

THE IASA BULLETIN



The Latest News and Research in the Arabian Peninsula



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

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formerly the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia

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

Please email: bulletin@theiasa.com

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors of the articles. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the IASA or its members.

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



For any enquiries:

contact@theiasa.com

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Medina Mosque: Photo by Adli Wahid on Unsplash

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Professor Maribel Fierro 'Medina in Al-Andalus and North Africa: Representations, Beliefs and Practices',

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WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

I very much hope you will find this edition of the Bulletin lively, interesting and informative. It is the first time we have produced two bulletins in a year as part of a policy to try to bring news about the Arabian peninsula to members in a timelier fashion. The past six months have proved to be both stimulating and exciting thanks to the work and ingenuity of IASA members and our collaborators. We were able to organise the Seminar for Arabian Studies, postponed from 2020, as a hybrid event – with most sessions virtual but others attended by people - with the Casa Arabe in Cordoba hosting it. I want to thank the Seminar Committee chaired by Julian Jansen van Rensburg and Jose Carvajal Lopez, Derek Kennet and Carolyn Perry in particular for making it such a success. Preparations are already under way for the 2022 Seminar which will be held in Berlin. The Seminar has long been and will remain our most important activity.

One of the main innovations in the past year was the appointment of Carolyn Perry as Outreach consultant. Carolyn has done a fantastic job in pulling the various strands together: producing the now on-line Bulletin, managing our events, developing a new website and greatly expanding our presence on social media. I am immensely grateful to Carolyn for achieving this. She will be returning to her other activities later this year and we are now actively

looking for a successor. Details are in this bulletin. If any members of the IASA are interested, you should contact me at noelmeb@aol.com.

We hope that the new website will be up and running by the end of this year. Our aim is to make it as informative and up-to-date as possible and ensure that it further enhances our international reach.

The IASA AGM will be on 14 October at 5.30 pm and will again be held by Zoom. I hope that from 2022 we can resume physical meetings. The AGM will be followed by a lecture by one of our trustees, Professor Peter Magee, Director of Zayed National Museum and the Head of Archaeology with the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi on 'How Abu Dhabi's archaeology is reshaping the understanding of the Global Neolithic'.

I look forward to seeing as many members as possible at the AGM and I will circulate my report on the past year ahead of the event.

Noel Brehony

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

IASA NEWS

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It has been a pleasure to put together this Autumn edition of the IASA Bulletin, and in particular to include reports on the 54th Seminar for Arabian Studies which took place in July. I had the pleasure of acting as Secretary to the Seminar, and even though we were not together in person, it was very nice to see so many IASA members in attendance. A report on the Seminar and the special session hosted by Casa Árabe appear in this bulletin.

As Noel has pointed out, it is the first year that we have produced two bulletins and this Autumn edition includes some of our regular features which did not appear in the Spring edition, for example Book Reviews (compiled and edited by Alexandra Hirst) and Lives Remembered. Conversely, some of the reference sections do not appear in the edition.

As always, we are very grateful to all those who have submitted content to the Bulletin, and I am delighted that this edition includes several pieces from new contributors, some of whom we have met through our various social media accounts.

Recently I have been looking at past editions, and was surprised to see that I joined the Bulletin committee back in 2014. It has been an honour to be the Editor of the Bulletin this year, and I hope that my successor will enjoy the role as much as I have done. I would like to thank all of the people who have contributed to the 2021 Spring and Summer editions, also Marylyn Whaymand for her patient proof reading, and Noel Brehony for his support, not only in the production of the Bulletin, but in every aspect of the Outreach role.

Thank you,
Carolyn Perry

TRUSTEE NEWS

Trustee biographies may be found on our website. Here we feature their latest news.

Ella Al-Shamahi

Ella Al-Shamahi's book 'The Handshake – A Gripping History' is a funny and fascinating history of the handshake from its origins (at least seven million years ago) to more recent times, when the gesture suffered a crisis in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on new research, anthropological insights and her own experience,

Ella reveals how the handshake has played a role in everything from meetings with uncontacted tribes to political assassinations - and what it tells us about the enduring power of human contact.

<https://profilebooks.com/work/the-handshake/>

IASA OUTREACH

The IASA is seeking a freelance Outreach consultant to replace Carolyn Perry, who has done a fantastic job in establishing the consultancy role. The IASA would like to appoint a successor under a consultancy contract to start from 1 November 2021 initially for a period of one year. This is a part time role occupying a few hours per week on average with a negotiable fee. The duties of the Outreach Officer are as follows

A. Managing the IASA Bulletin, which is a twice-yearly electronic publication produced for members of the IASA as part of the membership package but is available to non-members three months after publication by downloading from the IASA website. It is published and distributed to members in pdf format and can also be read in magazine format on the Issuu website. The Bulletin is produced by the Editor, supported by an IASA subcommittee which includes Trustees, the Book Review Editor and other contributors as necessary, including a Research Editor (currently vacant). Some sections, such as IASA news, lecture reports and research notices, appear in both the Spring and Autumn editions. The Autumn edition contains the Book Reviews and Lives Remembered sections. In addition to contributions received in response to the call for submissions, content is collected by the Editor throughout the year and solicited from regular contributors, as outlined below

B. Advising on managing the new website (currently being replaced) and writing a blog section which can be updated regularly, pages for the material that will migrate from the Bulletin, and also more interactive elements – such as audio or film clips, and any recorded lectures. The new site is to have the capacity for an Arabic language version

C. Organising the annual Beatrice de Cardi lecture which will continue to be held 'in person', pandemic restrictions permitting, and other in person and virtual events and lectures. The consultant should explore partnering with likeminded institutions to increase the number of events and introduce the IASA to new audiences.

D. Liaising with the Seminar Committee to ensure that its activities are publicised in all IASA communications.

E. Managing the IASA's postings on Social Media sites including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and

Instagram to increase awareness of IASA and attract new members. This includes generating content such as interviews at the Seminar for Arabian Studies, short films with relevant content taken at sites, during fieldwork or in museums by Trustees

F. Arranging for the translation of social media posts into Arabic subject to the agreement with the IASA subcommittee on the cost.

If any members are interested, please contact Noel Brehony at noelmeh@aol.com. Please also pass to others who you think might be interested.

IASA LECTURES

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

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

1 April 2021 Michael Quentin Morton 'Masters of the Pearl: A History of Qatar' Via Zoom.



The lecture was introduced and moderated by Professor Robert Carter, an IASA trustee who has specialised on the history and prehistory of the Gulf.

Michael Quentin Morton grew up in the Gulf and has written, to date, nine books on the history of the Middle East. His latest book 'Masters of the Pearl: A History of Qatar' was the subject of this entertaining, informative and well-received lecture. He opened by describing how his interest in the history of the region was awoken by his childhood discovery of stone arrowheads in the desert at a time when his father was a petroleum geologist working in Qatar. It was a much later encounter with James Onley, who is well known to IASA members as a historian of the Gulf, that inspired him to write a book that would help non-

Qataris to understand the history of how Qatar became the state that it is today, with a particular focus on the period after 1700.

The Qatari ruling family – Al-Thani – was one of the tribal groups that migrated from Nejd to the Gulf coastal areas in the early 18th century and made their money in pearling. Another was the Al-Khalifa which for a time was dominant in Qatar and then in Bahrain, where it still rules. Morton described how the rivalry over pearling and control of territory complicated relations between ruling families of what became Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar for decades and still occasionally arise. Conflict with Bahrain and Abu Dhabi in the mid-19th century - including the bombardment of Doha from the sea - prompted a British response that led a treaty between the British and tribes under the leadership of Mohammed bin Thani in 1868. This did not stop the Ottomans from establishing a military presence in Qatar in 1871 that did not end until 1915. Although the 1868 treaty might suggest that the Al-Thani was by then the ruling family this was contested and the family's leadership over the whole of the Qatar peninsula was not fully secured until the early years of the 20th century and required some skilful political manoeuvring – and fighting - within Qatar. At the same time the family had to play off the Ottomans and British, who both had to balance their local interests in securing positions in the Gulf with the need to consider the wider strategic relationship between London and the Porte. Qatar became a British protectorate under a treaty signed by Jassim bin Mohammed al-Thani in 1916. Morton gave a fascinating and detailed account of the rise of the influence and role of leading personalities in enabling the Al-Thani to establish their authority over the peninsula whilst also coping with divisions within the family and machinations of regional rivals. When the British decided to withdraw from the Gulf in 1971 Qatar, like Bahrain, chose not to join the UAE but become a fully-independent state.

Pearls were essential to the Qatari economy for much of its history but this dependence on a single resource led to periods of boom and bust as prices rose and fell and trade was disrupted by regional and local conflict. The age of pearling came to an effective end in the late 1920s caused by the rise of Japanese cultured pearls and the Great Depression. Fortunately for Qatar, the discovery and rapid development of the oil and then gas industry from the 1940s created another single resource – but one that it has used widely to diversify the economy and prepare for a non-oil future. Oil wealth further consolidated the power of the ruling family and reinforced patronage. Qatar Investment Fund, Qatar Airways and the Qatar Foundation are highly influential internationally – and Qatar scored a triumph in bringing the World Cup to the Gulf. The economic boom has not been without its downside, as it has brought in so many foreign workers that Qataris are outnumbered 4:1 resulting in an economically polarised two-tier society which is only sustainable by continued expansion.

Qatar has thus grown in a relatively short period into a highly influential regional power able to exert influence internationally. It remains determined to forge its own way leading to periods of difficult relations with neighbouring states, which were angered, for example, by the reporting of the al-Jazeera news network and Qatar's sympathy for Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. The most recent example was the blockade of Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Egypt between 2017 and 2020.

The lecture is available on the IASA YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRPleeB_6YU&t=481s&ab_channel=TheIASA

Report by Alan Hall

14 June 2021 Dr Janet Purdy 'Carved Doors as Historical Documents in Zanzibar, Oman and Beyond'



Dr Janet Purdy, the Daniel F. & Ada L. Rice Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow in African Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, presented her lecture entitled Carved Doors as Historical Documents in Zanzibar, Oman and Beyond on 14th June 2021. Dr Purdy's research examines visual exchange systems of social and cultural trade networks throughout eastern and northern Africa, the Gulf Region and the Indian Ocean world with an interest in the transmission of talismanic patterns, art and designs in their protective functions across a number of different mediums.

Before presenting the three main segments of her lecture: a brief overview of Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast, a brief introduction to the doors in Zanzibar and how they fit into broader networks and thirdly, how doors are viewed as historical documents, Janet defined a doorway as a definitive physical space which often represents "not only a delineation but also a distinct point of transformation or transition in movement, a threshold or even a place of danger." She related how the artists of the Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean worlds have long applied inscriptions, as well as decorative elements, texts, patterns and other visual markers to these crossover points "as a way to manipulate space and to harness protective powers."

Janet described coastal sites, such as Zanzibar, as situating points for the doors themselves, "positioned right at the edge of the water where boundaries and distinctions between the two are fluid," and where there is a need for protection, "protection of abundance, garnered from the sea" and protection from the dangers posed by the sea. Consequently, patrons commissioned masses of elaborately carved wooden doors for the physical and spiritual protection of their entrances and buildings.

Zanzibar had been a significant trading centre in the Indian Ocean for more than 1,000 years by the late 19th century and, by this time, the doors in Zanzibar had their own unique visual vocabulary "elevated arguably, even above the rest of the Swahili coastal region." An ornamentally carved door from Zanzibar, especially one of excellent artistry and craftsmanship with meaningful imagery and iconography, was a highly desirable and iconic form.

As well as looking at the detailed visual studies of carved doors as iconic objects of art, Janet considers them as historical documents. She discussed a particular example with a history spanning three continents – a massive, ornately carved wooden door that, in the middle of the 19th century, once stood at the front entrance of the Sultan's palace in Zanzibar. It appears to have been the door to the Beit al-Hukum palace and was probably carved in India during the 16th century. Shipped to Zanzibar in 10 or 12 sections and reassembled at the palace, it eventually became a gift presented by the Sultan to a French broker and remained with his family for over 100 years, after which it was sold to a French vintner. The Hukum door is now installed at the main entrance to a chateau in Bordeaux.

The decoration on the Hukum door includes a representation of a Makara – a legendary hybrid sea creature of Hindu mythology and Asian iconography. The Makara has important protective qualities and is the guardian of gateways and thresholds. As a well-known guardian figure for throne rooms and temples in the Asian world, the Makara would have been an appropriate element for the threshold of the Sultan's palace in Zanzibar. The protective and spiritual symbolism as a talisman against terrors of the sea would have had an appeal for the Swahili audience "and that meaning underscores why its forms were adopted and adapted by local carvers, requested by patrons and carried forward into new iterations of new designs."

The influence of the Hukum door on the local vocabulary can be seen in several examples of large wooden doors on the main Kenyatta road in Stone town Zanzibar. Compositional elements and motifs were very clearly copied and adapted. Janet hopes that the door and its role as a historical document and repository of cultural details will ideally allow her "to build further information about timelines and actors and designs, as it supports further research on all three continents."

Janet acknowledged the many contributions to her research stating that it was a collaborative endeavour and concluded by welcoming anyone who knew of a door that might be of interest to her or who had a story to share to contact her, as well as offering to take questions.

The talk is now on the IASA YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2nxeMjB5Q>

Report by Marylyn Whaymand



Al Mudayrib Oman door carved in Pemba Zanzibar (c) Janet Purdy

9th July 2021 Keynote lecture to the Seminar for Arabian Studies

Professor Maribel Fierro 'Medina in Al-Andalus and North Africa: Representations, Beliefs and Practices'

Professor Maribel Fierro is Research Professor at the Centre of Human and Social Sciences at the Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC-Spain). She has worked and published on the political, religious and intellectual history of Al-Andalus and the Islamic West, on Islamic law, on the construction of orthodoxy and on violence and its representation in Medieval Arabic sources. Among her publications: *Abd al-Rahman III: The first Cordoban caliph* (2005), *The Almohad revolution. Politics and religion in The Islamic West during the twelfth-thirteenth centuries* (2012).



In this stimulating and wide ranging lecture Professor Fierro gave a broad overview of how the links and influences between Medina and Al-Andalus developed over time. In the early years of the Umayyad period in al-Andalus Medina, the burial place of the Prophet, was the destination of most of those Andalusian scholars who travelled to the East – there was very little movement in the opposite direction. Medina was also strongly associated with the Maliki legal school, whose founder was born in the city, that prevailed in Al-Andalus and the Maghrib.

From the Almohad period (12th century) a visit (ziyarat) to the prophet's tomb Medina became part of the pilgrimage, perhaps influenced by a local Maghrib tradition of making visits to the graves of Holy men. There also developed a practice of sending letters to be read at the Prophet's grave often seeking cures for maladies. Professor Fierro described a well-known book of guidance about how to conduct aspects of the visit – with illustrations that had the effect of enabling a pilgrim to make a virtual visit. This was unique to Al-Andalus and is not found in similarly distant places from Medina in Central Asia. Professor Fierro explained that it may have related to the emergence of movements associated with charismatic leaders in the Almoravid and Almohad periods and reflecting the strong Maghrib tradition around the tombs of local holy men. The effect was to bring the Prophet closer to people who would never travel to the Hijaz.

When the mosque of Cordoba was built the Caliph emphasised that it closely resembled that of the Prophet in Medina. Caliph Abd al-Rahman III also had constructed the minbar (and replaced other minbars in North Africa installed by the Fatimids). The original minbar in Medina had been just of two steps, to enable the prophet to be seen. It came to be seen as conferring “baraka” on those close to it. When the Umayyads conquered Syria the Caliph wanted to move the minbar from Medina to Damascus (now six steps) as a symbol of political and religious authority. The minbar, which was produced on Fridays and certain other times, became to be seen in Cordoba as a relic of the Prophet and a symbol of Umayyad power through this visible link to the Prophet.

