Thomas, another gifted linguist whose crossing of the Empty Quarter remains one of the most noteworthy of all Arabian journeys. Thomas, like Rutter, never was fully accepted by the British establishment – probably because of his origins; neither man was the ‘right sort’.

Unlike Thomas, who remained in British imperial employ after WWI, Rutter took a position in business in Singapore, settling in 1919 in Penang where we find that he converted to Islam. He had not returned to Britain by 1922. By 1924 he was in Arabia for the first time to prepare to undertake the Hajj. He had by now acquired an impressive fluency in Arabic and set about studying an extensive range of works of orthodox Sunni Islam. Yet here a significant question arises. If Rutter was both a Muslim and fluent in Arabic, why did he choose to adopt an intricate disguise for his travels in Arabia? In The Holy Cities of Arabia, he offers what the reader that he is a sincere Muslim; one is certainly one of the most remarkable, and his narrative of his Hijaz journey brought him a brief celebrity, little was known about Rutter even in his own lifetime. Now we learn that he was born not into the educated elite but in Camberwell, south London, in 1894, the son of a clerk and a seamstress. His family suffered hard times especially after his father committed suicide in 1901. Rutter’s journey from Britain to Arabia’s holy cities was made possible only via his service in the First World War which took him first – to Egypt. He joined the British army in November 1917, he was fighting with the Desert Mounted Corps at Beersheba and Gaza. He was injured and evacuated to hospital in Cairo, and it was probably during his extended recovery that he began his study of Arabic. Rutter’s rise from humble origins to become one, and so well-versed in Muslim mirrors that of Bertram Thomas, another gifted linguist whose crossing of the Empty Quarter remains one of the most noteworthy of all Arabian journeys. Thomas, like Rutter, never was fully accepted by the British establishment – probably because of his origins; neither man was the ‘right sort’.

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Music and Traditions of the Arabian Peninsula: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar
Lisa Urkevich

IT SEEMS REMARKABLE that until recently ‘Arab’ music was divided by musicologists into only two musical regions: the Mashreq and the Maghrib, East and West. Where the Arabian Peninsula fitted into this rather arbitrary classification is unclear, but even the creation of a third category (Majnub?) would fall well short of doing justice to the vast musical culture which lies to the south of the ‘Middle East’. With influences that derive from its geographical situation adjacent to Africa, Iran and the greater Indian Ocean, it could even be seen as containing the richest and most diverse traditions in the Arab world.

Though many of these survive in precarious states of health, their continued existence, despite centuries of internal migration, social and environmental change, religious disapproval and even active prohibition, demonstrates their inherent strength and value. This is particularly impressive given that so many of the traditions were intimately tied to ceremonies central to a way of life which has changed dramatically in modern times.

Dr Urkevich has done us a great service therefore in sharing the results of her long-term research into these under-represented traditions. In doing so she has not been unaware of the fluid definitions of ‘music’, and the difficulties of transposing the term to cultures where song is traditionally de force and Bloomsbury has produced a very handsome and history.

The Encyclopaedia of Embroidery from the Arab World
Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF EMBROIDERY FROM THE ARAB WORLD is the first study not only to cover the whole region spatially, but also through time, presenting the often little-known archaeological antecedents of what we see today. The work is a remarkable achievement and will certainly become a classic work of reference in a number of fields.

The author not only provides a guide to the identification of embroideries, of great interest to collectors and museum curators, but also much technical information, invaluable for embroiderers and designers, including 40 pages of illustrations of stitches and how they are worked. In addition to the historical background, the social and economic importance of embroidery is discussed, and for linguists and translators there is an excellent and very detailed glossary, including many regional terms.

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, Director of the Textile Research Centre (TRC) of the University of Leiden, originally planned a rather different book, intending to visit each of the countries covered by the Encyclopaedia World events, however, intervened. She quickly realized that the tradition of hand embroidery, like many other crafts already much weakened by cultural and social change as well as by cheap foreign imports, and the tendency to debase both design and quality to suit the growing tourist market, was liable to vanish – another victim of the chaos and destruction of the 21st century.

So, rather than simply producing a beautiful book, or an academic study, she decided that it was vital to record everything possible before it disappeared and also to provide a work of reference for anyone in the future seeking to learn about the textile heritage of the area – or, indeed, to revive it. In addition to travelling as widely as possible to see embroidery in situ, the author has, of course, made use of the resources of the TRC as well as numerous collections, public and private, in the UK, USA and elsewhere, in particular the Kawar Collection in Jordan, and private collections in Cairo and Saudi Arabia.

