

Yemen Update

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Number 47 2005



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all aspects of Yemeni studies. The content of the articles and reviews in *Yemen Update* does not necessarily reflect the views of AIYS as an organization, or those of any of the institute's funding sources.

Readers are invited to contribute articles, reviews, information on Yemen, news of recent publications and events, translations, and letters in English to Dr. Maria Ellis, Executive Director, or to the *Yemen Update* Production Editor, Dr. Joan Reilly at the AIYS office in Ardmore (see above). Articles and reviews can be submitted by email or on a PC formatted disc or CD in Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. We prefer that photographs and line drawings for articles be submitted in "hard copy" and on disc as a jpeg file.

AIYS would like to thank the editorial committee for their expert assistance: Dan Varisco (editor of Yemen Webdate), Dan Buchman (Islam), Nora Colton (Economics), Barbara Evans (Contemporary Art), Bernard Haykel (History), Joy McCorriston (Archaeology), Flagg Miller (Anthropology), Noha Sadek (Art and Architecture), Tom Stevenson (Sports), Derek Wildman (Biology and the Environment), and Layla al-Zwaini (Law).

AIYS is also grateful for the publishing assistance of the Graphics Department of Hunt Oil in Dallas, especially the advice and assistance of Ms. Alisa Martin and Mr. Lane Land.

AIYS maintains an office, library, and hostel in Yemen. AIYS individual members may stay at the hostel at the following rates (subject to change): single occupancy (\$25/night, \$150/week, \$250/2 weeks, \$350/month), double occupancy (\$35/night, \$200/week, \$300/2 weeks, \$400/month), students (per bed rate of \$12/night, \$80/week, \$160/2 weeks, \$260/month). Chris Edens, the Resident Director, may be contacted c/o AIYS, Box 2658, Sana'a, Yemen. Phone: 967-1-278-816, fax: 967-1-285-071. E-mail: aiysvem@y.net.ye.

Yemen Update is archived online at <http://www.aiys.org/webdate/index.html>.

Front cover: the prayer hall of the Amiriya. The grand opening was celebrated September 11, 2005 (cover from a photograph by Araldo De luca, 2005)



Bayt Hashem, AIYS' home in Sana'a since 1999

Recent Contributors to AIYS

Membership fees and tax-deductible contributions over the years have supported AIYS in its continuous growth and have helped it to enlarge and adapt the programs that support American research in Yemen. Today they are needed more than ever to supplement or match federal program grants and to support specific purposes. AIYS is still in the process of acquiring its own building in Sana'a, with the help of a generous grant from the U.S. State Department. Special donations would help considerably in the adaptation and equipping of the building, providing a new and improved home in Sana'a for the AIYS hostel, library, and office. Contributions may be unrestricted or may be designated for a specific purpose. If you are interested in contributing to a specific AIYS project and would like more information, please contact the AIYS Executive Director, or use the "contributor" section of the membership form inserted in this issue of *Yemen Update*. Gifts in-kind may also be made; please consult the AIYS Executive Director to determine if such a gift would be appropriate.

The list below gives the names of those who made donations during the 2004-05 fiscal year. Not included in the sections that list donors of goods or services are the AIYS officers and the scholars who serve on the fellowship, library, and publications committees although their service in those capacities is a valuable and much-appreciated contribution to AIYS' programs.

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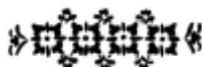
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Report of the Executive Director

Maris deJ. Ellis



The report of the Resident Director on pp. 7-11 of this issue thoroughly covers the events of the 2004-05 program year, especially, of course, as seen from Yemen. I will add only a few comments here.

Fellowship competition: The annual deadline for AIYS' long-established fellowship programs for US and Yemeni citizens is December 31. The fellowship competitions continue to be funded by a grant from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). There is no restriction as to field or discipline, but fellowship funds may only be used to support international travel and research costs incurred in Yemen. Program descriptions and eligibility requirements can be found on pp. 53-54; the AIYS website (<http://www.aiys.org/fellowships.html>) has the same information, application forms, and a list of fellowships awarded since 1991. The fellowships awarded during the 2004-05 academic year can also be found on p. 52 of this issue.

In 2003-04 AIYS became a participant in the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation fellowship program for East European Scholars, administered through CAORC. Two fellowships are available annually through this program. So far, AIYS has named four fellows (see p. 56).

In the summer of 2006 the State Department is funding a program of Scholarships for Critical Language Study at institutes abroad. The overall program is administered through CAORC; the individual summer programs are being organized by various overseas centers. AIYS is organizing and administering a program in intensive intermediate and advanced Arabic, through specially-designed courses at the Yemen Language Center. We do not yet know if ECA will continue this program beyond the summer of 2006.

Publications: AIYS members, both institutional and individual, receive copies of occasional publications, such as the long-awaited publication of

Dr. Abd al-Aziz Maqalih's poetry volume *Kitab San'a'* in Arabic and English, with extensive annotations by AIYS' RD Chris Edens. It is also available for purchase from MESA, as are all AIYS publications. Newly available through MESA is the second volume of *Ma'alim al-zira'a fi-l-Yaman (Agricultural Knowledge in Yemen)*, by Yahya Al-Ansi, co-published with the French center. (In Yemen, these books may be purchased from AIYS). Other volumes, listed in the RD report, are still in press or in preparation; I hope that in the next issue we will be able to report their completion. We similarly hope that the K-12 curriculum resources on Yemen, originally compiled by Marta Colburn during her tenure as AIYS Resident Director, will at last see the light of day, both in hard copy and on the AIYS website, with links from other educational sites.

Donors: We are very grateful to the many members who send in a donation with their membership payment, and to others who have made gifts that make AIYS' programs possible. The list on p. 3 shows donations received during the 2004-05 financial year for AIYS' ongoing activities. These gifts are critical to our programs and operations.

Survey on research in Yemen: AIYS is continuing its efforts to document the long-term value of its fellowships and its research support services. Therefore we ask all persons who worked in Yemen under research permits facilitated by AIYS—with permits granted by the Yemen Center for Studies and Research, by the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums, by the archives administration, and by other agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency—or who studied Arabic in Yemen on an AIYS fellowship, to send in a brief report on their project and on what, if any, relationship it bears to their present work. We also remind persons who have held permits to do research in Yemen that it is a condition of all permits that two copies of publications deriving from the permitted research are to be submitted, one to the permitting agency and one to AIYS.