The special relationship between Cordoba and Medina (via the Umayyad) was amplified in other ways: for example, four pages of the Quran stained with the blood of Uthman were kept in Cordoba by Abd al-Rahman and his successors.

The supporters of Muhammad in Medina were known as the Ansar – and this name was used in Al-Andalus and North Africa not just for loyal supporters from tribes but more widely among the non-tribal people of Al-Andalus - again suggesting that Medina was present in the Islamic West. In their view Malikism upheld orthodoxy and was the school followed by the rightful successor to the prophet. Malikism better expressed the practices pursued by the Prophet. Thus Cordoba was the new Medina in terms of soundness of the religious knowledge there transmitted.

In conclusion Professor Fierro showed that the Umayyad caliphs of Al-Andalus in the tenth century claimed the Prophet's inheritance as religious and political guides. They presented their capital as a new Medina through the similarities between the mosque of Cordoba and Medina. The proclamation of Malikism as the official legal doctrine connected Medina and Cordoba. Thus, whilst Cordoba may have been at the periphery of the Islamic world, it safeguarded Malikism, and its rulers could therefore be seen as the legitimate inheritors of the Messenger of God.

This short summary can do little justice to the broad reach and deep scholarship of Professor Fierro and readers are advised to view her lecture at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3i8WniOXEEM>

Report by Noel Brehony

FORTHCOMING IASA LECTURES

The Annual Beatrice de Cardi Lecture 2021 has been postponed until 2022.

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

Date and location to be announced.

14 October 2021

Lecture by Professor Peter Magee, Director of Zayed National Museum and the Head of Archaeology with the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi 'How Abu Dhabi's archaeology is reshaping the understanding of the Global Neolithic.'

The zoom link will be sent out nearer the date.

The remainder of the IASA 2021/22 lecture series is currently being finalised and members will be sent details in due course. Non-members may check our social media accounts for details.

SEMINAR FOR ARABIAN STUDIES

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

With the restrictions on travel due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the 54th Seminar for Arabian Studies, organized by the International Association for the Study of Arabia, took place online over the weekends of 2 – 4 and 9 – 11 July 2021 in collaboration with and supported by Casa Árabe, Cordoba.

Due to the online format and that we were able to hold the Seminar over two weekends allowed for seventy seven papers to be presented, twelve of which were hosted by Casa Árabe in a parallel session, more information for which can be found in the report by Jose Carvajal Lopez. The online Seminar also attracted over one hundred and sixty people from twenty three different countries.

The papers presented at the Seminar this year spanned a wide chronological and thematic range that began on the 2 July with Palaeolithic and Neolithic Arabia chaired by Robert Carter. This session included a range of excellent papers outlining both new findings of a Palaeolithic sequence from Buhais Rockshelter in Sharjah, settlement and subsistence strategies from Marawah Island in Abu Dhabi, a survey of Al-Mudhaybi, and two papers dealing with fish and dolphin exploitation during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age.



Remains of an early Umm an-Nar tomb at Hay al-Nadhah, near Rustaq, Oman (c) Derek Kennet

The rest of Friday and Saturday were dedicated to a wide range of papers concerning some of the latest research and work concerning Bronze Age Arabia. These sessions were chaired by Arnulf Hausleiter, Steffen Terp Laursen and Derek Kennet and included papers on pottery and cylinder seals, lipid residue analysis, animal exploitation, the development of cultural and funerary landscapes and a number of reports concerning recent excavations and surveys. The Bronze Age sessions concluded with a panel discussion chaired by Valentina Azzara.

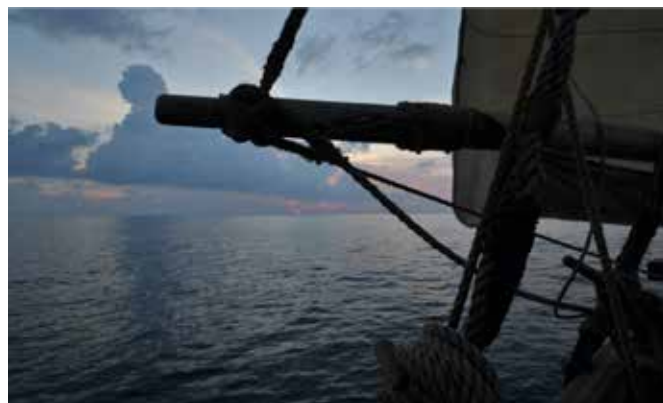
The last day of the first weekend dealt with the Iron Age and Late Pre-Islamic Arabia, chaired by Steve Karacic and Jose Carvajal Lopez respectively. These sessions included the latest in research concerning recent excavations, mortuary data, work on palaeoenvironments, digital reconstruction of Nabatean wall paintings, and assessing the provenance of ancient cotton.

The Keynote lecture was given by Maribel Fierro, a Research Professor at the Centre of Human and Social Sciences at the Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC-Spain), on the evening of Friday 9 July. The lecture entitled 'Medina in Al-Andalus and North Africa: representations, beliefs and practices', dealt with special links between the Maghrib and Medina. Thanks to Casa Árabe the lecture can be watched again on their YouTube channel [here](#).

The opening of the second weekend of the Seminar on Friday 9 July detailed the wealth of work taking place in North West Arabia, notably the oasis of Al-Ula. This session chaired by Rebecca Foote tackled a range of topics from rock art through to cultural landscapes and settlements using a range of aerial mapping and archaeological analyses of the settlements and oasis.

The first session of Saturday 10 July was on Islamic Arabia, and was chaired by Janet Watson. The presentations within this session dealt with a variety of topics that included studies of ceramics, settlement patterns, stable isotope analysis and the mapping of palm gardens in the Shimal plain and traditional architecture in Ras al-Khaimah. This session was followed by the excellent session on Scripts and Language chaired by Michael Macdonald. Within this session we heard from a range of speakers concerning inscriptions from Himā, the Red Sea, Yemen and Ethiopia, and the analysis of short vowels in Mehri.

The final day of the Seminar took on a nautical flavour, looking at Maritime Arabia and Trade, chaired by Julian Jansen van Rensburg. The day was a broad mixture of papers that included some recent and ongoing fieldwork that included both the documentation of ports, shipwrecks, traditional vessels, and maritime rock art. The final session of the day was a discussion of three presentations concerning Portuguese and Arab navigational practices.



Sailing on the Jewel of Muscat (c) Alessandro Ghidoni

In addition to the wonderful range of papers that were presented at the Seminar we were also able to include two poster sessions, one on each weekend. All in all, the Seminar, despite having to have been held online, was an outstanding success.

Report by Julian Jansen van Rensburg,
Chair, Seminar of Arabian Studies

Special Sessions on the links between Arabia and al-Andalus in the 54th Seminar of Arabian Studies (2021)

The 54th Seminar of Arabian Studies was to be held in Casa Árabe in Cordoba, in 2020. The pandemic forbade the celebration not only of this seminar, but of a face-to-face version of the event in 2021, in spite of the best efforts to try to have at least the speakers of the Special Sessions attending Cordoba. The fact that they were finally organised and celebrated online is a proof of the tenacity and organisational skills of our colleagues in Casa Árabe, of the speakers and of the committee. In the end, the Special Sessions were a great success and one of the most interesting experiences that I have enjoyed in the years that I have taken part in the seminars.

The Special Sessions were celebrated on Friday 9th July 2021 via the Zoom account of Casa Árabe, and they were at the same time streamed via the official YouTube channel of the institution. The first session, which I chaired, was entitled "Comparison of cultural and environmental adaptations in the Arabian and Iberian peninsulas." The second session had "Intellectual links: language, law, theology and culture in Jazirat al-'Arab and Jazirat al-Andalus" as its title, and was co-chaired by Professor Maribel Fierro (CSIC) and by myself.

The session of environmental adaptations had originally been intended to cover a wide range of issues, from Prehistory to the Islamic period, but due to the focus of the attending speakers, it became an interesting discussion on irrigated agriculture. During the first slots of the sessions, three Spanish speakers with very different perspectives on

irrigation exposed their points of view. Professor Eduardo Manzano (CSIC) defended that the irrigation systems in al-Andalus were the result of state-led economic reforms focusing on the growth of the cities and on the needs of the administrative apparatus of the Umayyad power of Cordoba.

Dr José María Martín Civantos (University of Granada) explained the interrelation of processes of social and ecological change related to the installation of irrigation systems and concluded that the process would have had to be led by small peasant communities themselves. In a similar, but more specific way, Professor Helena Kirchner (Autonomous University of Barcelona) explained that the processes of adaptation of irrigation techniques could not be understood simply as a copy of systems from Arabia; on the contrary, the different aspects of irrigation systems (water channels, cisterns, springs, etc) would be positioned differently to achieve a range of diverse aims and irrigation possibilities.



Water channel in Sierra Nevada, Granada (c) MEMOLA Project

These three interventions were followed by Dr Louise Purdue's presentation (CEPAM, CNRS), who turned to Iron Age Oman and explained didactically the development of run-off irrigation systems during this long period, with case studies from different sites. The session ended with a 50-min long debate that focussed on similarities and differences between the two areas of study and highlighted points of interest for future comparative studies, such as data collection, dating and the relationship between social complexity and the establishment of irrigation. The debate was full of interesting insights and comparisons, and shows that the Seminar can benefit much from this format in the future.

The second session, on cultural and intellectual links, had different points of interest. The links between intellectual schools (including those coming from philosophers like Ibn Masarrā and mystics like Ibn 'Arabī) was the object of discussion of Dr Pavel Basharin (Russian State University of Humanities) and Dr Nasser Dumairieh (University of Montreal). Professor Jaafar Ben El Haj Soulami ('Abd al-Malik as-Sa'di University of Tetouan) presented a paper on

the role of the genealogical science to maintain cultural links (real or forged) between the Maghrib and Arabia. Abdenour Padillo Saoud (University of Granada, CSIC) traced the connections between the pilgrimage of scholars and the formation that they received from different scholars of the Arabian Peninsula to establish intellectual links between the two areas. Dana Zaben and Sara Solá Portillo (University of Castilla La Mancha) shed some light on another aspect of the links between the two peninsulas: the transmission of medical vocabulary through the analysis of translated texts of Galen. Focussing on material culture, Dr Carmen Gutiérrez González (University of Cordoba) offered an interesting paper on the connections found between the foundation and building of mosques - and subsequent creation of Islamic social textures and religiouscapes - between Arabia and al-Andalus, particularly in the Umayyad period. This paper would have been well accompanied by a presentation by Cornelius Meyer and Raimundo Ortiz about a ground-penetrating radar analysis of the Umayyad Mosque of Cordoba, but unfortunately it could not be delivered due to the poor Internet connection of the authors. An interesting paper, but somehow off the main line of the contributions, was by José María Toro Piqueras (University of Cordoba), on the influence of Arabia on the writings of the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges based on the analysis of his short story "In search of Averroes".

The two sessions ran for the whole day (from 11 am to 6 pm) and were recorded for the YouTube channel of Casa Árabe, where they will be available soon. They constitute an enjoyable, if lengthy session, which ran smoothly in the first part and with some minimal, technical problems towards the end. The wide range of topics covered by the presentations and the good scholarship of the speakers allows for compelling comparisons and inspiring insights, as the interest shown in question slots by other speakers and members of the public show.

José Cristóbal Carvajal López
University of Leicester



Mosque of Cordoba: Photo by Girl With Red Hat on Unsplash

IASA PUBLICATIONS

Forthcoming: PSAS Volume 51 2022 Papers from the fifty-fourth meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held online 2nd to 4th and 9th to 11th July 2021.

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

PSAS 51 will be edited by Dr. Steve Karacic, assisted by an Editorial Board formed from members of the Steering and Editorial Committee of the Seminar, and other distinguished scholars.

The special session on links between the Iberian and Arabian peninsulas will be published separately by Casa Árabe, Cordoba via open access. Details will be available in due course.

Volumes 1-50 (1971-2020) of the *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, and Supplements to the Proceedings, can be purchased from Archaeopress (www.archaeopress.com). Volumes 1-47 (1971-2017) are available on JSTOR.

IASA Monograph Series

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

Twenty monographs have been published to date, covering a wide range of topics ranging from PhD theses on the prehistory of the Tihamah and star gazing in Oman to the proceedings of five conferences on the Red Sea and Death & Burial in Arabia. After a brief hiatus, new volumes are now in various stages of preparation.

A full list of Monographs may be found on our website: www.theiasa.com/publications/monographs/. All titles can be ordered from Archaeopress at www.archaeopress.com.

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

IASA RESEARCH GRANTS

The IASA began making awards to support research in the Arabian peninsula from 2013 and since then have benefitted from a generous donation from the IASA Patron, Valeria Piacentini. Although the donation has been exhausted trustees have been making awards by drawing down on IASA's reserves. Trustees are currently considering setting up a fund to attract donations to sustain our ability to continue making awards in the long term.

These awards can make a real difference in sustaining current research and supporting a new generation of researchers. We attach great importance to disseminating the outcomes of research in the form of publications, contributions to conferences and inspiring exhibitions.

The image below is from the 'The Palaeolithic Landscapes of Wadi Dabsa' exhibit curated by Robyn Inglis, who was awarded a grant for fieldwork in 2017. Images from the fieldwork were displayed at the King's Manor, University of York in Summer 2018. The exhibition is now online here: <https://surfaceproject.wordpress.com/the-palaeolithic-landscapes-of-wadi-dabsa-exhibit/>



Recipients of awards are required to make full reports to the IASA and agree to give lectures organised by the IASA as well as writing shorter reports in our bi-annual bulletin to make outcomes known as widely as possible. For an example of how an award can inspire a young researcher see the article by Jorg Matthias Determann in our 2021 bulletin.

The IASA grants are intended to support research in any academic area covered by the IASA's aims, which are to promote research relating to the Arabian Peninsula, in particular, its archaeology, art, culture, epigraphy, ethnography, geography, geology, history, languages, literature and natural history. Grants may be used to fund fieldwork, library or laboratory-based research or research support.

There are two types of research grant:

Small Research Grants: up to £500 (for all categories of researchers)

Main Research Grants: up to £1,000 (for post-doctoral research).

The deadline for application for grants is normally 31 May with the awards being announced by the end of June. They are assessed by our Research Committee, which is chaired by Dr Derek Kennet and this year included Robert Bewley and William Deadman.

They are open to applicants of any nationality. Further details are available at <https://www.theiasa.com/research/grants/>

GRANTS AWARDED 2021

Derek Kennet reports that five applications were received for the 2021 round. The following grants have been awarded (subject to confirmation from the awardees at this point).

Dr Michael Fradley, EAMENA, School of Archaeology, University of Oxford towards his project re-assessing the archaeology of the Tihamah Plain using Kh9 Hexagon satellite imagery.

Dr Michele Degli Esposti, Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences for 'Looking for Omana. A geoarchaeological study of Akab island in the Umm al Quwain lagoon'.

Kenta Sayama, DPhil Candidate, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford for 'Protecting Quaternary palaeoenvironmental sites in south-east Arabia: a database'.

Short reports on completed projects will appear in future editions of the Bulletin, full reports on projects will be posted on the IASA website.

COUNTRY NEWS AND RESEARCH

OMAN

A Capacity Building Project on Museums Further Strengthens Cooperation on Conservation Between Italy and Oman

Alessandro Garbellini, Charge d'Affaires A.I. Embassy of Italy in Muscat

In the framework of a long and established cooperation in the fields of archaeology and conservation, Italy and Oman are currently implementing a capacity building initiative to support the protection and the promotion of the valuable Omani heritage. A project financed by the Embassy of Italy in Muscat organized in collaboration with the University of Bologna - which has been working in the Sultanate for several decades - offers online training to officials of the Omani Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on collection management, exhibition design and communication techniques for museums.