Short clear chapters within broader sections make the Encyclopaedia very easy to use. The first section covers practical matters, such as materials and equipment, the embroiderers themselves and foreign influences. The second is largely historical, with a consideration of archaeological and medieval material. As always, the author links, where possible, past and present traditions, for example in the chapter on appliqué, running from ancient Egypt to the present Shari ‘Khayamiya (Street of the Tent Makers), or the use of local patterns by modern Saudi designers such as Nai’a Salih al-Bassam.

Section three covers each country in turn, and also tribal embroidery traditions – the Harb, Beni Sa’d, Beni Salim, and so on. Urban embroidery is also considered, including the influence of Indian textiles, Ottoman embroidery, and Palestinian and Syrian work, exported to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. This section has particularly interesting historical photographs – followers of the Mahdi wearing richly patched garments, for example, Palestinian women from various parts, again, Kitab Wasi of Saudi Arabia wearing a splendidly embroidered bisht. There are also valuable chapters on minority embroidery – Christian, Jewish and Samaritan, including ritual and ecclesiastical vestments.

Throughout the book are scattered ‘snapshots’ of subjects of particular interest, which add a lively and sometimes more personal touch: ‘Neksha Harazi – The Hand Embroidery Company of Al Hajjarah, Yemen’, for example, or ‘Colonel and Mrs Dickson’s Embroidered Garments from Kuwait’.

This is not an art book, and while one might wish that some of the numerous photographs of unusual pieces from private collections were more detailed examples such as the mantle of Roger of Sicily (Fig. 10.6) were reproduced at larger size, the author has made the very wise decision to use the space for diagrams of the actual embroidery patterns, thus fulfilling one of the purposes of the book: to provide an archive for reference and to make possible a revival of traditional design. There are also reconstructions of patterns from archaeological material, and sketches indicating the embroidered areas on different garments.

Fitting all this material into the space available was a tour de force and Bloomsbury has produced a very handsome volume. There are numerous useful maps, including some of unusual aspects of the subject, such as tribal confederations, a good bibliography, as well as on-line resources and a list of major textile collections and research centres.

Caroline Stone
Beatrice E. de Cardi

OBE, FBA, FSA (1914-2016) was the President of the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia.

Following her degree, Beatrice trained as a secretary – as was the expectation of all young ladies in the 1930s. But barely had she finished her course when Wheeler invited her to become his secretary at the London Museum in Lancaster House, where he was the Keeper. The war intervened and Wheeler joined up. Margot Eates held fort back at the museum, with Beatrice famously playing a prominent role, living at the museum and fire-watching throughout the Blitz. With the bombs raining down, it was finally decided to close the museum and Beatrice was lent to the Foreign Office, who sent her to China as a liaison Officer. There she supervised the transport of vital war materials and chasing up cargo from India to China, living in India almost as much as China.

After the War, she first worked in India and then in the newly formed Pakistan (as an Assistant UK Trade Commissioner). In her spare time, she threw herself into archaeology. She said she had read an article by the young Stuart Piggott who described some elaborately painted pottery from Quetta that was otherwise unknown. Beatrice wanted to extend distribution. Wheeler (now Director General of Archaeology of India) advised against it, warning her it was too dangerous. She was adamant, so Wheeler relented and arranged for his foreman, Sudar Din – who also had worked with Leonard Woolley – to be her travelling companion. "It was a wonderful arrangement" recalled Beatrice "we located a full 47 sites, a dozen of which had the so-called ‘Quetta Ware’". Beatrice then headed over the border to Afghanistan where she found more examples of Quetta Ware. But on her return to Pakistan, a telegram awaited her. It told her that she must apply for the post of ‘Assistant Secretary’ at the newly-formed Council for British Archaeology (CBA). It was a task she fulfilled (soon as Secretary) from 1947-1973.

While at the CBA, Beatrice undertook her own research in Baluchistan, the westernmost province of Pakistan, next door to the Iranian border. In 1957, she returned with a small team to excavate two sites, and also to survey the Mula pass – the main migration route from Baluchistan to Upper Sind. She spent the next few years writing up her results and it was not until 1966 that she was able to return. Owing to tribal unrest in western Pakistan she was now forced to turn her attention to the western half of Baluchistan, which forms the eastern corner of Iran. There, at the site of Bampur, she found some distinctive grey ware – a visit to Geoffrey Bibby at the Moesgard Museum in Denmark confirmed that the sherd from Bampur were comparable to those from the Emirates.