Digital Library project: As reported in previous years, AIYS was instrumental in creating the American Overseas Digital Library project, which began in 1999 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to AIYS, on behalf of all participating overseas center libraries and their umbrella organization, CAORC. Once the library project was well-established, new components were started. AIYS is involved in one of these, the Middle East Research Journal Project, which, through a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services to CAORC, is making it possible to do extensive bibliographic and preservation work with journals, including those held by AIYS. CAORC is still seeking the private donations required for the library project by the capital funds matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In establishing the digital library project, we hoped that the project would eventually extend beyond the collections of the centers, that it would help to make available, for international use, the diverse local materials of the host countries. In late 2004 AODL was renamed the Digital Library for International Research (DLIR), to reflect this larger international interest. A number of organizations in countries hosting overseas research centers having indicated an interest in the digital library project. AIYS, CAORC, the other participating centers, as well as collaborating organizations in the various countries hosting overseas research centers, have designed a project that seeks to improve access to archival and library collections. The collaborative project is funded by another 4-year TICFIA grant to AIYS that became available in October 2005.

Special projects: Readers of *Yemen Update* are, no doubt, aware that AIYS is committed to use its expertise and that of its affiliated American researchers and experts to facilitate, assist, and strengthen programs of cultural preservation and of scholarly research in Yemen wherever possible. The intersection between AIYS' mission and the US goals of public diplomacy, as exercised through educational and cultural exchange, has a long history in Yemen, primarily through small projects funded by AIYS' program grant from the State Department's Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs (the former

USIA), and larger projects funded from other sources. A number of these, specifically those related to the restoration of the Amiriya in Rada', have repeatedly been covered in this bulletin, most recently in the report of the Resident Director in this issue. I would like to focus here on one particular source of funding, the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, which since 2002 has granted AIYS funds to undertake three projects that contribute to the joint goals of cultural heritage preservation and training in techniques vital for the preservation of Yemen's cultural heritage.

1. Conserving to Train and Training to Conserve: Preserving the Historic Painted Decoration of the Amiriya Madrasa in Rada', Yemen

Since 1996 the historically and architecturally important Amiriya has provided a unique opportunity to implement this aspect of AIYS' mission. This long-running project was the first of several collaborative projects that combined cultural heritage work with local training, while it also provided opportunities for advanced training of American students and young conservation professionals. As part of the final work on the Amiriya, AIYS applied to the Ambassador's Fund in 2002 for support to train Yemeni government technicians in the cleaning and preservation of the mural paintings, under the aegis of the painting conservation program then in progress inside the historic building. The training program was a scheduled component of the Amiriya restoration program, administered by AIYS, but it needed additional financial support to be realized; the Ambassador's Fund provided this support. The training program had been scheduled to take place during 2002, but events of September 2001 through March 2003 delayed the start of work by the specialists of the Italian conservation team until late in 2003. In addition, the training program, which had to be conducted in conjunction with the actual conservation of the Amiriya mural paintings, was similarly deferred. It began, however, in March 2004 and finished in April 2005 (see illustration on p. 43). Certificates of completion were handed out to participants at a formal ceremony on June 16, 2005.

2. Restoration of the 'Ishshah Mud-brick Palace in Tarim

The 'Ishshah Palace is a large residential complex constructed entirely of mud, unbaked mud bricks, and lime-plaster during four decades—from the 1890s through the 1930s—in the eclectic international style characteristic of Tarim at that time. The complex includes: the main building with a pair of formal entrances from the south; a wing on the east side of the main building; a wing on the west side of the main building with a small extension to the southwest; a wing of the northwest corner of the main building; and Dar al-Dawil, the oldest element of the complex, north of the main building. A long period of neglect during the 1970s and 1980s (when the government had seized the building) left the structures in a precarious state. By the early 2000s portions of Dar al-Dawil, and some exterior and interior walls of the western wing of the main building had collapsed; other elements of the complex faced a similar fate (see *Yemen Update* 45, 2003, pp. 9-22).

The building currently serves as a house museum run by the Tarim chapter of the Yemeni Society for History and Heritage Protection, which occupies the building under a long-term lease. Mr. Muhammad al-Junayd, director of the museum, collaborated with Ms. Pamela Jerome's team when the latter was in Tarim to document the 'Ishshah Palace (the documentation report is available on the website of Columbia University's Media Center for Art History, Archaeology and Historic Preservation <http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/tarim>). Mr. al-Junayd supervised the restoration of the collapsed exterior wall on the west side of the palace, which was funded in 2003 by the Social Fund for Development. The Ambassador's Fund project addressed other portions of the 'Ishshah complex that had to be renovated—immediately—if the buildings of the complex were to survive. Specifically, the project funded rebuilding the collapsed kitchen in the west wing of the main building, rebuilding one of the two collapsed wings of al-Dar al-Dawil, and lime-plastering the roof of al-Dar al-Dawil and the roof of the gate house. The project also undertook additional necessary preventive steps in several other parts of the complex.

3. South Arabian Texts Inscribed on Wood

One of the most significant discoveries in Yemeni archaeology during the last three decades is the archives of inscribed wooden sticks. These unique documents are incised on wooden cylinders, 10-30 cm long and 2-5 cm across, made from palm-leaf stalks or branches of the *'ilb*-tree. The texts, which range in length from one to fifteen lines, use a hitherto unknown South Arabian cursive script (*zabur*-script), that initially could not be read; however, decipherment of the script has now reached a satisfactory stage.

The inscribed sticks come from the governorate of al-Jawf, and in particular from the town al-Sawda', ancient Nashan, where they were archived in the temple of the supreme South Arabian god 'Athtar. The texts report the activities of ordinary individuals: letters and other messages, accounts, deeds, conveyances, contracts or private agreements, abecedaries, debts, decrees, receipts, deliveries, legal decrees, name lists of persons and tribes, school exercises etc. These documents contain essential data about social institutions, the status of women, agriculture, trade, religion, chronology, language, palaeography, and the history of ancient Yemen; information of a type that is not available in the better known monumental inscriptions of South Arabia. The *zabur* texts thus provide a major reference for the cultural history of pre-Islamic Arabia and for the background of Islam.