A 4-week course, "Museums and Society", focuses on how cultural institutions can provide society with educational services promoting broader participation in cultural life. It also enables participants to create effective exhibitions and properly communicate with the public. The course also includes a case-study on the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, focusing on the efforts for its renaissance. English and Arabic subtitles are available for each video. The course was indeed originally developed within the framework of EDUU (Education and Cultural Heritage Enhancement for Social Cohesion in Iraq), a 30-month international project funded by the European Union in the framework of the EuropeAid –

Civil Society Organizations – Local Authorities Programme in Iraq and subsequently made available to the Omani audience.

The course was developed by Nicolò Marchetti, Full Professor of Archaeology of the Ancient Near East at University of Bologna, together with Giulia Scazzosi of the Leonardo da Vinci Museum of Science and Technology in Milan, and Carlo Lippolis of the University of Torino and former coordinator of the restoration works of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad.

The possibility to follow the course remotely gives the two countries the opportunity to continue working together despite the pandemic and travel restrictions, which does not allow a traditional, face-to-face capacity building initiative. The great interest shown by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, with the extensive participation of its staff and officials, also raised the interest of team members of other public and private cultural institutions in the Sultanate that are joining the course, which is open for free registration until the end of 2021.



Image courtesy of University of Bologna

The focus on transfer of knowledge confirms the approach of Italy towards the theme of heritage conservation and promotion, as well as towards the role that culture plays in social and economic development. Italy is keen to support the Sultanate's Vision 2040 for economic diversification sharing its expertise on a variety of sectors, including culture and tourism. The promotion of high standards of conservation in a country with such a wide spread heritage like Oman strengthens community identity and contributes to local development in rural and remote areas. It also creates job opportunities for residents, including the youngsters, who are gradually involved in the different stages of the promotion of sites. The strategies suggested in the course support the growth of a sustainable tourism for Oman, based on quality, culturally-aware visitors and a relationship with the local community. As a country with a heritage spread out in the territory and with a network of almost five thousand museums across all of the peninsula, Italy also has a long experience to share in this regard.

The project also paved the way for stronger cooperation in the museums field. The National Museum in Muscat has already hosted events and exhibitions on Italian arts and culture - including the exhibition "Dreamers" in 2019, curated by Dennys Frenez, on 40 years of Italian archaeological research in the Sultanate - and Italian museums are also exploring collaboration with their Omani counterparts. In 2020 Oman was the guest country of the exhibition "Incēnsūm" hosted by the Royal Museums of Turin. More initiatives will be brought forward thanks to the joint commitment of Italian and Omani authorities in supporting stronger ties on high-quality projects.

Culture has always been the core of the friendship between Italy and the Sultanate, both bilaterally and in multilateral fora like UNESCO, where our countries intensely cooperate together, with Italy being a strong supporter of the Organization and with Oman playing a key role within the World Heritage Committee. The constant and proactive contribution of Italian and Omani researchers and professionals is doing the rest, nurturing this relationship with new initiatives, projects and ideas.

'Beyond the Oasis': Introducing a new phase of research at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bat

Eli N. Dollarhide & Jennifer Swerida

In collaboration with the Oman Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and funded by the US National Endowment for the Humanities, the Bat Archaeological Project (BAP) is beginning a new fieldwork campaign focussed on understanding the site's Umm an-Nar cultural landscapes.

Landscapes are a medium of activity that come to reflect and inform the cultural practices and beliefs of the human groups that create and occupy them. Yet studies of arid landscapes

— especially those focused on the Near East — often privilege questions that target access to water above those that seek to explore the behaviors, meanings, and relationships that create cultural spaces in physical places. The emphasis on the constraints of arid landscapes has also limited understanding of the generative roles such landscapes play in the societies that live in and engage with them. By examining a key cultural landscape (Figure 1) in the hyper-arid environs of southeast Arabia, this project explores how human interactions with and within such spaces and settings create culturally meaningful places and behaviors that enable them to thrive.



Fig 1: Beyond the Bat Oasis (credit: Bat Archaeological Project)

In affiliation with New York University and the Penn Museum (University of Pennsylvania), BAP is conducting a new series of archaeological surveys and excavations targeting human-environment interaction at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bat, Oman. Recent research by BAP (e.g., Swerida et al 2020a, In Press; Dollarhide 2019) suggests that a web of settlements and related archaeological sites (Figure 2) in the Bat region worked cooperatively to thrive in a challenging, hyper-arid landscape. These cooperative behaviors strategically engaged with diverse localized resources, while simultaneously and organically creating culturally meaningful spaces (Swerida et al 2020b; Cable and al-Jabri 2019).



Fig 2: Excavating an Umm an-Nar House at Bat (credit: Bat Archaeological Project)

This project is a multi-year investigation into the Umm an-Nar period (UaN; ca. 2800-2000 BCE) cultural landscape

of Bat and its surroundings in the Wadi Sharsah of northwestern Oman. In the forthcoming years, the project will study the cultural processes and socio-ecological strategies practiced by the UaN through settlement excavation, survey, geomorphological study, and artifact analysis (Figure 3). The resulting reconstruction of an ancient cultural landscape will resituate the critically understudied Omani interior in ongoing debates on connectivity and human environment interaction in prehistoric societies and build a case study for a persistent, thriving cultural landscape in an arid environment.



Fig 3: A Middle Umm an-Nar Jar from Bat (credit: Angie Humes/Bat Archaeological Project)

References: Cable, C.M. and al-Jabri, S. (2019) The Wadi al-Hijr (Sultanate of Oman) in the Third Millennium BC. *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 30(1): 15-31.

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Swerida J., Dollarhide E.N., and Cable C.M. (2020b) Bat Archaeological Project: Preliminary Report of the 2019-2020 Season. Manuscript on File, Department of Archaeology and Excavations, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Muscat, Oman.

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YEMEN

Riyadh Ba-Kamoom, a General Manager in Yemen's General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums, very kindly agreed to talk to us about recent developments at the Mukalla Museum.

Could you please tell us about your role as Director of the Mukalla Museum?

I am a General Manager of the General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums in the Hadramout coastal zone.

Mukalla Museum is just our main office, our headquarters. We run 12 districts from Mukalla, trying our best with only ten staff members to guard and protect archaeological sites (both known and unknown) sites, some of which have already had archaeological excavations, others are accidentally discovered sites. We also run Mukalla Museum which was closed from 2011 until 2020 but is now open Sunday to Thursday, 8:00am to 12:00pm after many projects to renovate the building (which is actually a sultanate castle built in 1921 – 1925) with financial support from the Hadramout local authorities.



As well, we arrange events and programmes for the local community, the last one was the 24th to 29th July on the occasion of the Albalda week, when the sessions attracted more than 2,000 visitors.

We are also now making plans to increase our role which until now we consider to have just been covering essential tasks.

The museum is an historic building in itself. Could you please tell us about the history of the building and the collections, where did they come from, and what do they comprise?

The building is a sultanate palace built by Sultan Omar Bin Awad Al-Quaiti between 1921 and 1925. It has two wings; the east wing is now Mukalla Museum and is also occupied by the General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums Hadramout Coastal Zone administration offices. The west wing was built by Sultan Salih Al-Quaiti, is currently empty and in need of urgent conservation.



All images are (c) Mukalla Museum

We have seen from your Twitter account that you have recently been cataloguing the collection. Can you tell us about that?

Yes, with financial support from the Douan Foundation we have been doing the cataloguing of the museum collections; both the previous collections and the new collections that we have recently bought or brought back to the museum. More than 700 objects have been officially registered, photographed with high quality photos and documented.



Yemen has been facing so many challenges to its cultural heritage over the past years, quite apart from the humanitarian challenges facing the country. You and your colleagues have been doing a great job. What have been the challenges you have faced as custodians of cultural heritage?

Unfortunately Mukalla Museum is the first place to be targeted by thieves during any mess. The museum faced looting and robbing many times, especially during the Yemeni civil war in 1994, the instability in 2013, and the Al Qaeda attack in 2015. Many valuable artifacts were lost, but fortunately we were able to return some, such as swords and knives, including one huge example, in 2019 to 2020. The rest are still missing.

We are now working on raising the awareness of antiquities through media, that is television, radio and social media. Actually reopening the museum was the best way, because thousands of people can visit and see the antiquities in their correct place. Many of them thought old things were just for sale, and many children have visited a museum for the first time in their life.

Who are the visitors to the museum? Does the museum have a programme for schools?

We officially reopened on 30th November 2020, and since then more than four thousand people have visited the museum. The majority are school students, but we have had men and women, young and old, locals and also people from

other parts of Yemen, even some groups from Europe, America and south Africa have visited the museum from that date until now.

As I mentioned before, we do arrange some events on local occasions such as our recent events during AlBalda week. We have established and hosted five exhibitions, and also arranged an open day at the museum on the occasion of International Museum Day on 18 May, and many others.



Is there anything else that you would like to let IASA members know?

Thank you for letting me have this opportunity to talk on behalf of my team about our experience here in Mukalla Museum to your respected readers.

At the end I would like to say our experience until now is only to return the museum to what existed, what the founder of the museum Mohammed Abdul Qader BaFagih established in 1964, to make a museum for this peaceful city. Our ambition is to bring this museum to international standards, and to establish other new museums in different cities, not only historical museums. We plan other types of museums: a military museum, a Marine museum, traditional food, clothes, and many others.

Thank you so much!

You can follow the activities of Riyadh and his colleagues on Twitter [@GOAMMukalla](https://twitter.com/GOAMMukalla).



RESEARCH NOTICES

Ancient Saar Image Archive available on-line

Robert Killick

The image archive from the London-Bahrain Archaeological Expedition's excavations at Saar, Bahrain in the 1990s is now available on-line from the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) thanks to a grant from the Gerald Avery Wainwright Fund. Dating to the late third and early second millennia BCE, Saar remains the only excavated Early Dilmun settlement of this date from Bahrain itself. Excavations revealed a temple, a main street with minor alleys at right angles, and two- and three-roomed buildings constructed in rows with standard suites of domestic installations.

The image archive is the latest part of the excavation record to be deposited with ADS, which already holds copies of the published reports as well as the site databases. The archive contains over one thousand high-resolution images of the excavations and of artefacts found, as well as a further five hundred drawings. It is fully searchable. For example, all photographs of a particular type of find can be retrieved, such as seals or beads, or of a particular material, such as ivory or copper. Searches by location are also possible, so that photographs of a particular building together with its contents can also be found.

DVDs became available so the entire archive, 6.6gb in size, could be fitted onto a single DVD and posted out to researchers on request – clearly not a sustainable option over the long term! So I am grateful that the Wainwright Fund could see the value of making the image archive accessible on-line to the research community and was prepared to meet the costs of the Archaeology Data Service to achieve that. While preparing material for publication is a fundable activity for some grant-making bodies, archival deposition is less so.

The images from the archive are free to be reproduced under the terms of a Creative Commons License and the archive is hosted at the address below.

https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/saar_ba_2007/query.cfm

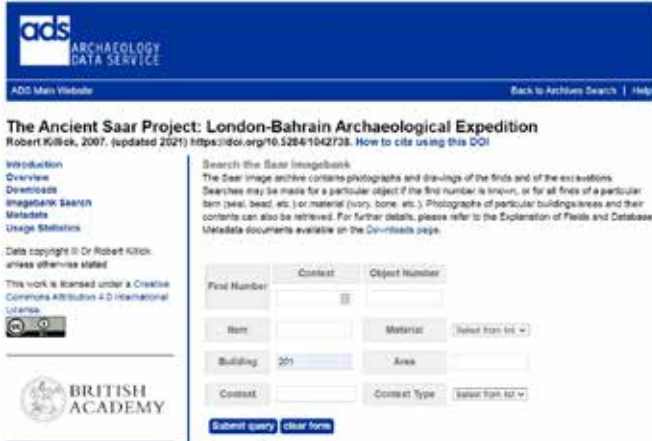


Figure 1: Opening screen of image archive showing search options

The history of this image archive provides a salutary demonstration of the difficulty of preserving records in perpetuity, a challenge for archaeologists even in the digital age. The images started life as medium-format film negatives and transparencies. Towards the end of the excavations, these were transferred onto 43 CD-ROMs by a local film-processing company in Bahrain that had acquired a high-end film scanner. As computer hard disk capacities increased and became affordable, it subsequently became possible to move all the images to a single hard drive. This proved fortunate as within ten years some of the original CD-ROMs had failed and could not be accessed and, at the same time, some of the colour negatives began to show signs of fading, presumably due to sub-standard processing. Then by 2005, dual layer



Figure 2: Some of the results of a query on Building = 201



Figure 3: Further details of each image can also be retrieved.

Mapping and synthesizing ancient Arabia: The Maparabia project (2019-23)

Jérémie Schiettecatte (CNRS, UMR 8167 Orient et Méditerranée, Paris)

Irene Rossi (CNR, Istituto di Scienze del Patrimonio Culturale, Milan)

Keywords: Ancient Arabia; Digital humanities; Atlas; Gazetteer; Dictionary; Archaeology; Epigraphy.

Whoever has had the opportunity to consult maps of the ancient Near East has noticed the absence of most of the Arabian Peninsula, showing at best its northern fringe or the shore of the Persian Gulf. The region is often pushed into the background, relegated to purported desert emptiness. Yet, 50 years of intensive research into the pre-Islamic history of the Peninsula have shown otherwise. And the last decade was an incredible booster in this research area, fostered by the production of corpuses, the investigation of new territories, such as Saudi Arabia, and its share of breakthroughs. This discrepancy is as much a consequence of the scarcity of syntheses intended for non-specialists as of the nature of the pre-Islamic Arabian epigraphy, accessible only to a small number of specialists.

In other words, there is a considerable amount of data available that addresses topical issues — such as the human-environment relationship; the emergence of an Arab identity and the birth of Islam; the place of Arabia in a connected Old World system, etc., and it is now possible to take advantage of the existing corpuses to develop the tools for their analysis, to produce syntheses, and to make them accessible to the greatest number of people. This is the purpose of the Maparabia project.

Fig 1. Screenshot of the online digital atlas interface (Maparabia project/CNRS/CNR/Cartodia).



It is a 5-year project funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR-18-CE27-0015, PI J. Schiettecatte), 2019-23, which encompasses a variety of fields of research: history, archaeology, epigraphy, linguistics, palaeography, geomatics, and geography. The fifteen members of the project come from four laboratories dedicated to pre-Islamic Arabia: CNRS-Orient & Méditerranée (Paris), CNRS-Archéorient (Lyon), Dipartimento di Civiltà e Forme del Sapere of the University of Pisa, and CNR-ISPC (Milan).

Based on archaeological data and large epigraphic corpuses (DASI, OCIANA), the project aims to develop three free online research instruments, adhering to Open Science and FAIR principles.

1/ Digital atlas of ancient Arabia: This online platform is designed for the mapping of monuments, inscriptions, languages, scripts, cults and social groups (FIG. 1). It exposes a geolocated database (postgreSQL) of two types of entities: archaeological sites and inscriptions. The archaeological data is compiled from the existing bibliography; the epigraphic data is imported from the DASI corpus (about 7200 South Arabian inscriptions at the moment) and OCIANA (about 3500 North Arabian inscriptions). The platform includes full web-GIS functionality: a map displayed in a browser, with a dynamic legend and timeline to display/hide/filter layers and data; simple queries are possible according to specific attributes (scripts, languages, type of remains, etc.). In addition, the encoding of the epigraphic content of ancient Arabian inscriptions (names of deities and tribes) allows the mapping of the distribution of cults and social groups. Any specialist wishing to carry out advanced queries or spatial analyses may request access to the QGIS project and use the database on open-source GIS software for his/her own research.