And so began her long and well-known association with the UAE, an early highlight of which occurred in 1968 when she and Brian Doe undertook an ambitious survey of Ras al-Khaimah. This was followed by work in Oman and also Qatar, where she identified the presence of ‘Ubaid-related pottery.

Come the 1970s she focused on locating and recording sites at-risk owing to the great pace of development in Ras al-Khaimah. In 1987, she was duly recognized by the Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah who presented her with the Al-Qasimi Medal – the first woman to receive this accolade. This was followed in 1993 by the Sir Richard Burton Memorial Medal from the Royal Asiatic Society, while in 2003 the Society of Antiquaries of London presented her with its prestigious Medal for outstanding service to the Society’s objectives.

Beatrice continued being involved with archaeology to the end – and had been a visiting professor at UCL since 1997. Beatrice was a great inspiration and will be hugely missed.

In June 2014, on the occasion of her 100th birthday, the Antiquaries then presented her with its very highest accolade – a Gold Medal – so joining Beatrice to a glittering roll call of previous recipients that includes Childe, Woolley, and Evans. In further celebration, her old institution, the CBA, renamed its headquarters ‘Beatrice De Cardi House’. Beatrice continued being involved with archaeology to the end – and had been a visiting professor at UCL since 1997. Beatrice was a great inspiration and will be hugely missed.
Hugh Raymond Leach

**OBIE, MBE (Mil)**

**1934-2015**

Hugh Leach, who died in November 2015, aged 81, was one of the last of the great British travellers and explorers of Arabia. A colourful and eccentric man, he had an adventurous career which took him to Oman, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt and Sudan, as well as to the more remote parts of Central Asia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. A friend of Wilfred Thesiger and Freya Stark, he accompanied the redoubtable Freya on a photographic expedition around Yemen when she was in her 80’s.

Hugh attended Abingdon School, and from there went on to Sandhurst. In 1955 he became a Commissioned Officer in the Royal Tank Regiment. In 1956 he was amongst the first to come ashore at the start of the Suez campaign. Following a period of study at the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies (MECAS) in Lebanon he was posted to Oman in 1960 as a desert intelligence officer. There he spent time living in a mud brick house in the village of Niqwa Alia and travelling with the local Bedu tribes. His great love of Arabia stems from this period and Oman would always remain one of his favourite countries. “The happiest days of my life” he wrote many years later from his cottage in Peckham Rye, “were those spent living with the Bedu in the deserts of Oman”.

After leaving the army, Hugh joined the Foreign Office in 1966 and worked in senior positions at the British Embassies in Jeddah, Sana’a, Cairo and Khartoum. It was during these years that he combined his love of travelling with a growing scholarly interest in the history and culture of Arabia. In May 1971, when Yemen was still recovering from a savage civil war Hugh travelled to the ancient city of Sa’ada, in the north of the country, where he became the first Westerner to meet the last surviving members of the once thriving Yemeni Jewish community of 50,000. Until this point everyone believed that all of Yemen’s Jews had left for Israel in 1948-50.

Hugh estimated that the total number of Jews remaining in the Sa’ada region was around 1,700. He was fascinated by the extent to which they had preserved their customs and culture, their Hebrew language, and their separate identity, which dated back to the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Despite the political troubles and turmoil that had afflicted Yemen in the 1960’s, Hugh noted that relations between Arabs and Jews in Sa’ada remained good and that the two communities got on well.

No publicity was given to Hugh’s findings, and when Hugh told the Yemeni Prime Minister of what he had discovered, the latter was completely astonished and took a considerable amount of persuading to believe the truth of what Hugh was telling him. The original record of Hugh’s findings is now available at the British National Archive in Kew.

In 1976, Hugh was joined by Freya Stark for an extraordinary journey around Yemen in Hugh’s veteran land rover “Martha”, accompanied by their two 1936 Leica cameras. With these cameras they made a visually stunning photographic record in black and white of the peoples, landscapes, and ancient mud brick buildings that they encountered on their tour.