The corpus of inscribed sticks has been growing since the 1970s, yet the condition the sticks and the content of the texts on them remain largely unknown (only 40 sticks have been published so far, most of these from collections in Europe). Many of the sticks are known to be in poor condition and to be facing deterioration of the texts inscribed on them. The sticks have immense scientific value, as unique sources of information about social conditions in Yemen before the advent of Islam. Their loss would be an immeasurable loss to Yemeni history and heritage. A full program of cataloging, conserving, analyzing and publishing the sticks is sorely needed. Such a program would require a multi-year international effort. The Ambassador's Fund project is the first phase in that effort, in which 500 inscribed sticks will be cataloged, conserved, and analyzed.



From the Resident Director

Christopher M. Edens



General

The year since last October has been busy in Sana'a, sometimes overwhelmingly. As I reported last year, the living and research conditions for foreign visitors returned to normal during 2004, and the improved conditions continued through 2005—with occasional periods of excitement. These circumstances allowed foreign scholars to pursue their research projects, and allowed AIYS to complete several existing projects and to explore new ones.

The general mood in Sana'a remained peaceful during the year, with a few exceptions. Several "events" occurred in December; attacks were attempted on foreign individuals and offices. None were actually carried out, but their coincidence did trigger concern. Troubles in the north flared up again during the spring when Badr al-Din al-Huthi (father of Husayn al-Huthi, the key figure in the conflict of summer 2004) resumed armed opposition to the government in and around Sa'dah. A flurry of grenade-throwing incidents in Sana'a, directed at Yemeni security forces, caused the US embassy to issue sharp but short-term warnings against travel to and within Yemen. In July, the government's long-awaited announcement of economic reforms, including a significant increase in the price of gasoline and diesel, sparked several days of violent demonstrations. Several scores of participants and by-standers are said to have died in the violence, and the demonstrations also resulted in damage to a lot of public and private property. Shortly after the demonstrations ended, the government announced a partial roll-back of the price hikes, and also a schedule for staged rises in civil service salaries.

Fellows and Researchers

The hostel was generally busy throughout the year even with the occasional bursts of excitement, but it was rarely full, even during the summer. Hostel residents included many of the scholars named below,

along with British fisheries consultants, interns at the Dutch embassy, tourists, Amiriya celebrants, and language students.

Scholars with stipends from several different fellowship programs came during the year to carry out their research activities. AIYS fellows were the most numerous: Dan Corstange (University of Michigan), Greg Johnsen (University of Arizona), and Sarah Phillips (Australian National University) held Arabic language fellowships, and they also explored or continued research projects. Scholars holding AIYS research fellowships included: Najwa Adra (independent scholar), who continued research on her earlier study about tribal identity and the *bara'* in al-Ahjur. Steve Caton (Harvard University) studied water consumption in the Sana'a basin. Ingrid Hehmeyer (Royal Ontario Museum) researched Tahirid water systems in Rada', in collaboration with Selma al-Radi. Marjorie Ransom (independent scholar) studied the traditional silver jewelry of Yemen and Stacey Philbrick Yadav (University of Pennsylvania) researched the discourse of party politics. The Fulbright programs were also well represented, with Dan Corstange returning later in the year to take up his Fulbright-Hays fellowship (politics of economic development), Michele Lamprakos (Massachusetts Institute for Technology; historic preservation in old Sana'a) and Nathalie Peutz (Princeton University; ethnology of development on Soqatra). Continuing or completing their Fulbright-Hays projects were Swiyya Haqq (independent scholar; religious education in Tarim), Ryan Phillips (University of Washington; history of Yemeni unity), and Keisha Toms (independent scholar; a film series on the theme of social tolerance); they arrived during the year to begin their IIE Fulbright projects. Two others IIE Fulbrighters are expected during fall 2005. The new Mellon post-doctoral research fellowship for scholars from eastern European and Baltic countries got underway when Dr. Obadi Mothana (Slovakia;

Yemeni-EU economic relations) spent the summer in Yemen; Dr. Viktor Cerny (Czech Republic; Yemeni population genetics) is expected to take up his fellowship later this fall.

The year's visitors included other scholars affiliated with AIYS. Miranda Morris and her collaborator Tanuf Salim Noh continued their work on Soqotri oral poetry, both in Yemen and in Edinburgh. Bill Glanzman (Mount Royal College, Calgary) made a short successful visit to arrange a new long-term archaeological project in Wadi Raghwan (Ma'rib). Carolyn Han concluded her English-teaching assignments, and in September 2005 she began work on a historical novel about the Sulayhid queen Sayyidah Arwa. Dr. Morna Livingston (Philadelphia University) made two visits as a prelude to a study of traditional highland cisterns and related structures. Several past and present AIYS officers made appearances: Daniel Varisco (Hofstra University) was in town on two different occasions for consultancy work. McGuire Gibson (University of Chicago) came for the informal opening of the Amiriya (see below). Over the winter Bob Burrowes occupied center-stage in a conference (see below). Tom Stevenson made his now customary summer visit to continue his collaborative research with Abd al-Karim al-Aug on the sociology of Yemeni sports and, just as importantly, to shake up Sana'a in his official capacity as AIYS president. Maria Ellis was in Sana'a for a month in mid-year for the executive director's annual inspection.

Several research teams also came through town. Joy McCorriston (Ohio State University) and Rick Oches (University of Southern Florida) returned for a very productive season of the Roots of Agriculture in Southern Arabia project. The discovery of a deeply stratified mid-Holocene occupation site, which may be the oldest ceremonial site yet discovered in the Arabian peninsula, was notable among the varied results. Marilyn Hodgson brought back her team from the American Foundation for the Study of Man for another extended season of excavation in Ma'rib, which included the first excavations in the center of the Mahram Bilqis oval. Pamela Jerome (Columbia) and Selma al-Radi conducted a third season of documenting al-Kâf palaces in Tarim.

The administrative side of things was relatively

uneventful, and, apart from one trend, the paperwork procedures for researchers' permits and visas remain unchanged from last year. Early in 2005 the security reviews became more difficult for research permit applications and residence visas; obtaining these documents often requires several months of effort at this time. The reason for this change is not clear, but it is not directed specifically at AIYS or Americans (other institutions, including Yemeni schools of Arabic, report similar headaches). So far the paperwork has eventually been forthcoming, so patience and persistence are the keys to coping with the problem. Researchers note: the security review for residence visas has been giving much more attention than in the past to the provision that bars researchers from employment in Yemen, whether paid or unpaid.