2/ Gazetteer of ancient Arabia: This consists of a list of places, providing their identification, description, and semantic relationships between them (FIG. 2). It adopts the definition of “Place” disseminated by the Pleiades project (<https://pleiades.stoa.org/help/concepts>), therefore elements of the natural and anthropic landscape, settlements and individual artifacts, political, social and cultural entities related to the territory are taken into consideration “whether or not exactly locatable, whether or not their actual relation with the real world can be ascertained”. The Gazetteer is populated automatically by importing data from DASI on demand, in particular: onomastic items (toponyms, tribe names, building names); corresponding epigraphic sigla; data on archaeological sites; and some vocabularies, especially those related to periodization. Synchronization with DASI does not preclude from manually entering new Name, Source and Period records, nor the implementation of existing records with new metadata, in order to provide a complete description of a Place based on other sources (e.g. North Arabian and Nabataean inscriptions).

3/ Thematic Dictionary of Ancient Arabia (TDAA):

This is a comprehensive electronic dictionary covering several aspects of the history, society, religion, linguistics

and topography of Arabia from the beginning of the first millennium BCE to the seventh century CE. The treatment of its entries is based primarily on the consideration of epigraphic and archaeological material, which in turn allows for an assessment of the reliability and historicity of other sources, often considered distorted by distance (classical sources) or remoteness (Arab-Islamic sources). In this respect, the TDAA is intended to meet the need for an up-to-date open-access synthesis. The TDAA will benefit both specialists of ancient Arabia, and the wider academic community, by facilitating access to sources essential for the understanding of the ancient world and the emergence of Islam. To date, more than 700 entries are planned and 90 contributors from different academic backgrounds are involved in their writing.

We plan to make these instruments publicly available in the course of 2022 (<https://ancientarabia.huma-num.fr>), and hope that this project will promote the production of a renewed regional history from the beginning of the first millennium BCE to the seventh century CE. We do not exclude extending the chronological range to the protohistoric and prehistoric periods in the future. One day at a time...

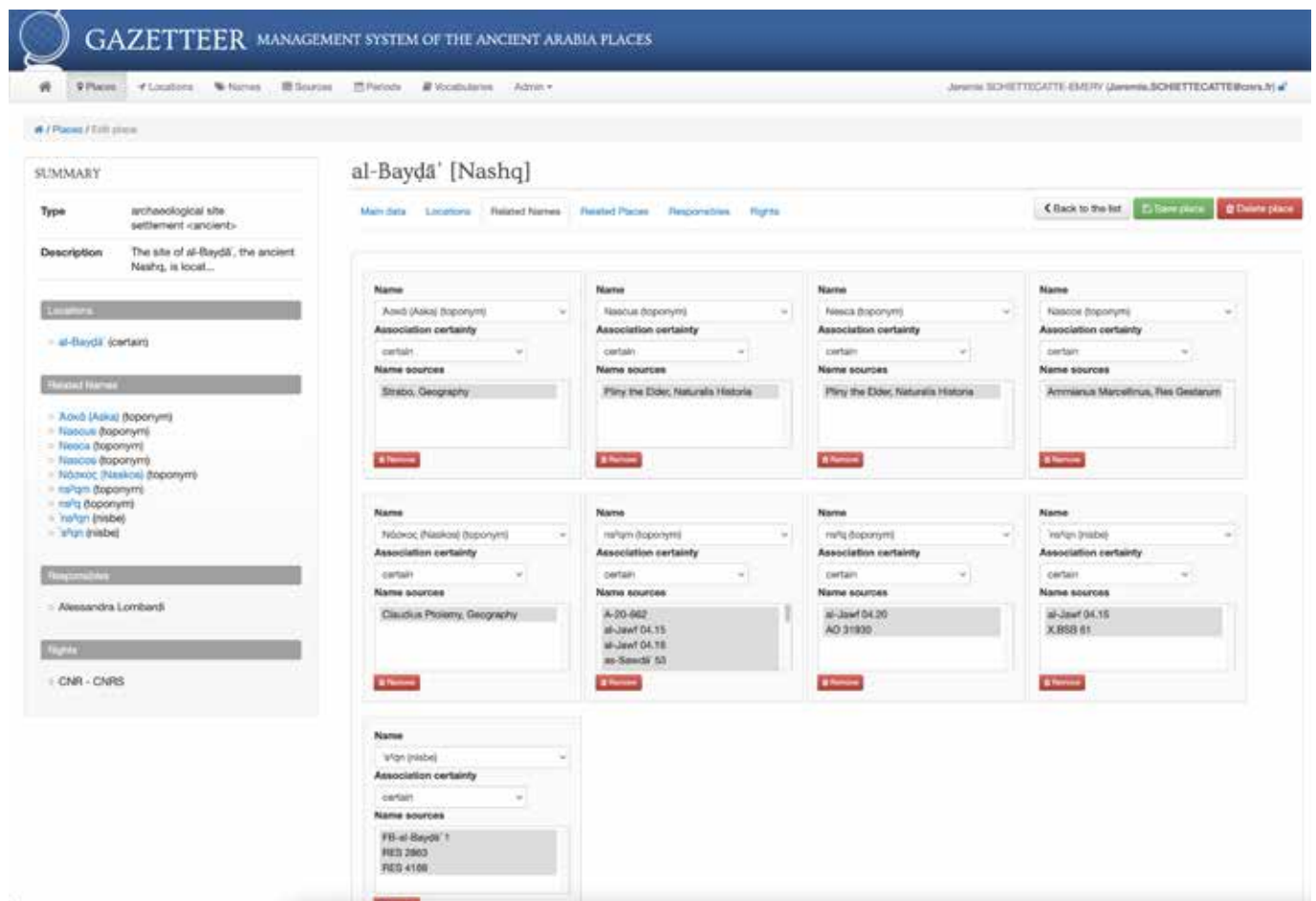


Figure 2. Screenshot of the Gazetteer management system (Maparabia project/CNR/CNRS).

The study of Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah's dagger

Juma Mubarak Al Kuwari, Marsya A Abdulghani, Saud Mubarak Al Hajri

In the Qatari culture, swords have been used as part of ceremonies and occasions and in some cases, swords are given as gifts. Weapons have been part of many individual collections with some available for public viewing while some are part of personal private collections. With interest in collecting, there is also an interest in studying the swords in the context of their historical significance that led to the design development. Hence, the dagger of Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah caught our eye and we have decided to reverse engineer the item in the hopes of understanding the production methods. Our final product is to create a replica which can evaluate the effectiveness of our methodology and our understanding of weaponry production.



The conservation team of the National Museum of Qatar provided an alternative dagger to be studied as part of their vast collection. Visitors can see other daggers of the leaders of Qatar in the museum in the gallery.

Our proposed investigation is a combination of traditional and digital for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding of the item. Background information gives context to the dagger and its provenance. In addition, it gives an indication of an overlapping style of influence. The dagger is measured and categorised into the following: belt, handle, blade, scabbard chest and heel. Within those categories, we measured individual elements in steps. Next, we identified the materials and validated our assumption with the conservation team. Lastly, we conducted basic digitisation techniques using photography and 3D scanning. The visual and written documentation combined to complement each other as references in producing the replica.

In a larger context, the independently led research emphasises the role of museums as a source of inspiration and resources for preservation and development of weaponry craftsmanship in Qatar. The National Museum of Qatar was very welcoming to our inquiry to conduct the session. Their enthusiasm and guidance to assist us from conception

to execution shows the museum's readiness to support learners of any kind. We utilised consumer level equipment to conduct our investigation but in the future, detailed examination will require access to exclusive documentation tools reserved for professionals. This opens the doors to include enthusiasts as part of the research design, museology and conservation efforts in the museum. It will create a newfound appreciation for the museum profession and reiterate the role of museums in safeguarding heritage for the community. We are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside professionals as a learning opportunity.

Charles Huber: France's Greatest Arabian Explorer

William Facey

The Strasbourgeois geographer and explorer Charles Huber (1837–84) made two great journeys between 1880 and 1884 that have ensured his place among the foremost 19th-century explorers of Arabia. William Facey has spent the Covid months writing the first-ever Huber biography and, in collaboration with Michael C.A. Macdonald, translating the travelogue of his first Arabian journey in 1880–81. This took Huber from Damascus through the Nafud desert to Ha'il, Jabal Aja, al-Qasim, Tayma, Mada'in Salih, the Harrat Khaybar and back to Ha'il, and then on to Damascus via north-east Arabia, Iraq and the Hamad. The plan is for publication in 2022.

Huber's account of this first journey is the only continuous narrative of his heroic Arabian travels that he ever wrote. It appeared serially (and posthumously) in successive issues of the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* in Paris in 1884 and 1885. Since then it has never been republished in either French or English. The lack of a proper, critical English edition of this highly significant travelogue has for long represented a gap in the literature on Arabian exploration. Our new and fully annotated translation clearly identifies the places that he travelled through and the inscriptions he recorded. As almost nothing has ever been written about the man himself, the translation is preceded by a substantial biographical introduction that takes the story up to his murder in the Hijaz in July 1884. It also focuses on his 1883–84 journey with Julius Euting that covered much of the same ground, and on the Franco-German imbroglio over the Tayma Stele. Copious appendices present a selection of correspondence relevant to Huber's travels and his character and friendships, as well as a catalogue of the inscriptions he recorded.

Huber's epic 5,000-km journey on camelback in 1880–81 can now take its place as one of the significant landmarks of 19th-century exploration alongside those of the other great 19th-century Arabian travellers. For further information, and to offer any comments and advice, contact Will Facey at wfacey@medinapublishing.com.

Sailing to the Horn of Africa: a Sabaeen venture

Jérémie Schiettecatte (CNRS, UMR 8167 Orient et Méditerranée, Paris)

Alessia Prioletta (CNRS, UMR 8167 Orient et Méditerranée, Paris)

Christian J. Robin (Institut de France, Paris)

The discovery we present here is unexpected, to say the least. It results from the illegal excavation of an archaeological site in Somalia, a temple for which no parallel is attested in the region. There, monumental Sabaic inscriptions were unearthed, their photographs were posted on the Web and simultaneously handed down to Christian Robin and Khaldun Nu'mān in 2019-20. Since then, we have had the opportunity to present this discovery to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris, in January 2021 and during the Epigraphic Day of the Institute of Advanced Study (Princeton, NJ) in March 2021. The detailed publication is nearing completion.

The very location of this looting was not revealed, except that it was done in Puntland, Somalia. A comparison of the photographs with the Google Earth imagery suggests a location on the eastern coast of Somalia, ca. 50 km SSW of Cape Guardafui.

Seven Sabaic inscriptions and an incense-burning altar have been brought to our attention. The photographs show that they were discovered in a carefully built construction. Its marginally drafted, pecked masonry is characteristic of South Arabian monumental constructions. The architecture and the content of the inscriptions clearly indicate a religious function. To this day, only rock art, megaliths, platforms, dry-stone cairns and light architecture have been documented on the Somali coast and in the hinterland. The presence of a well-built stone temple is something exceptional.

The seven inscriptions on the photographs were labelled Bari 2021-1 to 7, after the name of the province of Bari (Puntland), in which they are located. The palaeographic style is not so different from the standard established in the late 8th – early 7th cent. BCE.

The significance of these inscriptions is considerable. Firstly, they attest to the presence of a temple dedicated to the god Akhakhātān (ʿḥḥtn - vocalization is hypothetical) on the Somali coast well before any ancient coastal occupations known so far. Beside this deity, which is rarely attested in the inscriptions, the gods 'Athtar and Almaqah are also invoked. Secondly, several clues indicate a Sabaeen origin of the dedicants: the use of the Sabaic language, the onomastics, the reference to the Sabaeen god Almaqah and to a Sabaeen ruler named Yathā'amar Watar. So far, three rulers of that name are known, we cannot determine which one is mentioned here. The author of one of the texts is a member of the lineage, dhu-Ḥadaqān, coming from Maryab (today Ma'rib). It is remarkable that this lineage is also mentioned

in the Ethio-Sabaeen inscriptions found in Eritrea (RIÉth 55 and 56) and that Maryab is also the probable origin of the commissioners of several inscriptions from the Ethiopia-Eritrea zone (RIÉth 26, 27, 30 and 39).



Fig 1: Inscription Bari 2021-4. The text is a dedication to the god Akhakhātān by Luḥay'athat dhu-Ḥadaqān from Maryab, when he was conducting the fleet of Saba' on behalf of his lord Yathā'amar, ruler of Saba'.



Fig 2: Inscription Bari 2021-4 rotated

Thirdly, the presence of people from the Sabaeen capital and the recognition of the authority of the Sabaeen ruler suggest that African expeditions were a centrally-controlled enterprise. This hypothesis is reinforced by references to a markab of Yuhaytha' / markab of his lord / markab of Saba'. In this context, the Sabaic word mrkb refers to the convoy that travels by sea, in other words the 'boat' or even the 'fleet'. The Somali inscriptions provide explicit evidence of the involvement of the Sabaeen power in distant maritime expeditions.

This Sabaeen site located south of Cape Guardafui was founded in the late 8th- 7th century BCE, that is more than a century after Sabaeans started to settle down in the Eritrean

hinterland and on the Ethiopian Tigray plateau. It took place after the Sabaeans, from inner Yemen, had come into regular contact with the people of the Tihāma coastal plain, and after they had seized political control of the Arabian coastal plain in the late 8th cent. BCE. Both the political control and the navigational experience on the Arabian and African coastal seas acted as a catalyst for an ambitious maritime exploration, which is illustrated by a fleet of Saba' sailing along the northern coast of Somalia on behalf of the Sabaean ruler Yatha'amar Watar. In the Horn of Africa, no political organisation can be found in antiquity. The collection of African products could be done by sending expeditions that bartered and withdrew or by creating permanent settlements. The building of a temple probably implied a recurrent presence in a controlled territory.

Forthcoming paper

Prioletta, A., Robin, Ch. J., Schiettecatte, J., Gajda, I. & Nu'man, Kh. "Sabaeans on the Somali Coast". Submitted to Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy.

WORK IN PROGRESS

My name is Sara Ann Knutson and I am a PhD candidate in Anthropology (Archaeology) at the University of California, Berkeley. My work focuses on Islamic(ate) heritage, based on 'Abbasid coins in museum collections around the world, namely in the Middle East and Europe. As part of this research, I am currently conducting a cultural heritage survey that seeks to understand how people connected to the wider Middle East, including North Africa, (defined as being from the region, having cultural ties to the region, or those who work on the cultural heritage/ archaeology of the region) understand the cultural heritage of the Middle East, their familiarity with and access to museums, and the meanings behind Arab and Islamic museum materials.

This research aims to study the values and opinions of individuals and stakeholders who are personally or professionally connected to the cultural heritage of the Middle East and those who understand material objects from the Middle East (located in museum collections around the world) as part of their cultural heritage. One objective of this cultural heritage survey is to gather information on how contemporary individuals connected to the Middle East understand their cultural heritage in connection to past and present global networks.

Survey participants must be:

- (1) at least 18 years old
- (2) from the Middle East, have cultural ties to the Middle East, and/ or work in the Middle East in the cultural heritage sector or a related field like anthropology or archaeology, and
- (3) consent and agree to participate in the study.

I would be grateful if IASA members would take the survey. They are more than welcome (and encouraged!) to also share the survey with anyone they know who might qualify and be interested in taking the survey as well. All responses are completely anonymous and will not be linked back to participants in any way.

The survey should take about 25 minutes (or less) and is available in both English and Arabic. And as a small incentive/ thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts, there is a drawing for \$50 (or in equivalent currency) gift cards.

The survey link (with full details) is here and is available in both English and Arabic: <https://bit.ly/3hPowD6>

Anyone who has any questions is welcome to contact me at sara_knutson@berkeley.edu

Thank you in advance for assisting me with this research!