For many years these photographs remained unpublished but in 2011 “Seen in the Yemen: Travelling with Freya Stark” (Arabian Publishing, 2011) appeared. Hugh’s book is an impressive account of the Yemen and its history and culture seen through the lenses of two very ancient Leica cameras. It is also an excellent companion volume to Freya Stark’s earlier classic “Seen in the Hadhramaut” which was published in 1938.

Following his retirement from the Foreign Office in 1989, Hugh devoted his time and energy to his many hobbies and interests. He was a keen cyclist, and was often to be seen speeding along the Somerset Levels or braving North Sea gales on the Dutch coast. He maintained his strong interest in black and white photography, motorbikes and vintage cars.

Hugh was an active member of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs (RSAA) becoming one of the two Honorary Vice Presidents as well as the Historian for the Society. In 2001, he co-authored a history of the Society with Sue Farrington, called “Strolling Around on the Roof of the World” (Routledge Curzon 2001). He also wrote numerous articles during this period on a whole range of subjects. Many of these appear in the RSAA’s journals.

In 1998, Hugh was awarded the RSA’s “Lawrence of Arabia Memorial Medal” for“exploration and research in Arab countries and north west areas of the Sub continent and leadership of young people’s expeditions”. He had led several expeditions of young people to the region in the 1990’s, sharing his enthusiasm and passion for adventure and travel with the next generation. He was particularly honoured by this award as he was also fascinated by the quixotic figure of Lawrence and had written several articles about his life in Arabia.

In these years Hugh continued to travel and visited Syria, Romania, Hungary, Central Asia and his beloved Oman. In 2014 he donated a collection of journals, and photographs from his time in Oman, Yemen, the UAE and Saudi Arabia to St Antony’s College, Oxford.

It was Arabia where Hugh had always been happiest. It is therefore fitting that the inscription on his grave is a quotation from one of his favourite poems by Walter de la Mare

“He is created with the spell of far Arabia
They have stolen his wits away”

There could not be a more fitting epitaph for Hugh Leach, the soldier, diplomat and scholar. Although he loved his life in Somerset and Peckham Rye and his career with the army and the Foreign Office, it was for Arabia that he longed and for the freedom, adventure and romance that the desert brought him.

Stephan Roman, CMG

**Dr Paul Lunde**

**1943-2016**

Paul Lunde, distinguished Arabist and beloved husband and father, died peacefully at his Cambridge home on August 9th. Dr. Lunde, was a former member of the Committee of the Society for Arabian Studies and an accomplished independent scholar, able to research in an exceptional range of languages including Arabic, Hebrew, Italian and Catalan. He was widely published and wrote frequently for this Bulletin.

The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Yemen

Yemen has rarely been out of the news, sadly for all the wrong reasons. As Dr St John Simpson now explains, this could have a significant impact on the Cultural Heritage of Yemen which is quickly being lost.

On 31st May the Great Dam at Marib was badly damaged, only ten days after the new museum at Dhamar in the Yemeni highlands was obliterated in a precision airstrike. Part of the south-west fortification wall, the temples of Althar and el-Naqrah and the dig-house of the former Italian Archaeological Expedition to Baraqish were destroyed in another air-strike on or about 12th September. Sufi shrines in the Hadrama'ut have been destroyed and there are reports of bulldozing at the ancient South Arabian port site of Qani. On 14th February the Ottoman citadel of Kawkaban was very badly damaged through further bombing. The population is suffering from the direct effects of conflict but also through shortages of fuel, food, water, medicine and the breakdown in education. Old residential areas in the famous Old City at Sana'a – itself inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1986 – have also been destroyed on multiple occasions.

The historic Qahira castle in Ta'izz was levelled following repeated air-strikes from 21st May onwards, the National Museum in Ta'izz destroyed during shelling, beginning on 22nd October and continuing on 30th January, and the fires gutted its library, reportedly destroying some 12,000 books and manuscripts, plus a number of antiquities which had been temporarily stored there. This is an under-reported conflict and one which is getting worse by all accounts. The destructive effect on museums, historic buildings and archaeological sites seems small in comparison with human suffering but is still a crime against humanity. All three of the country’s sites on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Monuments (the Old City of Sana’a, the old walled city of Shibam and the historic town of Zabid) have been damaged and have been re-classified on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Many others are nationally registered monuments. The cultural importance of these places has been highlighted repeatedly on “no-strike” lists drawn up by the authorities in Yemen and delivered by UNESCO to the active participants in the conflict: the continuing rate of destruction undermines confidence and is hugely frustrating.

Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, has made repeated pleas for the safeguarding of cultural heritage and in July last year UNESCO convened an emergency meeting of Yemeni experts and representatives of international cultural organisations. A special UN flight during a temporary ceasefire allowed Muhammad as-Sayyani, chairman of Yemen’s General Organization of Antiquities, Museums and Manuscripts (GOAMM), and Mr Naji Saleh, Chairman of the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities of Yemen (GOPHCY), to leave Sana’a and eventually reach Paris. They made impassioned statements and called for international co-operation in helping bring the conflict to an end as it is only then that the reconstruction can begin. This is going to require a huge bill and money, training, materials and other support are going to be needed at that stage. UNESCO has declared an Emergency Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Yemen’s Cultural Heritage. But what can be done now? Firstly, it is our moral duty that we use every reasonable avenue open to us to ensure that this is not a forgotten war. Our Yemeni colleagues are chronicling the effects of the conflict and are desperately attempting to safeguard the contents of the many museums across the country. They are also supplying reports and images every time a cultural target has been damaged, so that detailed assessments can be made of why, and how these can be reconstructed later. Museums around the world which have Yemeni collections, whether archaeological, historical or ethnographic, have also responded to the crisis by highlighting Yemeni culture in their collections through a series of simultaneous events this April under a campaign entitled “Unit4Heritage”.

We are also working closely with ICOM to draw up a Red List for Yemen which is expected to be published this autumn. Red Lists illustrate the key types of object considered most at risk through looting, and are essential tools allowing non-specialists in law enforcement and the art market to identify and report potentially stolen artefacts. In the case of Yemen, there has been a long history of looting archaeological sites and our long experience of other conflict zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan sadly shows that this is very likely to occur in the immediate post-conflict stages. It is at that time, when the borders re-open and trade resumes, that a new supply of objects will move onto the international market. In Britain we have an effective mechanism of safeguard, and the British Museum, UK Border Force, Art & Antiques Unit of the Metropolitan Police and art market have worked together very closely in identifying and returning thousands of illegally excavated or stolen museum objects to the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul. We hope that we do not have to do the same for Yemen but the Red List will play an essential part if we do.

Let us not forget Yemen: the reputed homeland of the Queen of Sheba, the corner known to Classical historians as “Happy Arabia” and to Islamic geographers as “delightful Yemen”, and the place where many leading Arab tribes have their roots. Its heritage is part of our universal history and we cannot abandon our Yemeni colleagues at this time of their greatest need.

Figure 1: Marib Dam, after the bombing in May 2015 Source: UNESCO

Figure 2: Dhamar Regional Museum on the day of its destruction, both in May 2015. Source: UNESCO

Figure 3: The Historic Capital Sanaa is increasingly under threat from bombings. Source: UNESCO

A Message from our Sponsors, the MBI Al Jaber Foundation

Support for the preservation of cultural heritage in the Middle East has been a specific focus of the MBI Al Jaber Foundation for several decades. We have worked closely with both the British Museum and UNESCO in raising awareness of the threat to cultural heritage in Iraq as well as in Mali.

Our support includes sponsorship of Iraqi scholars at the 49th Rencontre Assyriologique, held at the British Museum; playing a pivotal role in convening a UNESCO conference to discuss the protection of Mali’s cultural heritage, enabling the fine-tuning of a definitive plan to safeguard the region’s ancient tombs, artefacts and manuscripts; and support for a two-day conference, ‘Mali in Transition’, which focussed on Heritage and Conservation, as well as Interdisciplinary and Historical perspectives.

We have been supporting the Seminar for Arabian Studies since our Foundation was incorporated in 2002, and we have been supporting the BFSA Bulletin for the past few years. However, this year our support for the Bulletin came with a request that the destruction of the cultural heritage of Yemen be highlighted.

We will continue to draw attention to the unique culture of Yemen by supporting a photographic exhibition, curated by Trevor H.J. Marchand, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology, at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS from July 12th – September 23rd 2017: “ARCHITECTURE that FILLS – September 23rd 2017: “ARCHITECTURE that FILLS Anthropology, at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS from July 12th – September 23rd 2017: “ARCHITECTURE that FILLS Anthropol

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