Staff

The staff in Sana'a remained unchanged from last year. Each of us experienced events of personal importance during the year. On the positive side of the ledger, Ammar Abdallah al-Awdi and Maisoon Fathi al-Aswadi celebrated their second wedding anniversary. Mulk Abdallah's youngest daughter was engaged to be married, while an older daughter gave birth to a son. Shakib Sadiq's wife gave birth to a son at the beginning of October 2005. On the negative side, Amir Abduh struggled with several bouts of a debilitating illness, and in September 2005 he took a two month leave of absence. The RD's father-in-law, Kahri Yûkmen, died in October 2004.

Library

The library acquired a large number of new books, both Arabic and English. The latter included over 500 titles that had been purchased in the US since 2001, but kept in storage awaiting a practical means of shipping them to Yemen. Ambassador Krajieski kindly offered space in his shipment of household effects for this purpose. As a result, we face the difficulty of finding the shelving space needed for the collection; the library has now exceeded the limits of the current space. The Digital Library for International Research (formerly AODL) cataloging project started to deal with the large number of unmatched, and so uncatalogued, Arabic titles in AIYS's holdings. Cataloguing these titles will be done in India on the

basis of scanned information provided by Maisoon.

AIYS Projects

The Amiriya Restoration Project has been covered in many of these annual reports. Selma al-Radi began the project in 1983, as a collaborative project with the GOAM director in al-Bayda' governorate—initially Mr. Izzi Muhammad Muslih and then Mr. Yahya Al-Nasiri—jointly funded by Dutch and Yemeni government funds. AIYS got involved in the project in 1996, assuming the responsibility of administering the non-Yemeni government part of the budget. During the period 1996-2005 the Dutch Embassy in Sana'a continued to fund the restoration of the building itself, as well as the design and installation of the site museum. Conservation of the spectacular paintings inside the prayer hall was funded by contributions from the Dutch embassy, the Social Fund for Development, and the Italian foreign ministry. In addition to cleaning and consolidating the paintings themselves, this latter aspect of the project also trained six technical specialists from GOAM in painting conservation, which was supported by a grant from the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. Publications produced by the project include Selma al-Radi's book *The Amiriya in Rada'* (1997, Oxford) and her articles "Qudad, the Traditional Yemeni Plaster" (1994, *Yemen Update* 34:6-13) and "'Shahr Rabi': the Amiriya Stucco Documentation Project (with Lamya Khalidi; 2002, *Yemen Update* 44:15-24*); Caterina Borelli's video documentary *Qudad: Re-Inventing a Tradition* (2004*); and the book *Amiriya Madrasa: The Conservation of the Mural Paintings* (by Selma Al-Radi, Roberto Nardi, and Chiara Zizola, 2005; available in English, Arabic, or Italian editions). Work on the Amiriya Restoration Project also provided a platform for collaborative projects. James Conlon, Gina Crevallo, and Michele Risdal-Barnes benefitted from an internship project that gave them practical experience in restoration using traditional methods and materials*; Lamya Khalidi worked with the stucco documentation project*; and Ingrid Hehmeyer undertook a study of Tahirid water systems in Rada'*. (Items marked with an asterisk* were supported by AIYS fellowships from its CAORC/ECA grants.)

The Amiriya project reached completion this year. The Yemeni team rebuilt the staircase and portico of the western entrance to the building and the Italian team of the Centro di Conservazione Archeologica (CCA) completed its work on the paintings. In addition, new alabaster panes were installed in the windows of the prayer hall, the electrical wiring was completed and lighting installed throughout the building, the museum panels were hung, and gardens were planted on two sides of the building, replacing the ramshackle buildings that previously filled these spaces. The celebration of the project's completion was complicated; the date of the official opening was set and then postponed several times before Ali Abdallah Salih, President of the Republic of Yemen, convened the official opening on September 11, 2005. Prior to the official opening, the project participants held events in mid-June to celebrate: On June 15 Selma al-Radi invited friends and colleagues to visit the Amiriya with her. On June 16 CCA and the Italian embassy put on a symposium of international speakers in the morning, and in the evening AIYS, together with the US embassy, sponsored a showing of Caterina Borelli's recent film *Qudad: Reinventing a Tradition*. To mark its role in the project, CCA produced a book about the Amiriya paintings, in Italian, English, and Arabic versions; AIYS assisted in the production of the book with copy-editing of the English text and arranged for some of the Arabic translation. CCA distributed the book at the June 16 symposium. These events received extensive media coverage inside Yemen, but outside as well.

The other on-going AIYS-administered preservation project—rebuilding parts of the 'Ishshah palace of 'Umar b. Shaykh al-Kâf in Tarim with funds provided by the US Embassy's Ambassador's Fund program—also reached completion in early 2005, although with far less fanfare. The Ishshah Palace, which currently houses a museum open to the public, was the first of the al-Kâf palaces that Pamela Jerome's team documented (see the Columbia team's report in *Yemen Update* 45).

In spring 2005 the US embassy asked AIYS to submit proposals to the Ambassador's Fund program. One of these applications was successful, a project to catalog the inscribed wooden sticks (*zabûr*) in the National Museum and to prepare a

detailed study of a sample of the sticks. The sticks bear texts written in a cursive South Arabian script and they have great importance for documenting ordinary life in pre-Islamic Yemen (although they are still a relatively unknown group of artifacts). Contracts, receipts, private letters, lists of names, school exercises and the like are inscribed on the *zabûr*. Relatively few of these texts have been analyzed and published; this project is intended to be the opening phases of a long-term program to publish collections in Yemen. Dr. Yousef Abdullah and Dr. Muhammad Maraqtan will lead the project team, which is expected to start work in November 2005.