IASA SOCIAL MEDIA

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

As well as [Facebook](#), we are on Twitter (@IASArabia), Instagram (@theiasarabia) and [LinkedIn](#).

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

BRITISH LIBRARY/QATAR FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP

Since our update in the Spring 2021 IASA bulletin much has happened in the British Library/Qatar Foundation Partnership programme. Firstly, [the Sunderland – the East India Company Ship we are tracking in its weekly log entries on its voyage of 1721/22](#) has sailed through the Bab al-Mandeb



and picked up coffee from Mokha before setting off across the Indian Ocean towards the Malabar coast:



Significantly, in May 2021 the British Library/Qatar Foundation (BLQFP) [celebrated the digitisation of its 2 millionth image](#) as part of the creation of the [Qatar Digital Library](#), an online portal available in [Arabic](#) and [English](#). This milestone offered an opportunity to reflect on [the creativity, innovation and collaboration](#) involved to achieve this. It was also marked by James Onley, Director of Research at Qatar National Library, in an article drawing on the file containing the 2 millionth image, examining the times of [‘Isa bin Tarif, Governor of Biddah \(Doha\), 1843-47](#).

In numbers this represented over the nine years so far of the BLQFP: the digitisation of the 2 millionth page, [139 audio tracks](#).



222 Arabic Scientific Manuscripts as part of 7000 physical collection items, 17,725 enhanced catalogue descriptions, 200,000 unique lines translated, 6,576 new authority items, 1,176 rights holders, and 177 expert articles. An example of the recent work on Arabic Scientific Manuscripts is highlighted in [Fragments of Abbasid Sciences: From Desert Monastery to Digital Reunion](#) and [the Baghdadi Bookseller of Bloomsbury](#).

It was great to get [feedback](#) about how useful the Qatar Digital Library (QDL) has been:



Indeed, during these difficult pandemic times a key aim of the BLQFP has been, through QDL Expert Articles and British Library blogs, to keep the archives accessible even when the British Library and Qatar National Library have had to close and staff have been working remotely for extended periods of time. These articles and blogs have covered a wide geographical area, historical periods and themes.

Some of the [earliest surviving aerial photographs of Qatar](#)

taken in the 1930s are revealed as part of the search for landing grounds for the new air routes around the Arabian Peninsula.



Photograph of Doha Palace looking South, 9 May 1934. IOR/L/PS/12/1956, f. 9r

As the oil age began to impact Qatar the issues behind the placing of the [first British Political Officer in Doha](#) in the late 1940s are analysed.

Going back to the early years of British involvement in the region, [the Third Voyage of the East India Company](#), 1607-1610 and the challenges faced and encounters made – includes the island of Socotra as drawn by the mariners. Continuing the maritime theme, the contentious issue of [‘piracy’ and the role of British forces under Francis Loch](#) in launching the 1819 expedition against the Qawasim of Ra’s al Khaymah.



Of further related interest are reflections on [the many names of the General Treaty with the Arab Tribes of the Persian Gulf](#) as well as the consideration given in the first part of the 19th century to [a maritime route from England to India via the Euphrates](#).

Iran in different historical periods has been explored. This has included research on the relationship of the Government

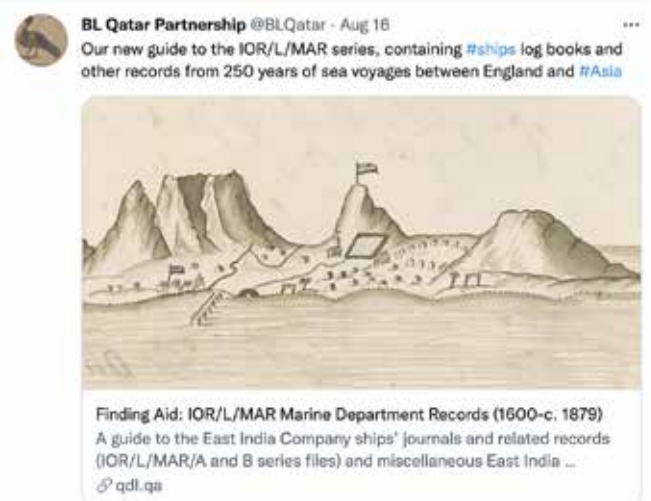
of Bombay and a member of the Qajar ruling family as part of the [ramifications of a trial for murder in 1830](#). [The life and legacy of Reza Shah Pahlavi](#) examines the context of Iran’s attempts to assert itself in the Gulf against British hegemony in the 1930s.



The British-Iranian naval rivalry of this period is explored in detail in the [Flotilla Tour of 1933](#) as a demonstration of British naval power.

Some detailed issues of etymology and place have been delved into: see [the term ‘shater’ and its use in the India Office Records](#) and [making sense of Ras Dharbat Ali](#) in the archives and the mountains of Dhofar. The story behind the [initial making of the Saudi-Jordanian border](#) in 1925 was explained and a number of myths dispelled.

In addition to these detailed examinations of specific historical incidents, issues and themes the BLQFP has also developed further Finding Aids into specific sets of files: [the IOR L/MAR Marine Department Records \(1600 – c. 1879\)](#).



and [IOR/F/4s Records of the Board of Control \(1620-1859\)](#), which oversaw the East India Company’s activities in India

and the Gulf until the creation of the India Office in 1858. The memoirs of members of the Indian Political Service in the twentieth century are explored in [general](#) and in specific connection with [the Gulf](#).

Check out our regular updates including our #mapofthefeature



and newly digitized collection items:



We look forward to keeping in touch with the IASA - connect on Twitter with the BLQFP on [@blqatar](#) and the Qatar National Library on [@QNLlib](#)

NOTICES

Exhibition: In the Footsteps of Pilgrims; the Ottoman Hajj

November 17th to December 17th 2021 at the Yunus Emre Institute, 10 Maple Street London W1T 5HA

The primary focus of the exhibition will be the remains of buildings and other features located on the pilgrimage route between Damascus and Mecca although other aspects of the Hajj will also be included. Themes within the exhibition will include 1) the development of the Hajj from pre-Islamic times up to the sixteenth century, 2) the development of the Hajj by the Ottomans after their conquest of Damascus and the Hijaz during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

3) the renovation of the Hajj route in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 4) the construction of the Hijaz railway 5) literature and culture related to the performance of the Hajj, 6) Ottoman Mecca and Medina.

The exhibition will be complemented by a series of conversations on aspects of the Ottoman Hajj as well as a short book giving more information.

From Andrew Petersen



The International Association for Archaeological Research in Western & Central Asia (ARWA)

Founded in 2020, ARWA groups more than 500 scholars and advanced students from 48 countries.

It is aimed at establishing a worldwide link between scholars, to defend the archaeological discipline and its scientists, to propose a number of services (informing the widest audience, encouraging joint projects, mentoring promising students, advising international organizations). It is composed of several chapters (Archaeology stricto sensu, History & Philology, Art History & Visual Studies, Heritage, Geoarchaeology, Archaeometry, Technology & Environmental Studies, Bioarchaeology, Physics applied to Archaeology & Dating Methods, Digital Practices & Computer Sciences) and comprises eight regional groups from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Pamir and the Indus Valley.

The Arabian Peninsula is one of these regions. ARWA organizes international congresses, seminars, webinars, academic introductions to the diverse disciplines mentioned above, and a substantial programme of online lectures.

The association publishes a journal, an online bulletin, and a collection of five scientific series (Lema, Subartu, Araxes, Aratta, Oxus).

General information: <https://arwa-international.org>

ARWA Collection: <https://arwa-international.org/publications/arwa-collection/>

Contact for the Arabian Peninsula: Lloyd Weeks, lweeks2@une.edu.au

NEW PUBLICATIONS ON ARABIA

Al Qassemi, S.S and Reisz, T. (eds) 2021. *Building Sharjah*. Birkhäuser ISBN: 9783035622768

The 2021 publication of *Building Sharjah* marks the completion of an intensive five-year research project to collect and reconstruct Sharjah's modern landscape, including the parts once imagined and those no longer to be found. Nearly 600 images from dozens of sources, mostly unpublished until now, in addition to more than 60 featured projects and newly commissioned contributions from 17 writers chart how modernist ambitions came together to engineer a global city.

Building Sharjah reveals how modern architecture unfurled across the United Arab Emirates' third-largest city. An oil discovery in 1972 positioned Sharjah as one of the world's final cities shaped by transformative fortune. In the footsteps of Kuwait, Riyadh, and Dubai, Sharjah faced a metamorphosis: either one that repeated the past's mistakes or one that reimagined how wealth can build a city.

Sharjah's potential enticed an international cast of experts to create a bold, new city. As their projects begin to vanish, this book preserves them through unseen photographs and recovered documents. New writing chronicles how local and arriving residents arranged the designed, concrete environment into a home. Beyond just a local artifact, this book examines the confident promises made by global practices of urbanization.

Crawford, M. 2021. *The Imam, the Pasha and the Englishman, The Ordeal of 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'ud, Cairo 1818*. London: Medina Publishing. ISBN 9780992980863

The dramatic encounter between Muhammad 'Ali Pasha, Ottoman governor of Egypt, and his vanquished Saudi foe, Imam 'Abd Allah, in Cairo in November 1818 marks the symbolic end of the First Saudi State. 'Abd Allah was in transit to public execution in Istanbul, the pasha on his way to becoming a major regional force and founding a local dynasty. The meeting was witnessed by an English Whig, John Bowes Wright, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, whose previously unpublished account throws new light on the exchanges, and the surrender by 'Abd Allah of the remaining treasures taken by his late father Sa'ud from the Prophet's tomb in al-Madina.

The book highlights the importance of this historic moment in the uneasy relationship between Muhammad 'Ali and his nominal sovereign, Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II, and analyses their respective efforts to benefit domestically and internationally from 'Abd Allah's final journey. It considers the political cultures of the main regional protagonists and the Whiggish attitudes and assumptions that Bowes Wright

brings to his experiences in Cairo and Istanbul. It is this cultural exploration that distinguishes this work and makes it of particular value to those interested in premodern Middle Eastern history and the contribution to understanding of Western travellers in Egypt and the Levant.

Green, J. and Henry, R. (eds) 2021 *Olga Tufnell's 'Perfect Journey' Letters and photographs of an archaeologist in the Levant and Mediterranean* London: UCL Press. ISBN: 9781787359062

Open access: <https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/166544>

Olga Tufnell (1905–85) was a British archaeologist working in Egypt, Cyprus and Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s, a period often described as a golden age of archaeological discovery. For the first time, this book presents Olga's account of her experiences in her own words. Based largely on letters home, the text is accompanied by dozens of photographs that shed light on personal experiences of travel and dig life at this extraordinary time. Introductory material by John D.M. Green and Ros Henry provides the social, historical, biographical and archaeological context for the overall narrative.

The letters offer new insights into the social and professional networks and history of archaeological research, particularly for Palestine under the British Mandate. They provide insights into the role of foreign archaeologists, relationships with local workers and inhabitants, and the colonial framework within which they operated during turbulent times.

Low, M. C., *Imperial Mecca - Ottoman Arabia and the Indian Ocean Hajj*. Columbia University Press ISBN: 9780231190770

Michael Christopher Low analyzes the late Ottoman hajj and Hijaz region as transimperial spaces, reshaped by the competing forces of Istanbul's project of frontier modernization and the extraterritorial reach of British India's steamship empire in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea. *Imperial Mecca* recasts Ottoman Arabia as a distant, unstable semiautonomous frontier that Istanbul struggled to modernize and defend against the onslaught of colonial steamship mobility. As it turned out, steamships carried not just pilgrims, passports, and microbes, but the specter of legal imperialism and colonial intervention. Over the course of roughly a half century from the 1850s through World War I, British India's fear of the hajj as a vector of anticolonial subversion gradually gave way to an increasingly sophisticated administrative, legal, and medical protectorate over the steamship hajj, threatening to eclipse the Ottoman state and Caliphate's prized legitimizing claim as protector of Islam's most holy places. Drawing on a wide range of

Ottoman and British archival sources, this book sheds new light on the transimperial and global histories traversed along the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Rendel, G. and Facey, W. 2021 *Across Arabia, Three Weeks in 1937*. London: Arabian Publishing ISBN: 9780992980856

At the end of March 1937, Geraldine Rendel found she had achieved a trio of unintended distinctions. As the first Western woman to travel openly across Saudi Arabia as a non-Muslim, the first to be received in public by King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, and the first to be received at dinner in the royal palace in Riyadh, she had joined a tiny coterie of pioneering British woman travellers in Arabia.

Until the 1930s, a journey by any foreigner, male or female, across Arabia was a rare event. But when in 1932 the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was proclaimed, increasing numbers of diplomats and oil company representatives began to make their way to its remote desert capital, Riyadh, aided by the arrival of the motorcar. With the car came the camera, and the pictures by the Rendels, both of them keen photographers, rank among the finest from the period.

Geraldine’s husband George, head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, had been responsible for Britain’s relations with Saudi Arabia since 1930. When he and his wife were invited to the Kingdom by King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz for a visit combining diplomacy with travel, he accepted with alacrity. The couple kept a detailed diary, on which Geraldine drew to write a lively account that she intended for publication. In contrast to her husband, who had serious political business to conduct, she treats their journey as a holiday. In the event her narrative, full of vivid social encounters, humour and insights into the women’s side of life, failed to appear in print, and is published here for the first time.

William Facey’s biographical introduction interweaves the story of Geraldine’s adventurous life with the evolution of Anglo-Saudi relations in the 1920s and ’30s, so placing the Rendels’ trans-Arabian journey in its political context.

Risse, M, *Foodways in Southern Oman*, Routledge ISBN 0367859556

Foodways in Southern Oman examines the objects, practices and beliefs relating to producing, obtaining, cooking, eating and disposing of food in the Dhofar region of southern Oman. The chapters consider food preparation, who makes what kind of food, and how and when meals are eaten. Marielle Risse connects what is consumed to themes such as land usage, gender, age, purity, privacy and generosity. She also discusses how foodways are related to issues of morality, safety, religion, and tourism. The volume is a result of fourteen years of collecting data and insights in Dhofar, covering topics such as catching fish, herding

camels, growing fruits, designing kitchens, cooking meals and setting leftovers out for animals. It will be of interest to scholars from a range of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, food studies, Middle Eastern studies and Islamic studies.

Shehab, B. and Nawar, H. 2020 *A History of Arab Graphic Design*. Cairo: AUC Press ISBN: 9789774168918

Arab graphic design emerged in the early twentieth century out of a need to influence, and give expression to, the far-reaching economic, social, and political changes that were taking place in the Arab world at the time. But graphic design as a formally recognized genre of visual art only came into its own in the region in the twenty-first century and, to date, there has been no published study on the subject to speak of.

A History of Arab Graphic Design traces the people and events that were integral to the shaping of a field of graphic design in the Arab world. Examining the work of over eighty key designers from Morocco to Iraq, and covering the period from pre-1900 to the end of the twentieth century, Bahia Shehab and Haytham Nawar chart the development of design in the region, beginning with Islamic art and Arabic calligraphy, and their impact on Arab visual culture, through to the digital revolution and the arrival of the Internet. They look at how cinema, economic prosperity, and political and cultural events gave birth to and shaped the founders of Arab graphic design.

Highlighting the work of key designers and stunningly illustrated with over 600 color images, A History of Arab Graphic Design is an invaluable resource tool for graphic designers, one which, it is hoped, will place Arab visual culture and design on the map of a thriving international design discourse.