Other AIYS projects are still in their planning stage. In 2004 AIYS applied for MEPI funds with which to support a grass-roots preservation strategy in Tarim, and also to continue the documentation of the Tarimi palaces; unfortunately MEPI did not approve the application. In mid-2005 AIYS applied to the Social Fund for Development (SFD) for support of Pamela Jerome's program to document the historic palaces in Tarim, which included a strong training component in the program. As of September 2005 SFD had given verbal indication of approval; the project will run for five years, and it has the ultimate intention of fostering local engagement in the creation of a historic district and an urban preservation plan. In addition, AIYS is a recipient of funds from TICFIA (*Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access*), a multi-center block grant for a three-year program from the Department of Education. The program in Yemen, now being designed, will create a union catalog of research libraries and archives in Sana'a, available on-line and in CD format. Several proposals for enhancing scholarly exchange are currently being planned. One of these is the creation of a US students-abroad undergraduate program in Yemen, which AIYS would co-ordinate, to promote academic interest in Yemen in the coming generation of American scholars.

On a more personal note, in August 2005 the Social Fund for Development invited the RD to participate in a project to restore the Great Mosque of Sana'a. The project will include archaeological documentation of the mosque's history, with excavations anticipated both inside and outside the

mosque. The project is still in its preliminary stages, beginning with a field visit by a team of conservation specialists from Venice; the project itself is expected to begin early in 2006.

Besides co-sponsoring the June showing of Caterina Borelli's film in connection with celebrating the Amiriyah, AIYS arranged or participated in several other public events during the past year. In March 2005 AIYS and the Yemen Center for Studies and Research organized a two-day symposium about the first generation of Yemenis who went abroad for education from the imamate north, starting in 1947. Bob Burrowes was the driving force behind the symposium, and his recently published study was the centerpiece of the event (*The Famous Forty and their Companions: North Yemen's First-Generation Modernists and Educational Emigrants*, 2005, *Middle East Journal* 59: 81-97). Bob presented a synopsis of his article, and the full paper was distributed to symposium attendees in both English and Arabic versions. Among the other speakers at the symposium were Dr. Abd al-Karim al-Iryani and Dr. Abd al-Aziz al-Maqalih; the RD presented remarks on education and the degree of northern isolation during the first half of the 20th century.

In May the UNDP-Cultural Project, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and UNESCO, organized a three-day conference designed to promote and to motivate the cultural inventory program that the Yemeni government recently approved. The conference opened with formal presentations of the tangible and intangible heritage of Yemen, and international inventory standards; it then broke into parallel round tables concerned with different facets of an inventory program. Several AIYS-affiliated scholars attended the conference. Najwa Adra spoke about Yemen's intangible cultural heritage and participated in the round table about inventorying intangible heritage. The RD presented some thoughts about the purpose and obstacles of a cultural inventory; both he and Michele Lamprakos participated in the round table about inventorying immovable tangible heritage. The RD also provided consultation in the planning for the event, and he attended a follow-up meeting to review the inventory forms and procedures that the conference produced.

Outreach

The University of Dhamar celebrated its 10th anniversary with a conference in May on the history of the Dhamar region. Bakiye Yükmén Edens presented results of AIYS's 2004 excavation training program at Hirran; lack of time obliged the RD to withdraw his scheduled paper on early agriculture in Dhamar.

In late August Caterina Borelli showed her 1999 film *Architecture of Mud* at the conference "Yemeni-Hadramis in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?," held in Kuala Lumpur. The conference was co-sponsored by the Embassy of the Republic of Yemen to Malaysia, and AIYS arranged with Dr. Abu Bakr al-Qirbi, the Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs, to include the film in the conference program; AIYS paid for Ms. Borelli's trip. While in Kuala Lumpur Ms. Borelli laid the groundwork for a film and oral history about the al-Kâf family. David Hirsch, a several-time AIYS fellow, also attended the conference.

The AIYS lecture series continued to strengthen following the post-September 2001 hiatus. Three AIYS fellows—Najwa Adra, Marjorie Ransom, and Stacey Philbrick Yadav—gave talks on their research, as did Joy McCorrison and Bill Glanzman.

Publication

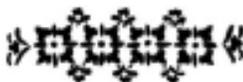
The publications program also saw developments. The translation of Abd al-Aziz al-Maqalih's poetry *Kitab Sana'a* was printed through the University of Aden Press (trans. by Bob Holman and Sam Liebhaber). Three other volumes are now in various stages of preparation in Sana'a. Tim Mackintosh-Smith has nearly completed an English translation of Qadi Isma'il al-Akwa's *Madkhal ila ma'rifat hijar al-'ilm wa-ma'qili-hi fi-l-Yaman*, an introduction to the traditional Yemeni institution of customarily protected places. Sam Liebhaber

translated a selection of the Mahri poetry of Ha Dâkôn, and prepared an extensive introduction to Mahri poetry. Both volumes will be printed during the coming year. Miranda Morris continued her collaboration with oral poets on Soqotra, and these efforts will be presented in a volume on Soqotri oral poetry; as an important supplement to AIYS's support for this publication, Dr. Morris has obtained a grant from the British Academy to support translation of text to Arabic and production of the CD that will accompany the volume.

AIYS Facilities

One other project continued throughout the year—our efforts to purchase property as AIYS's permanent facility. Last year's report described the purchasing process as "almost comedic in its complexity"; that feeling deepened to an almost existential despair this year. After the failure of last year's attempt, we looked at literally dozens of properties, and made offers on a suitable place during the winter and on a second property in early summer. We reached agreements with the sellers on the price of each property, only to see the deal collapse: in the first case, we soon realized that, despite the seller's representations, not all his co-inheritors actually wanted to sell; in the second case, the seller took a two month trip outside Yemen soon after the price agreement and returned to Yemen with the decision to develop his property rather than sell to us. The one bright spot in this gloom was the extension until May 2006 of the federal grant that provides AIYS with the means of buying property.

Christopher Edens
September 2005





President's Report

Thomas B. Stevenson, AIYS President



When I started writing this, I was just back from a very lively July in Sana'a. I arrived with a Foreign Policy Institute/Fund for Peace study that ranked Yemen eighth on the list of states in danger of failing (unfortunately, I was scooped by the internet). The criteria for designation as a state in danger of failure include: a state with rapid population growth, high levels of military spending, inability to provide basic services such as education and health care, and an increasing chasm between the few exceptionally well-to-do and the remainder of the populace. There is much in this report (and much of it that is not well explained) that ought to be fodder for analysis.¹ This also comes at a time when some security analysts, such as Thomas Barnett, advocate that the U.S. and allied militaries should intervene and restructure failing states.

The moment that may mark a significant change in Yemeni, and perhaps Middle Eastern politics, came mid-month. Shortly after celebrating the anniversary of his 27th year in power, 'Ali 'Abd Allah Salih announced he would not seek reelection in 2007. He urged "younger" men to step into the breach. This decision prompted a great deal of speculation, not only about the veracity of his declaration, but whether or not he was signaling that his son, Amad 'Ali, would be his successor. Clearly political scientists—and taxi drivers—will have much to ponder during the coming months and researchers are assured material for further studies.

On the heels of the President's stunning pronouncement came the long awaited, and dreaded, reduction of government subsidies on gasoline, diesel, and propane required by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. The increases are significant; gas is now about \$1.25 a gallon, admittedly less than half what I'm now paying, but a serious burden to the more than half the population living below the poverty line. Already the *dabab* (minicab) price has risen to 20Yemeni reals per ride and taxi costs are up, although unevenly. Eventually all prices will rise.

These changes sparked protest, although not on the scale of those in either 1995 or 1998. Demonstrators paraded through some areas of Sana'a and in other areas they went on a rampage, uprooting trees—those saplings trying to grow on the al-Zubrayi Street median—and selectively breaking store windows. Demonstrations occurred in other cities as well. According to official reports 38 people were killed. Tanks, armed jeeps, and club wielding police were out in force for more than a week to prevent recurrences. Economists, generally not seen in the hostel, would have a nice case study.

Of less significance, I note the arrival of ATM machines at a number of banks. While these proved secure against demonstrators' attacks, the banks promptly welded steel plates over them. Still, the days of easy access to cash are on their way, at least in Sana'a.

Despite the seeming turbulence of life, Yemen is generally safe. Overland travel, except to the Sa'dah area, is unrestricted. There have been no violent incidents, even as many blame the U.S. for the fuel price increases. Despite cautions from the U.S. embassy, the U.S. and French governments have removed Yemen from their travel warning lists. Yemen remains a very open country, a characteristic that has made it an ideal setting for research.

After more than twenty years of work Selma al-Radi's restoration of the 'Amiriyya Mosque and School complex is complete. The grand opening, several times delayed by changes in the schedule of President 'Ali 'Abd Allah Salih, took place on September 11, 2005.

Although there were relatively few people in the hostel this year taking advantage of Arabic language study fellowships, the Yemen Language Center was full. In fact the strong demand has prompted the school's director, Sabri Saleem, to add new rooms to his hostel.

This fall our library holdings climbed substantially as 43 boxes of books and journals were transferred to

Sana'a from our Ardmore office (where they had been accumulating since 2001, waiting for acceptable transportation). These include not just new volumes, but a large number of books from the 1970s and 1980s that fill gaps in the collection. While we have often said that we have the most complete holdings on Yemen, these additions will insure the veracity of the claim. To accommodate these materials as well as the digital library, our facilities will have to expand.

By this time I hoped to be able to report that AIYS had purchased a house and was preparing it for occupancy (funded by our MEPI grant). Alas, this is not yet the case. Although we seemed certain to have a deal on an ideal property late in the summer, before all the legal processes could be completed the owner

decided against the sale. The pursuit of a suitable, affordable building has consumed a huge amount of time and money and generated an inordinate amount of frustration. Our grant is large by institute standards. But, the decline in the value of the dollar and a steady rise in the prices of newly built and suitably large old houses have made our search extremely difficult. I remain hopeful that by next year the President will be able to report that we have succeeded.

1. The Fund for Peace organization has recently published a first annual "Failed States Index" (<www.fundforpeace.org>). The results appeared in the July/August 2005 issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine. To view the index on the internet go to: <www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3098>.



Sana'a street scene (photograph by Carolyn Han, 2002).



My Research in Yemen: The Disappearing Tradition of Silver Jewelry



Marjorie Ransom

One of the richest and most meaningful cultural treasures of Arab women—their traditional jewelry—has increasingly been abandoned over the past four decades of modernization. The relentless power of fashion is reaching into the remotest parts of the Arab world, even to the mountains of Yemen. Women are abandoning handcrafted works in silver in favor of machine-made ornaments of gold. The process has reached the point where only older women know much about traditional Arab silver. The lore is disappearing and the silver is being melted or sold to foreign tourists.

This was the opening paragraph of my proposal for doing research in Yemen, but I could not imagine the rapidity of the demise of traditional Yemeni jewelry until I witnessed it with my own eyes.

Let me say first of all how grateful I am that the American Institute for Yemeni Studies gave me the opportunity to pursue this research project. AIYS members know how fabulous Yemen is, but no one prepared me for the spectacular scenery that I would find all over the country. When I lived in Yemen, on two prior occasions, there were few roads and most of the places I visited this time were then inaccessible.

I was in Yemen for this research from October



The silversmith Said Mohammed Ahmed Baqtayan of Shihir, Hadramaut, works and sells in his shop in the silver suq.

2004 to June 2005, with interruptions for home leave at Christmas and several trips to the Gulf on behalf of an American private school on whose board I sit. Getting an exit visa every time I left Yemen was a tedious chore for AIYS and occasionally caused me some angst.

I moved around Yemen with considerable ease. When the Yemeni government insisted that I have an armed escort with me or in a follow car, I complied. I noticed that these demands lessened during my stay and that the precautions were recommended primarily in the Marib area. I traveled most often with a car and driver from Universal Travel, which made me feel much safer than traveling by group taxi, which I did once from Sana'a to Marib. I took the bus a couple of times from Sayyun to Sana'a to save money and that was just fine.