Tutunçu, M. 2020 *Mekka & Medina Maps and illustrations from 15th to 20th Century*. SOTA Publishing ISBN: 9789069210223

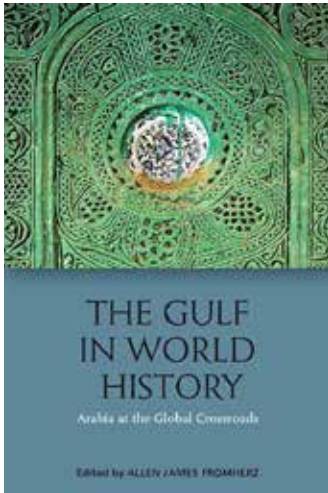
Drawings and images of Islam’s holiest places, the Kaaba and the city of Mecca, alongside Medina with the Mosque of Prophet, have been very popular over the centuries. These images have been used for various purposes and had also been executed for these purposes (drawn, sketched, coloured, incised, stencilled, cut, knitted, printed or even built) on or using a variety of materials, such as stone, ceramics, paper, textiles, wood, marble/tiles (in the form of frescoes), etc.

This book is a publication for the first time of nine key objects, and contains unique information about the history and topography of the holy cities of Islam. All of these key objects are monuments of the arts, and will, for the first time, be analysed and studied and compared to one another so that the information they have will be disclosed to the reader.

BOOK REVIEWS

Thank you to our Book Review Editor, Dr Alexandra Hirst, for compiling this section of the Bulletin.

Please note that opinions expressed here are those of contributors and not necessarily those of the IASA.



The Gulf in World History: Arabia at the Global Crossroads

Ed. Allen J. Fromherz
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020 (hardback, 2017). 392 pp. 28 figures, 19 plates, 1 map, Index, Bibliography. Paperback. £25.99 ISBN 9781474430661

JUST AS THE GULF today is connected on many levels to the eastern and western Indian Ocean, Africa, the Middle East, and the West, so too it was throughout history. The notion that the Gulf, and in particular the six states now comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council, were isolated from the outside world before oil is a relatively recent construct, relying on the faulty assumption that only the exploitation of oil has created ties with the rest of the world and brought the Gulf within the orbit of globalization. Fortunately, beginning in the last decade or so, there have been a growing number of works dealing with the connections of the Gulf to the Indian Ocean, supplementing earlier works on ties of the Gulf to the Middle East.

Adding to this emerging collection, *The Gulf in World History* provides intriguing glimpses into nooks and crannies of this aspect of global history. The book originated in a workshop held at New York University, Abu Dhabi, and it is handsomely produced with monochrome images throughout and a portfolio of nineteen colour photographs in the centre.

It must be said that the contributions are so disparate that it is difficult to find a common thread beyond the geographic focus on Arabia's connections mainly with the Indian Ocean. But that disparate nature may have its own rewards. Much as the contributions to a festschrift may not constitute a cohesive whole, such a wide range of selections and subjects as found in this volume present their own pleasures, even if a few seem idiosyncratic with regard to the overall theme. The book is divided into six parts that deal principally with history, archaeology, and cultural artifacts and imagination. Given the difficulty of divining an overall theme, it seems best to briefly describe each of the contributions on its own merits.

Contributions of an archeologically nature include Mark Horton's overview of the long history of Gulf connections with the Indian Ocean. He cites the preponderance of materials with a Gulf origin found in East Africa as the product of monsoon-driven voyages that have occurred regularly for more than a millennium. While the Swahili coast is frequently omitted by Eurasian-centred views of the Indian Ocean region, Horton argues that 'rather than being irrelevant, the eastern African coast played a vital role connecting the Gulf with the Indian Ocean World and creating a form of proto-globalisation.' (pp. 161–162)

Robert Carter expands the stretch of Gulf networks even more in his examination of pearl fishing in the Gulf over the last seven thousand years. Gulf pearls seemed to have reached the Greeks and the Romans, and the Portuguese specifically targeted Bahrain at the beginning of the sixteenth century for its pearl trade. The eighteenth to twentieth centuries saw the expansion of the Gulf's pearl market around the world; at one point an estimated 80 per cent of the world's pearls came from the Gulf.

Another example of the Gulf's age-old global connections is provided by Eric Staples in his examination of the ships of the Gulf, their evolution over time, the manner of construction, and the types of materials used. His contribution 'illustrate[s] that these material networks connected the Gulf with timber merchants in Africa and South Asia, rope makers in Kerala and the Maldives, cotton and doum palm weavers in the Kutch and Zanzibar, and bitumen suppliers in northern Iraq.' (p. 214)

Carolyn Swan carries the theme forward in a parallel path, focusing on how a close examination of glass demonstrates the long duration and breadth of Gulf trade. Although fragments of glass from the Bronze Age have been found, it was not until the late pre-Islamic period (c. 300 BCE to 700 CE) that glass vessels appeared in southern Gulf settlements, mostly originating from the Mediterranean and possibly linked to the incense trade from South Arabia.

The Gulf's historical connections to other parts of the Indian Ocean are superbly presented, with particular focus on India and East Africa. Ghulam A. Nadri relies heavily on VOC (the Dutch East Indies Company) documents to contest the prevailing opinion that trade between the Gulf and elsewhere in the Indian Ocean was largely conducted by Muslims, and so highlights the important role of Gujarati merchants in this trade.

Abdulrahman al-Salimi argues that Banians (an Indian merchant community) were present in Oman well before the arrival of the Portuguese and that the Banians opposed the Portuguese alongside the Omanis. Their presence, along with that of the Lawatiya (another group of Indian origin,

also known as Hyderabadis), continued to be important in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for trade and administering the customs for Muscat port.

Valeria Piacentini Fiorani focuses on the kings of Hormuz, particularly around the turn of the sixteenth century when their domain straddled the Gulf between Hormuz and the Omani coast. Even though Hormuz Island fell to the Portuguese after several sieges, the realm of Hormuz recreated a network of politics, business, and culture that persisted as a 'mobile, international, cosmopolitan society.' (p. 37)

An overview of the Gulf presence in India before oil is provided by Johan Mathew. He notes that most 'Khalijis' living in British India were sailors or small merchants but little historical record remains of their existence. Concentrating on Gulf elites, he describes ties to India by the Omani ruling family and Kuwaiti merchants, principally in Bombay but also Calicut: 'If Bombay was the Gateway of India, it was also the Khalij's gateway to the globe.' (p. 127)

Moving from India to Africa, Matthew Hopper addresses the seeming paradox between the long existence of large communities in the Gulf of African descent and the self-identification of these African communities as Arab. He is principally concerned with the question of whether an African diaspora applies to the Gulf and concludes that: "When defined in terms of 'pre-determination' rather than 'self-determination', the African diaspora in the Gulf may be found hiding in plain sight." (p. 156)

While most of the Gulf's external connections were visible in the region's ports, Timothy Power describes how far-flung trade impacted the interior of Arabia, using the Buraimi Oasis as his focus. He traces cycles of sedentarization in the oasis and links them to the organizational capacities of Omani states bolstered by maritime trade. As an example of the interrelationships, he points out that: "It is possible to identify a western Indian Ocean 'triangle trade', in which Arabian dates and horses were exported to India in exchange for textiles, which were then traded with East Africa for slaves who were set to work in Arabian oases." (p. 231)

Cultural artifacts and concerns form the basis of two chapters. William Zimmerle cites an archaeological dig in Oman where the Omani workers immediately identified a four-thousand-year-old object as a mabkhara or cuboid incense burner. His conclusion is that its shape, as well as its function, has been unchanged ever since and much of his contribution is devoted to relating the manufacture and uses of the incense burner in Oman's Dhofar region, noting that: 'More recently, the cuboid incense burner has become a symbol of national identity for all Omanis.' (p. 310)

Karen Exell describes the four Msheireb Heritage House Museums in Doha, which stress the history of Indian Ocean slavery, the early oil industry in Qatar (with emphasis on the Qatari workers), the urban history of old Doha, and the

development of the house in Qatar. She raises the question of whether the museums 'articulate a necessary stage for the construction of a national identity, or are they, in the context of the specific demographic circumstances of Qatar and its neighbouring Gulf states, and the regional nationalisation policies, contributing to a precarious ethical situation regarding race and prejudice?' (p. 326)

Lamya Harub's chapter shifts from the cultural into the political as she discusses the role of Sultan Qaboos in forging an Omani national identity. But she is careful to emphasize the equally key importance of oil: 'Therefore, contrary to countless analyses, the real crisis at hand is not the succession to Sultan Qaboos, as his legacy will continue after him, but that of oil, which has played a critical role in the social, economic and political structures of Oman from 1970.' (p. 334)

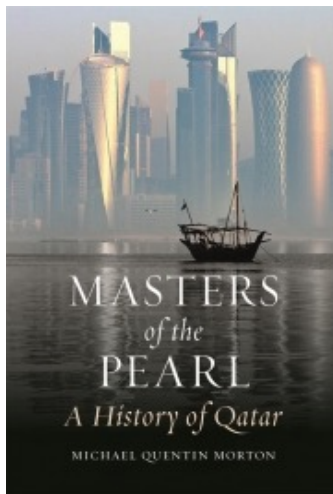
Finally, the volume rounds out its diversity with three contributions that remain apart from the others and stand out in their absence of clear connections to the theme of the book. Michael Ryan utilizes classical Islamic sources in discussing astrology and its treatment by Islam but, despite his title, does not make any direct connection between the Mediterranean and the Gulf.

Richard McGregor contributes a short chapter regarding a tenth-century encyclopaedia produced by a team of scholars in Basra known as the Brethren of Purity. From this, he distils an example of their diverse cultural and religious view of human virtues by relaying their description of the case of animals versus humans as argued before the king of the jinn.

Charles Häberl provides an overview of the Mandeans, the small ethno-religious community recently 'ethnically cleansed from Iraq'. He points out that: 'They also spread widely throughout the Gulf system and the Indian Ocean, sometimes even becoming ministers and elite officials to Muslim rulers....' (p. 58). With that in mind, he argues that 'ancient geographies' such as pertained to the Mandeans were as conceptual as they were physical.

The wide diversity of discrete subjects presented make it difficult to draw any firm conclusions, apart from the stated objective of the book, which, as the editor states, 'focuses on the role of change in culture, society, religion and trade, and the history of cosmopolitanism and trans-cultural encounters.' (p. 10) While it may seem that Gulf society is relatively homogenous, these studies clearly demonstrate the diversity that lies underneath. As fascinating as these vignettes of the Gulf's connection to the Indian Ocean world are, most readers are unlikely to delve into more than a few chapters at a time. The recent appearance of a paperback edition undoubtedly will assist that approach.

By **J.E. Peterson**



Masters of the Pearl: A History of Qatar

Michael Quentin Morton
London: Reaktion
Books, 2020. 264 pp. 59
illus. 2 maps, Timeline,
Notes, Genealogical
Tables, Glossary, Index,
Bibliography. Hardback.
£25.
ISBN 9781789143119

WHEN THE READER opens Michael Quentin Morton's history of Qatar, they are greeted by a blurb on the inside flap which declares that 'the opaque Arabian world guards its secrets well, but *Masters of the Pearl* lifts the veil to shed light on a country that until now has defied explanation.' If this orientalist caricature does not set the tone of the book, then two passages in the introduction soon will.

The first is Morton's assertion that 'the mindset of the pearl trader' (pp. 13–14) has endured and continues to inform the actions of Qatar's rulers. This unevidenced claim that Qataris' actions are determined by a primordial 'mindset' is repeatedly shoehorned in throughout, such as in relation to the development of the oil industry: 'no doubt at the back of the Amir [Khalifa bin Hamad]'s mind was his memory of the pearl trade as a young boy,' Morton speculates liberally (p. 169).

The second is the author's 'personal connection' with Qatar. Morton recounts growing up in Dukhan oil camp in the 1950s, where he found an ancient arrowhead which his father, an oil geologist, donated to the British Museum. Aside from the appropriation of Qatar's material heritage, this encapsulates the author's relationship to Qatar. The book reads as if it were written from the vantage point of an isolated oil settlement: there is a superficial familiarity with the country, while the author remains palpably distant from Qatari society ('Qataris rarely invited outsiders into their houses' (p. 202), Morton notes tellingly). This is evident in frustrating rhetorical questions about the country, such as 'how much more [of African cultures] has been preserved in the lives of modern descendants of slaves; and how successful has integration been, or is there discrimination against them?' (p. 96).

The main narrative of the book is divided into twelve chapters in addition to an introduction and an epilogue. This is preceded by two maps: one of Qatar and another broader map of the Gulf. While these are useful, the map of Qatar is not sufficiently detailed, lacking some locations referenced in the chapters and any ethnographical details about tribal domains during earlier periods.

There is a timeline stretching from 628 CE to 2017 at the end of the book, but the narrative really begins towards the middle of the 18th century, and the events of a century and a half in which Qatar took shape as a polity are covered in a whirlwind of names in the space of four chapters. By the end of the fourth chapter, we arrive in the 20th century, where the majority of the book's narrative takes place.

Each chapter is interspersed with 4–5 black and white images. These do not always bear in clear relationship to the narrative, such as the image of four-wheel drive cars 'dune-bashing' at Khor al-Udaid (p. 62) in a chapter situated in the 19th century! Images become more relevant as the narrative enters modern times but are sometimes not optimally placed. For example, Morton tells us that the design of the Qatar National Convention Centre incorporates artificial trunks of a sidra tree in Chapter 9, but the image of the Centre is included in Chapter 11.

Not all of the book is chronologically organised: the sequence is occasionally interrupted by thematic chapters. For example, Chapter 5 deals with slavery (where Morton deserves some points for drawing links to modern slavery), and Chapter 8 addresses demographic changes in the country in the wake of the oil boom. Apart from these chapters, the rest of the narrative on modern Qatar leading up to the 2017–2020 blockade focuses on the royal family. This is not uninteresting: Morton does a good job of conveying the intrigue which surrounded less-than-smooth successions to the throne in the 20th century. It is, however, almost entirely focused on the male members of the royal family. We get a fleeting glimpse of 'one of Khalifa [bin Hamad Al Thani]'s daughters', who – after her father was deposed in 1995 – 'attempted a revenge attack by shooting at [Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabir] with a gun, leaving him slightly injured' (p. 175). No more is said of the unnamed princess and the reader is left scratching their head.

The book abounds with this kind of shallow coverage and unsubstantiated speculation. Morton presumes frequently to speak for Qataris: 'people were generally relieved that Ahmad had gone' (p. 159); women 'occasionally tut at the lack of 'decency' in the dress sense of expatriates' (p. 224). At one point, the author even presumes to speak for 'the Arab mind' (p. 184). Similarly problematic is the careless use of labels such as 'terrorist', 'radical', and 'extremism'. Hamas is said to have 'seized power' in Gaza (p. 191), obscuring the fact that they were democratically elected. Current conflicts in the region are reduced to Sunnis vs. Shias, and with this is an insensitive definition of Iranians: 'not Arabs and generally of the Shia persuasion' (p. 173).

Two main threads run through the twelve chapters: references to the pearl trade (which serve no purpose beyond Chapter 4 other than reminding us of the title of the book), and a fixation with the late Qatar blockade which means that the book is unlikely to age well. Indeed, in several places, the book reads like an attempt to trace the historical roots of

this blockade. An example is the concluding paragraph of Chapter 3, where Morton draws links between ‘the current fallout between the UAE and Qatar’ and the death of Jassim bin Muhammad Al Thani’s son at the hands of a raiding party from Abu Dhabi and his retaliatory attack on Liwa Oasis in 1889: ‘[T]hese events are woven into the modern narrative of a conflict between two sheikhs’, Morton tells us, ‘[t]hey are not forgotten, for blood runs deep’ (p. 63). Similar ominous foreshadowing can be found throughout the book.

However, this foreshadowing is not consistent. Tensions between Saudi Arabia and Qatar at any historical point are hastily presented as historical precursors to the blockade, but periods of amicable relations are readily dismissed because they do not serve the narrative. By the time we get to the 1990s, we are not sure whether Qatar has always been butting heads with Saudi Arabia or ‘sheltering under its umbrella’ (p. 183).