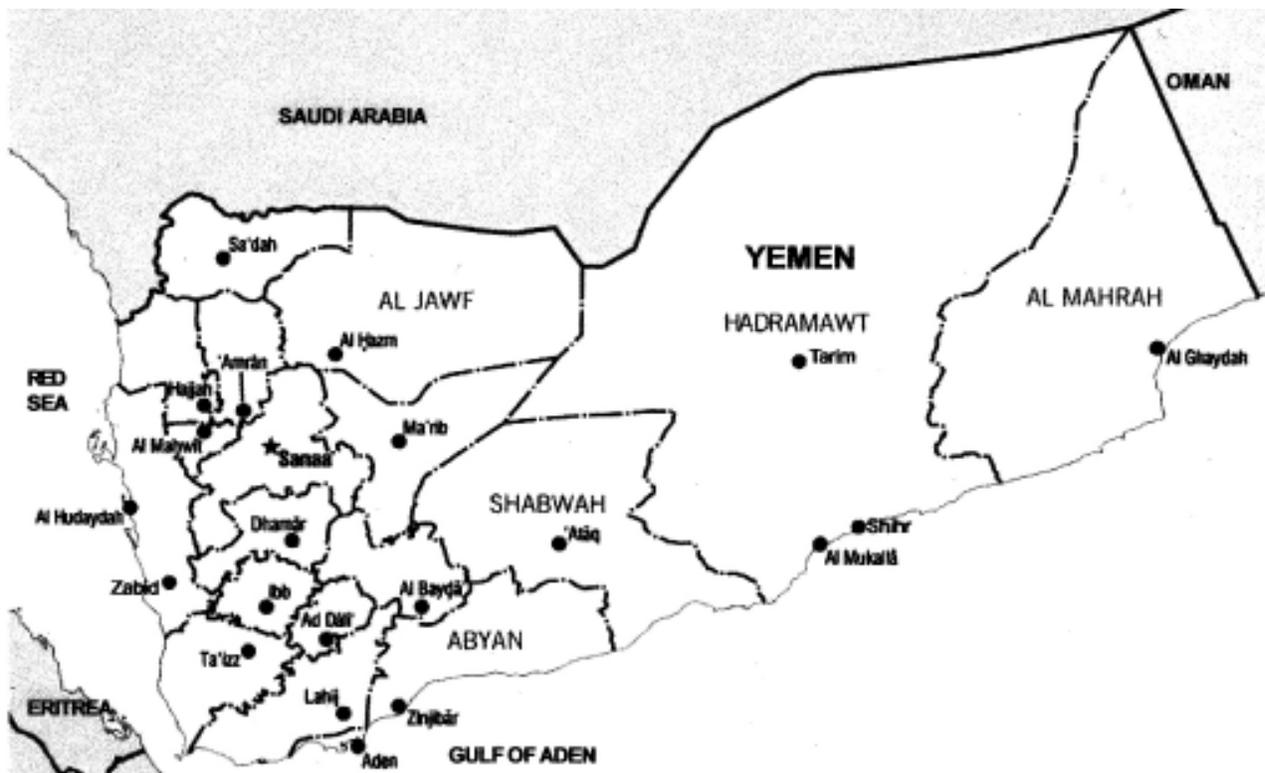
I normally wore a headscarf and very modest clothing, but I resisted wearing the *balto* (an ankle length, long-sleeved, black over-garment) until about my fourth month in Yemen, when my Hadrami consultant told me that I had to wear it when calling on Hadrami women. When I discovered that my Yemeni contacts—both men and women—were more receptive when they saw me in black; I never took it

off again.

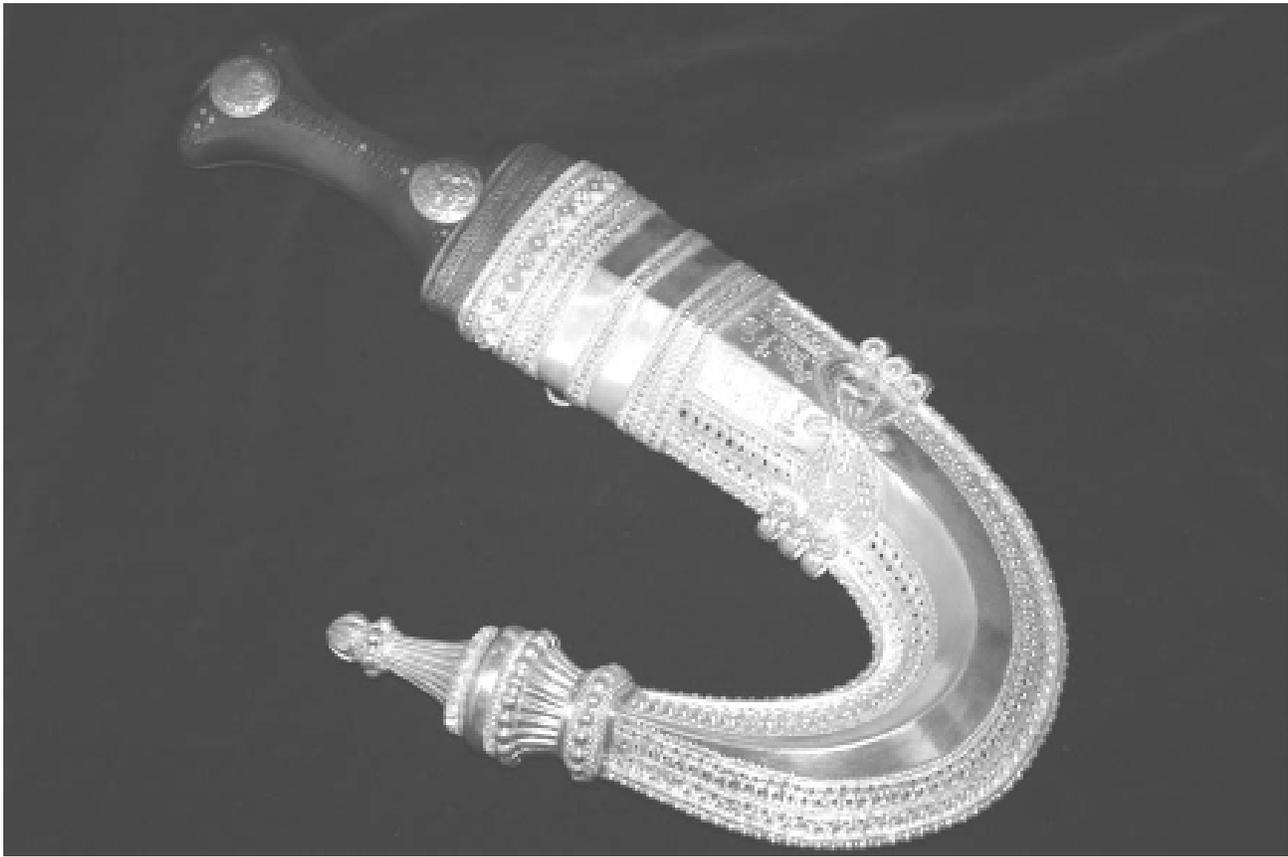
I suggested in my project proposal that I document the dying art of silver jewelry, before it disappears altogether, by studying the regional designs and motifs in Yemen's principal traditional jewelry-making centers. This I would do, I suggested, in interviews with traditional silversmiths. In addition, I proposed conducting in-depth interviews with older women to record how they acquired and disposed of jewelry, why they wore it when they did, how they expressed tribal or religious identity through their jewelry, and the symbolic and functional meaning that the jewelry held for them.