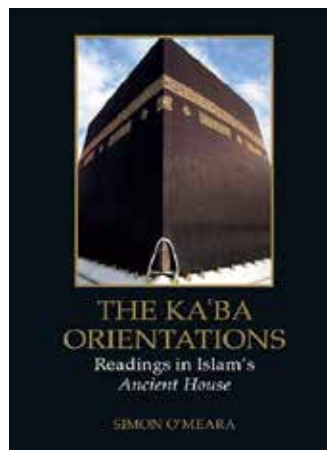
At the end of the book, two genealogical tables of the Al Thani and Al Khalifa families are included. Disappointingly, the Al Thani genealogical table (p. 234) is pared down to male heirs or contenders to the throne, and there is a typographical error which suggests that a third cousin of Prince Tamim ruled Qatar in 2008 (that is actually the year he died). There is also a chapter-by-chapter list of references, where the scarcity of Arabic sources is hard to miss. Most of the references in the earlier chapters are British colonial records that Morton relies on uncritically (e.g. Palgrave’s *Personal Narratives of a Year’s Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia* and Lorimer’s *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*). On the other hand, the latter chapters heavily rely on news articles.

The book contains problematic reproductions of colonial terminology. The term ‘piracy’ is the most egregious: studies by Sultan Al-Qasimi and Charles E. Davies have highlighted how this label was frequently used to delegitimise rival seafaring powers in the Gulf. While Morton, to his credit, does problematise the term to some extent, this appears almost an afterthought. Elsewhere in the book ‘piracy’ is used uncritically, sometimes to explain British use of force in the Gulf: ‘as well as suppressing piracy and the slave trade, British naval patrols were stopping dhows to search for arms’ (p. 64). Similarly, an illustration depicting Lewis Pelly’s attack on Bahrain in 1868 is uncritically captioned ‘the British Navy burning pirate dhows’ (p. 47). Thus, intentionally or not, in places the book reproduces the myth of benevolent British imperialism in the Gulf.

The book has its merits: Morton is quite a good descriptive writer and there are some fine evocations of the Qatari landscape. It also contains genuinely interesting and important history from an under-studied country. However, it is difficult to say who this book is for. The author claims that he is writing for both general and specialist readers, but the former may be put off by the bewildering and ultimately unrewarding

tribal labyrinth of the early chapters, while the latter will quickly become frustrated by the limited sources, narrow perspective and shallow coverage of events. This is a shame since, at an RRP of £25, the book is more accessible than other prohibitively-priced histories of Qatar.

By **William Monk and Mariam Aboeizz**



**The Ka’ba Orientations
Readings in Islam’s
Ancient House**

Simon O’Mera
Edinburgh: Edinburgh
University Press, 2020. 264
pp. Extensively illustrated.
Index, Bibliography.
Hardback. £97.
ISBN 9780748699308

IT IS A SURPRISING FACT that, until recently, there has been no scholarly monograph on the Ka’ba, despite the fact that it is the focus of the daily devotions of nearly two billion Muslims around the world. Like Martin Biddle’s monograph of the tomb of Christ within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, this book tackles a huge subject which is central to a world religion yet has rarely been the subject of detailed, rational investigation. The author of the present work does not pretend to provide the definitive work or last word on the subject, but rather aims to open discussions focussing on the cultural history and significance of this ancient structure. The author points out that most studies of Islamic art and architecture barely discuss the Ka’ba, focussing instead on buildings and architecture whose histories are both more accessible and less connected to the origins of Islam. This is partly because the ideas about the origins of the structure are embedded in religious belief, and partly because this is a simple structure which defies normal architectural classification. Simon O’Meara states the problem succinctly when he asks: ‘what is one to do with a building whose patron is said to be God and its builder Abraham or Adam?’ (p. 85). However, this has not stopped people writing volumes about the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, a structure whose origins are equally locked into religious belief. In fact, the dearth of scholarly discussion about the Ka’ba maybe because of its Arabian origins, which do not fit into a narrative that sees Islamic culture as a product of classical (Roman and Byzantine) and Persian (Sassanian) civilization with little input from Arabia itself.

In the absence of previous monographs on the subject, this book provides an excellent starting point, looking at six aspects of the Ka’ba based on comprehensive discussion and use of primary sources as well as artistic representations

of the building. Each chapter is divided into two parts, the first looking at the historical dimension and the second discussing the spiritual dimensions of the subject. The first chapter discusses the significance of the Ka'ba as qiblah or direction of prayer, and shows how this is manifested not only in the construction of mosques and religious buildings, but also in city planning. The second chapter looks outwards from the Ka'ba, focussing on its relationship to astronomy and cardinal directions, as well as its metaphorical function as centre of the world and as a direct connection (navel) to the divine. A third chapter is concerned with the many destructions of the Ka'ba and the evidence deduced from the foundations, including an early example of archaeological investigation during the demolition of the Ka'ba prior to rebuilding in 64 AH (684 CE). The fourth chapter looks at the rituals of circumambulating the building and the relationship between the building and Sufism, according to the text of the thirteenth century writer Ibn 'Arabi. The fifth chapter relates to the interior of the Ka'ba and its role both for housing idols in the pre-Islamic period or for certain rituals and events in Islamic times. The sixth chapter looks at the exterior of the Ka'ba, focussing in particular on the historic references and uses of the kiswah (ceremonial covering) and also on the depiction of the Ka'ba in Persian miniature paintings.

Although the book does not claim to be comprehensive, the range of topics covered and the insights offered present myriad points for discussion. For the present, a few observations will provide some idea of the themes developed throughout the work. First of all, the book deals with a number of commonly held assumptions which permeate modern discussions of the building. For example, it is often asserted that the Ka'ba cannot be copied, yet the author provides a sufficiently diverse list to show that there have been many copies of the building throughout history in all parts of the Islamic world. Secondly, whilst this book presents historically verifiable information about the Ka'ba, it also seriously considers the spiritual dimensions of the building, paying particular attention to Sufi traditions which are often sidelined in discussions of Islamic architecture. In particular, the author conveys the deep personal significance of the Ka'ba to individual Muslims. The final observation is that the book clearly shows the difficulties of ascribing authority to different historical traditions, leaving the reader to work out which accounts are more reliable or have more significance.

For the future it is hoped that this book will stimulate more research and discussion of Islam's most important building. In particular, this book shows the need for both a rational understanding of the tangible building as well as an appreciation of its spiritual significance.

By **Andrew Petersen**

For an in-depth discussion of the book see the virtual

book launch presented by the Royal Asiatic Society and the Islamic Art Circle, hosted on Zoom (16 November 2020) and available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKQz7cF2os0>



Stealing from the Saracens: How Islamic Architecture Shaped Europe

Diana Darke

London: Hurst &

Company, 2020. 480 pp.

182 illustrations. Index,

Bibliography. Hardback. £25

ISBN 9781787383050

THE BOOK SETS OUT to prove that European architecture – Carolingian, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and indeed St Peter's and Wren's St Paul – was inspired by Islamic predecessors or by pre-Islamic buildings from Syria. Unfortunately, despite its wealth of quotes and their confident presentation, it fails to make this thesis plausible. Darke begins by explaining her title, *Stealing from the Saracens*. This would be a pun on the etymology of 'Saracens'. The name, she asserts, is derived from the Arabic verb *saraq* to steal – i.e., how the East Romans would have perceived the nasty Bedouins at their border. I was not aware that the Greco-Romans spoke Arabic, and I have never heard such an explanation. There is consensus in scholarship that no convincing etymology for *sarakenoi* can be proposed. I will not dwell on the many factual errors but concentrate on Darke's anchoring significant aspects of Western religious architecture in Syria. These are 'the twin towers' entrance, the 'pointed arch', the 'ribbed vaulting', and, most importantly, 'the dome'.

The Syrian-Byzantine church of Qalb Lozeh thus becomes 'the true forerunner of Romanesque architecture' (p. 86), with its 'twin towers, monumental entrance' (p. 87, 341). Well, Qalb Lozeh shows these elements but did not invent them. So, where do they come from? The answer is rather obvious: the model is the monumental Roman city gate, such as the *Porta Nigra*. A church's entry is on one side (the western); nothing more natural than adopting the Roman imperial gate mode – in Qalb Lozeh in its provincial form, Italy, and the Rhineland in monumental form.

Darke has an even more astonishing theory on the origins of Western ecclesiastical architecture: "the architectural development of the first churches...unsurprisingly, began

with the repurposing of the pagan temples” (p. 68). The first churches did not establish themselves in the temples or adopt them as their model but chose the Roman secular basilica type for their assemblies.

According to Darke, the pointed arch was first consciously used in the inner colonnade of the Dome of the Rock. From there, it would become the forerunner and model of European Gothic. This kind of arch is indeed the defining technical element of Gothic architecture. However, the Gothic arch is much more than a simple technical modification of the Roman and Romanesque round arch. It is part of a new vision of the divine: the substitution of the earthly gravity of massive walls by light through tall windows that leave almost no stone between them. Even conceding her idea of filiation, the minimally pointed arches of the Dome of the Rock are not the earliest ones; they are preceded by Byzantine and Sassanid examples and by the upper windows of the 4th century Roman mausoleum of Helena.

But all this looking for an ultimate origin is irrelevant, and so are those arches of the Dome of the Rock, supposedly resurrected 500 years later in St Denis. Darke does not grasp the tall Gothic window and arch's complete otherness, spiritual and material. The beauty and intellectual power of Gothic, striding towards the heavens, does not come from its being pointed but from the symphony of heavenly light with which it fills the human space and a receptive heart. Like the pointed arch, Darke sees the horseshoe arch – so magnificently used in the mosque/cathedral at Cordoba – as an Islamic invention. It is not. The Visigoths invented it. The ‘ribbed vaulting’ characteristic of Gothic and Renaissance architecture would also come from Cordoba, via ‘skilled craftsmen from Spain, Sicily and possibly even Syria, all of whom were now available to work for the new Christian masters’ (p. 169). There is not a single document or clue for such a bold assertion. It is true that the great Gothic cathedrals were built by mobile workshops, not ex-Muslims, but composed of masters from France, Italy (Como), Germany, moving around construction sites all over Europe, with no political or linguistic borders.

I must now deal with Darke’s central argument, the cupola. For this, she dwells extensively on the Dome of the Rock – but her assertion that the Dome of the Rock ‘sets itself apart from the whole liturgical tradition of Christian churches’ (p. 104) is incorrect. The Dome of the Rock is Islam’s answer to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Anastasis), which is visible from it. Both have a cupola, supported by an octagon with an internal ambulatory. The two cupolas have identical measures. Both octagons are built around a sacred rock, left in its natural and raw state. The conquering Muslims had no architects; the Dome of the Rock is a Byzantine building, created by local masters but directed and inspired by a new faith. The mosaics in the Dome of the Rock are the work of Byzantine artists. The motifs (jewellery, Byzantine and

Sassanian crowns) avoid figural displays and symbolise the triumph of the new religion. What makes the Dome of the Rock so beautiful, so unique, is thus not its architecture but its location and its symbolism: it is the crown of Jerusalem, its splendour outdoes the Anastasis.

Instead, Darke dwells on the architecture without noticing that its dome is not an actual cupola, but a ‘fake’ cupola (made of timber). As such, it compares with the wooden baldachin-tent cupola of the Anastasis, and is therefore neither in continuity with earlier true cupolas, or a predecessor of later ones. Not everything that looks the same is the same. The Anastasis and the Dome of the Rock are not part of the story of the true cupola.

Darke innocently amuses herself several times (p. 3, 104, 125) at the stupidity of the crusaders and the medieval pilgrims not recognising the Dome of the Rock as an Islamic building but believing it to be the *Templum Domini*. Again, she does not grasp the symbolic meaning and power of a name: the crusaders and the pilgrims knew that this was neither Solomon’s temple nor the Second Temple (both described in the Old Testament as rectangular), and they also knew that it had been destroyed in year 70.

At this point, a word on cupolas is in order, as there is much confusion in the book. The cupola is a Roman invention. It became (almost accidentally) possible when the Romans discovered the *opus caementicium*, by using the volcanic *pulvis puteolanus*, at first for vaulted structures (from the 2nd century BCE) in Campania, where volcanic ashes abound. The earliest cupolas were created in the sea resort of Baiae. Its apogee is the Pantheon. From the 2nd century CE onwards, *opus caementicium* began to be combined with bricks, particularly in Greece. In the 4th century CE, this development was completed. The Rotunda of St George in Thessaloniki was built entirely in bricks.

Another development, misunderstood by Darke, is the invention of brick-ribs (‘nervature’), inserted radially in *opus caementicium* cupolas. In the beginning, they were made for load-reducing purposes but soon acquired static properties. It should also be noted, that the early nervature were invisible; only later did they become prominent. The Western *caementicium* cupola tradition came to an end in the early 5th century. In parallel with the new political structures, the ribbed cupola (its ribs stronger and very visible) began a new life in the Byzantine East, combining with the local brick vaulting. The process culminated in the Hagia Sophia, which is a bricks-only construction with its cupola strengthened by ribs, allowing for the technical and spiritual novelty of inserting its 40 windows between them (for details concerning Roman concrete, vaulting, ribbing and domes, see the studies by Jürgen J. Rasch and Lynne C. Lancaster). According to Darke: ‘it is likely that some of the stonemasons who worked on Hagia Sophia came originally from the Dead Cities of Syria’ (p. 77, 92). Why, one might

ask, is it likely that stonemasons would be working with bricks?

Darke speaks at length about the Hagia Sophia but does not understand its constructional elements, and even less, its meaning and its symbolism. It represents the translation into architecture of the new idea of the divinely appointed emperor, in the centre of the divine service, under the heavenly vault, illuminated by divine light. Light is the primary material from which the Hagia Sophia is built – not bricks or stones. The space under the dome was not meant for the congregation (as affirmed by Darke on p. 75), it was reserved for the clergy and the emperor.

One last thing concerning cupolas must be mentioned: Darke is fascinated by the double-shell (double dome) technique. It would have been an Eastern (Seldjuk) invention, copied at Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, Michelangelo's St Peter, Wren's St Paul. Furthermore, Darke's timeline is correct. The double-shelled dome first appears in Sultan Sanjar's mausoleum, Merv, in 1157 and soon becomes the characteristic of other Seldjuk mausolea in Central Asia and Anatolia. The double-shell dome aims at creating a higher visual impression, not attainable with a 'normal', flatter cupola. Therefore, the 'normal' cupola is built above the drum and then topped by a second cupola, mainly decorative. Established wisdom in Western art history credits Brunelleschi with the invention. Florence wanted a majestic, imposing domed city silhouette, proclaiming its political and economic ambitions, but a dome of such magnitude was impossible before the early 20th century. Did Brunelleschi invent the double-shell structure by himself, or was he knowledgeable of the Seldjuk model? He cannot have been inspired by the 12th century wooden double dome of the Damascus Mosque, as suggested by Darke. I do not have a definitive opinion here: how could he have known about the Seldjuk models? All Seldjuk (and later Islamic) qubbas were mausolea – how would the idea move from a mausoleum to a cathedral? The most important question concerns the size: the Florence dome was much bigger than anything in the East.

While Darke may be right here, she gets the function of the two shells wrong: 'the Islamic world developed the technique of the double-shell: that is, a lighter shell for the building's interior, and a more durable shell for its exterior (p. 291). No, it is the other way round. That said, I loved Darke's discussion of the double dome. Exactly 60 years ago, I walked the stairs in the space between the two shells of St Peter's. I still feel the awkwardness and the excitement. Before ending, I want to list some of the more surprising assertions which might lead non-specialist readers in the wrong direction. According to Darke, geometric window grilles (in the Alhambra and the Cordoba synagogue, p. 180 and 193) were 'developed by the Umayyads, first in the Damascus Mosque'. No, they were not. They go back to ancient Rome and have survived in Yemen to this day.

Of the wonderfully carved Pilastrini Acritani (outside San Marco, on its right), Darke correctly says that they come from the church of St Polyeuktos, at Constantinople but describes them as: 'the obviously oriental...with their grape and vine designs' (p. 232). No, they are obviously Byzantine, of the most accomplished kind.

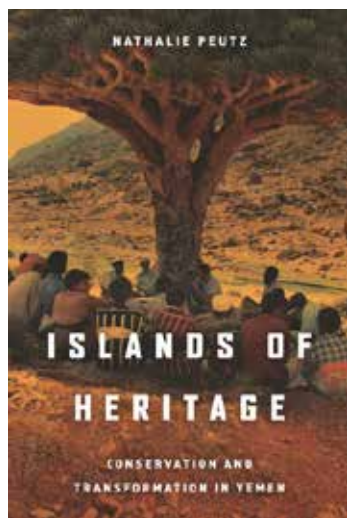
Concerning glass, she says: 'The enamelled types of Syrian glass discovered by the Crusaders became the forerunners of the stained-glass Gothic cathedrals of Europe' (p. 221, 349). Well, enamelled glass is not stained glass. While Venice imported raw material for glass (both raw glass and potash) from the Levant, the glass-making techniques and the application of colours were different, as shown by Hugh Tait (1999) in the Warburg volume by Burnett/Contadini.¹ Darke also states that: 'The early development of Christianity was accompanied by serious divisions, and from the start of Justinian's reign began violent persecutions... particularly of the Monophysites...' (p. 94). So how was it that Justinian's wife was a fervent Miaphysite (the term 'Monophysite' is no longer appropriate), actively promoting their mission with imperial patronage?

However, my main objections against the Darke book do not concern its factual errors but her clinging to single architectural features. If one element is earlier, then a causal influence is proved. But things are not that easy. A technical feature becomes significant only when it is loaded with meaning. Preoccupied with single strands and phenomena, Darke remains blind to the overall picture and the majesty and the symbolism of great architecture: the breath-taking beauty of the columned forest in Cordoba; the grace of the Alhambra; the splendour of the Dome of the Rock in its setting as the crown of Jerusalem; the Hagia Sophia as the transposition on earth of a new understanding of imperial and divine majesty; the Gothic cathedrals, opening windows to God's light and its eternal promises; Michelangelo's St Peter bringing the eventual triumph of the heavens down for us to see.

On a level more modest than Darke's ambitious scheme, many elements can be cited where Islamic art and architecture have influenced the West – but this needs detailed knowledge and arguing. I firmly believe that much must and should be done to explore these (mutual) influences and bring them to the public's attention at large. To this vital task, the book reviewed here has not done a good service.

By **Werner Daum**

¹Hugh Tait, 'Venice: Heir to the Glassmakers of Islam or of Byzantium?', in Charles Burnett and Anna Contadini, *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, Warburg Institute Colloquy 5, ed. Charles Burnett, Jill Kraye, and W. F. Ryan, London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1999, pp. 77–104



**Islands of Heritage:
Conservation and
Transformation in
Yemen**

Nathalie Peutz
Stanford, CA: Stanford
University Press, 2018
368 pp. 14 figures, 1
map, Appendix, Index,
References. Paperback.
£22.99/\$30
ISBN 9781503607149

THE SOQOTRA ARCHIPELAGO is better known for its globally significant and distinct fauna and flora – notably the dragon’s blood tree, and its status as a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site, rather than for its unique cultural heritage. This rich cultural heritage has been effectively marginalised over the years in favour of the environmental heritage promoted by countless environmental protection, conservation, zoning and development regimes. The effects of these successive conservation projects, coupled with the impact of international development, national politics, and globalisation on the Soqotri people and their resistance to what has been termed ‘environmental orientalism’, is all brought together in an ethnographical tour de force in

Nathalie Peutz’s book *Islands of Heritage: Conservation and Transformation in Yemen*.

Having had the pleasure of meeting Nathalie several times during her fieldwork on Soqatra, and experiencing her hospitality when staying in Hadiboh, it has been a pleasure to read through her book and immerse myself in its eloquent and well-written ethnographic narrative, which touches on a range of socio-political subjects relating to aspects of Soqotra’s unique and intangible linguistic heritage. It is a heritage that, as is outlined within this well-researched historical, theoretical and ethnographic format, has become a means for the Soqotri people to advocate for their political and cultural rights. This book provides an interesting snapshot of a period within Soqotri history before Yemen was plunged into what appears to be a never-ending conflict; a period that coincides with the beginnings of the Soqotra Heritage Project, which continues to make giant strides in the documentation, conservation and protection of Soqotra’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage. I would wholeheartedly recommend Nathalie’s book for the richness of the ethnographic detail and personal accounts, which show us the strength of the Soqotri people, and how heritage can be used to socially and politically empower a people who have long been marginalised.

By **Julian Jansen van Rensburg**

LIVES REMEMBERED

Alasdair Livingstone (1954–2021)

His many friends, colleagues and former students were shocked and grieved to learn of the sudden death in January, from Covid, of the assyriologist Alasdair Livingstone. A man of warmth, humour and eclectic erudition, he inspired generations of students at Birmingham University, where he had taught since 1993 until his retirement in 2017. His dedication to the history of the ancient Middle East was all the more remarkable for combining a mastery of cuneiform studies with a familiarity not only with the scripts and languages of ancient Arabia but also with Arabic in both classical and colloquial forms.

Alasdair was born in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, on 29 January 1954, where his father was a mathematics lecturer. His boyhood left him with a lifelong stock of Zulu phrases, which his father insisted should be used around the house. When the latter was appointed to a chair of Pure Mathematics at Birmingham, the family moved there in 1968. Having attended King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys in Birmingham, Alasdair won a place at Queens’ College, Cambridge. In 1975 he took a First in Assyriology and Arabic Studies, before returning to Birmingham

to study with the foremost British assyriologist Wilfred Lambert, who became his lifelong guru. Alasdair gained his PhD in 1980 with a thesis (published in 1986) entitled *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*.

In 1979–81 he worked as a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Munich, which confirmed him in his reverence for German scholarship. In 1981, and now married to Anita from an East African Asian family, he moved to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Here he succeeded Juris Zarins as Archaeological Adviser at the Dept of Antiquities and Museums, then run by Dr Abdullah Masry. His job included arduous field trips to record rock art and inscriptions, and to serve as epigrapher on excavations in Tayma and Thaj. He was also on the editorial team of *Atlat* (the *Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology*), co-authored various guidebooks, and helped with the cataloguing of the Dept’s collections. This was where I first met him, in the early 1980s, while working on the project to set up the six local archaeological museums at Tayma, al-‘Ula, Dumat al-Jandal, al-Hofuf, Najran and Jizan. His advice on the pre-Islamic scripts and languages of pre-Islamic Arabia was invaluable. Living in Saudi Arabia in those days demanded stoicism and an

ability to see the funny side, both qualities he possessed in abundance. Domestic life took place against the roar of dripping, wall-mounted air conditioners and involved a constant battle against dust, all the more necessary after a baby, Kristina, arrived. Anita's only regular outside entertainment was a trip to the supermarket (much like life under Covid today). Alasdair enjoyed greater freedom and took mischievous pleasure, not always shared by his passengers, in driving like the locals. As a witty polyglot, he revelled in the linguistic environment and was popular with his colleagues. He could lecture in Arabic and had a great ear for the nuances of local idiom, once introducing me to the myriad ways of saying 'Ay wallah' – from the positive 'Absolutely!' to the sardonic 'Pull the other one' and all shades in between – depending on intonation.

In 1985 he was appointed to the staff at Heidelberg University. There he completed Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea and published on inscriptions from Tayma. By then we had become good friends, and he was to me, as to so many others, a friendly and helpful critic. He took a pride in his Scottish ancestry and seldom travelled without his bagpipes, which he would produce at the slightest provocation. I recall him coming to stay in Dorset, where one evening he donned full Highland dress and played them fortissimo in the garden, to the stupefaction of the neighbourhood. In 1993 he finally returned to Birmingham, replacing both Lambert and the archaeologist, Jeffrey Orchard, as lecturer. He was promoted to Reader in 1997.

Alasdair's mother, Trudy, was a local councillor in Birmingham. She nurtured in him a genuine empathy and strong sense of fairness. As a teacher of Assyriology, he was a great scholar who wore his learning lightly, encouraging his students to learn deeply but never trying to overawe them with his own erudition. He was also unconventional. An annual highlight of his classroom year was to leave Birmingham at dawn in a Land Rover full of students for the British Museum, where he would frogmarch them down to the basement to read cuneiform brick and cone inscriptions from the originals under his watchful eye. His classes, which would inevitably include forays into Arabic or Zulu, were notable for their humour and use of apt examples. He was profoundly supportive of all his students and won their affection in return.

In 2013 Alasdair published *Hemerologies of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, a subject long at the centre of his interests. Following retirement in 2017, he was working on Assyrian literature and a host of smaller projects. He leaves behind a legacy as an insightful scholar, a genial colleague, a much-loved teacher, and a remarkable character. He is survived by his partner, Birgit Haskamp, and by Kristina and her children, on whom he doted.

By **William Facey, with thanks to Irving Finkel and Jonathan Taylor**

Prof. Dr. Yusuf Muhammad Abdallah.



Yusuf Muhammad Abdallah, one of Yemen's foremost scholars in a range of fields, but specifically in archaeology and the study of epigraphic South Arabian (the pre-Arabic south Arabian languages), passed away in April this year. Born in Taizz governorate in 1943 he began his higher education at the American University in Beirut where he gained his Master's degree in 1970. From there he went on to study for his doctorate in Tübingen, Germany, under the great expert in the field of ancient South Arabia and Semitic epigraphy, Prof Walter Müller. He went on to play a key role in developing the study of Yemen's archaeology and ancient languages as a lecturer and later professor at the University of Sanaa, as well as becoming deputy head of the General Authority of Antiquities and Museums. Latterly he was a senior advisor to the Yemeni president's office with the rank of Minister.

He was among the first in the 1980s to decipher and analyse the South Arabian script used on wooden sticks to record accounts and contracts, offering insights into trade, currency and daily life quite different from the formal inscriptions in stone and brief graffiti found on rocks. His publications, mainly articles in Arabic or German, betray his deep fascination with the continuities between the Yemen of the pre-Arabic inscriptions and the early Yemeni Arabic works of scholars such as al-Hamdani several centuries later. Above all it is as the teacher of a whole generation of students that he will be mourned. A great number of affectionate tributes have marked his passing, highlighting the appreciation of Yemen's history, archaeology and cultural treasures that he inspired.

By **Robert Willson**

THE LAST WORD

The Last Word in this Edition of the IASA Bulletin goes to Hatim Khan. Hatim shares his incredible photographs of the wildlife of Saudi Arabia on social media and kindly agreed that we could reproduce some of them.

The Magnificent Birds of Saudi Arabia

Surprisingly, many people are not aware of the fact that we have a magnificent diversity of bird species across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There are more than five hundred species, which is the highest number in the entire Middle East. From a bird's perspective, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is close to Africa, Europe, and Asia so we are at the crossroads of much of the world which allows millions of birds to migrate every year passing through the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Above: Blue Cheeked Bee Eater

Below: Arabian Bee Eater

All photographs (c) Hatim Khan



To increase awareness, knowledge, and interest amongst people of all ages as well as the future generations, I am currently preparing a comprehensive book / field guide titled as "Magnificent Birds of Saudi Arabia" covering all the bird species in this beautiful kingdom.

The field guide will be in the Arabic language as well as English which will allow the enthusiasts, birding community, wildlife photographers, local and international tourists, students, teachers, professors, researchers, and many more to understand, learn and actively participate in the conservation

practices of the birds, wildlife, and nature in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The book will cover in-depth information about birds such as their identification, habitat, diet, nest, social behaviour, breeding behaviour, vocal behaviour, and other data as well.

The question is, why do we need birds? Birds play an essential role in the functioning of the world's ecosystems, in a way that directly impacts human health, economy and food production - as well as millions of other species. Birds control pests, pollinate plants, spread seeds, transform entire

landscapes, and keep coral reefs alive. They keep the climate stable, oxygenate air and transform pollutants into nutrients. Birds play an important role in the effective functioning of these systems.

Hatim is an expat, born, raised in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He works in Digital Marketing and as a Photographer/ Videographer. His main focus is wildlife, particularly birds and he is currently developing a bird guide of Saudi Arabia with the objective of promoting awareness and wildlife tourism. Some pages are reproduced below. He lives in Jeddah with his wife and two children. His son Abdullah, 16 years old, is also an avid Birder and Wildlife Photographer.



Below: Grey Headed Kingfisher with Grasshopper



Common Name: ARABIAN WHEATEAR الاسم الشائع: أبو القيقب العربي

IDENTIFICATION: The male has a thick black forehead, face, moustache, throat, wings, and a concealed tail band, consisting with pale (often white) crown, white rump and upper tail coverts, and white underparts with rufous buff ventral region. The female is often streaked or mottled brown, offering some contrast with the white supercilium, forehead and ear cap. The female is rather different, being largely drab grey brown above, with warmer ochraceous, a greater throat, greenish-white streaked or blotched lower breast, and a pinkish-orange vent. Both sexes show a variable white or grey tinge on the primaries, being especially prominent in the male, but is usually restricted to the basal parts of the feathers.

HABITAT: Scrubland, wooded desert country, usually with areas of fertile ground, often with stone walls and earth banks, and rocky hillsides, with sparse low vegetation but often with bushes, and Akacia and other trees, including stone juniper scrub near oases, mainly between 1,500 and 3,500 m (especially below 2,800 m).

DIET: Diet comprises both fruits and insects. Generally, forages by flitting about in a rock crevice, by sitting in air over flying insects (taken especially to perch low off the ground), and by flying down prey from a low perch (usually a rock, but occasionally over more scattered shrub, such as within an Akacia tree).

NEST: A shallow cup of grass lined with finer grass, wool and feathers, placed 0.6 m above ground in a rock crevice, a slit, tunnel end or hole. Flat stones placed inside the nesting crevice form a barrier (30-55 cm long) at the outer edge of the nest.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: Pairs

BREEDING: The female builds the nest and incubates. Both adults tend to the young. If a second brood is attempted, soon from the first brood may help tend the second brood.

Common Name: ARABIAN WHEATEAR الاسم الشائع: أبو القيقب العربي

VOCAL BEHAVIOR: Song most strongly (reels), 8-9 short, explosive bubbling, but some low pitched warble that incorporates some rather strident elements, downy tail whistle 80-90 Hz. The whistling is slightly extended and more varied, lower pitched warble with a 20% reedy quality, e.g., downy (typ) whistle 80.

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Desonther Luperoides* (Desonther Luperoides) أبو القيقب العربي

ORDER / FAMILY: Passeriformes / Mniotiltidae (Old World Flycatcher) القيقب / منياتيلدات

SIZE / WEIGHT / WINGSPAN: الذكر: 14-16 cm / 19-25 g / 7.8-9 cm (5.3-6.3 in / 7.0-7.88 oz / 3.4-3.5 in) الأنثى: 14-16 cm / 19-23 g / 8-9 cm (5.3-6.3 in / 6.7-8.88 oz / 3.3-4.5 in)

ANNUAL BREEDING PERIOD: 445,000

TREND: Decreasing

ACTIVITY: Diurnal

BREEDING PERIOD: January - February: Breeding / Non-breeding
March - July: Breeding
August - September: Breeding / Non-breeding
October - December: Non-breeding

ABUNDANCE: [2] Common

LIFE SPAN: متوسط العمر

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

Follow Hatim on Instagram @hfkhanphotography, Twitter @HFKPhotography and on LinkedIn.