My goal is to produce a lavishly illustrated book, a book that not only documents the beautiful objects, but tells the stories of the women who wore it—their reliance on the jewelry as financial security, personal identity, protection, and beautiful adornment.

Studying the regional styles has proved the easiest of my tasks. The jewelry falls into two broad general divisions: the jewelry of the north (the former Imamate/Republic of Yemen) and the jewelry of the south (the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen). Just as it is very difficult to identify jewelry by country, however, it is hard to adhere strictly to these



Map of Yemen with governorates (provinces) and major towns and cities.



A Hadrami jambiyya, the handiwork of Said Mohammed Baqtayan of Shihr, Hadramaut, features some perforation and soldered bands of stamped silver. It belongs to dealer Kamal Abdullah al-Rubaih.

two general divisions within Yemen. But, for the sake of discussion, let me begin with these two areas and the principal regional styles of Yemeni jewelry.

The South

First I will consider the jewelry of the northern Hadramaut: the towns of Sayyun and Tarim and the Wadis of Du'an, Amid, and Idim form a cohesive and distinct regional style. The jewelry of the southern or coastal Hadramaut, another regional style, was made primarily in Shihr but it was worn in the whole Hadramaut.

To the west of the Hadramaut, the jewelry of the Jawf and the Marib share similarities with that of Shabwa and al-Baidha. I was able to distinguish a few pieces from Lahj, Yafi,' and Abyan, but they also fit in this group.

The jewelry of Mahra (to the east of the Hadramaut) is distinguished by certain shapes such as cylindrical, filigree amulets, pearls strung to resemble amulets, many cast items, and a great fondness for

gold dipped objects. More than other Yemeni and Hadrami jewelry, it resembles Indian jewelry patterns and also certain jewelry styles in the Salala region of Oman, which is geographically close.

The North

I had difficulty deciding how to group the regional styles of the north. I divide them generally into the higher and middle range mountains and the coastal Tihama (the Red Sea coast). I tried to treat the jewelry of Sa'adah, Amran, Sana'a, and the jewelry centers of Heraz, Mahwit, and Hajjah as separate regional styles, but I realized that they more accurately form a regional style of the higher mountains. Similar pieces of jewelry were produced in many centers of the high mountain region, so that it is often difficult to identify the exact source. Fortunately, I have been able to identify the specific origins of many jewelry pieces.

Some of the best jewelry of the north was produced in the mountainous area of Raymah, where the Tihama meets the mountains, about two hours east



A woman of Zabid wearing her traditional silver jewelry.

of Bait al-Faqih (Bait al-Faqih is north of Zabid). This area had a high concentration of Jewish silversmiths and produced some of the finest granulation in the Badeehi tradition. (The finest jewelry of the 20th century was made in the Bowsani or Badeehi style. Bowsani pieces had lovely filigree; Badeehi pieces, which were even more difficult to make, had granulation, those tiny balls of silver that are formed individually, then soldered into shapes such as diamonds or flowers and then are soldered onto the piece itself to form intricate patterns.)

The jewelers of Wasab Ali and Wasab Safil, in the Tihama northeast of Hudaydah, made jewelry for wide areas of Yemen and also made jewelry in Jeddah for Saudis. Their style is so distinctive that I have classified their work as a regional style.

The stories of the jewelry of Raymah and the Wasab are particularly sad. When I visited Kuzmah, high in the mountains of Raymah, I could find only a couple of traders and no silversmiths. I have also been told that the people of the Wasab stopped making

silver jewelry in Yemen as long as 100 years ago when they migrated to Jeddah, and that they ceased making silver jewelry in Saudi Arabia about 40 years ago because there were no sons to take over the trade. Thus, two broad schools of jewelry making have died.

Moving on, it is difficult to distinguish the work of Taizz from the work of important centers in the Tihama, such as al-Dhahi, Bait il-Faqih, and Zabid, but I found that there are pieces made in the Hogariyyeh south of Taiz that are quite distinctive and so I have chosen to classify this as a regional style of Taiz.

Zaidiyya, north of Hudaydah, has a style of incising and engraving that you see most often on jambiyya hilts, accessories, and swords; it is so distinctive that I have classified it as a regional style. The silver of the other centers of the Tihama—Garahi, Zabid, Bait il-Faqih, Hudaydah, and al-Dhahiyy—often overlap, although the work of especially talented silversmiths is recognized until today.

Here and there in the silver *sugs* you find distinctive pieces of jewelry that pre-date the 20th century. These *mansouri* pieces were most often cast or stamped and the amount of silver used was much less—often 50%. *Mansouri* pieces were produced in the northern mountains, Taiz, and the Hadramaut. The reasons for the dramatic shift from *mansouri* cast pieces to the wonderful filigree and granulation that



This box, which was worn on a man's jambiyya belt, displays the unique style of engraving and perforation found only in Zaidiyya jewelry, a school founded by Yusuf Bland.



This large and heavy necklace from Mahwit was called “laazim,” because the bride had to wear one on her wedding day. The customer negotiated the amount of silver in the piece. This one is of light silver, probably 50%.

characterized Yemeni jewelry in the 20th century is a question that I will be pursuing.

Interviews and Photographs

In my attempts to classify Yemeni traditional silver jewelry by region, I interviewed jewelers and dealers from five major centers of the Tihama, and in the higher mountains of Sana’a and Mahwit. I was unable to travel to Amran or Sa’adah, but I hope that I can do this in the future. To the southeast, I interviewed jewelers in Taizz and I hope to interview a jeweler from Ibb who now resides in California.

In the Hadramaut, I interviewed jewelers in Sayyun, Tarim, Shihr, and Dis al-Sharqiyyah. In Mahra, I interviewed jewelers in Sayhut.

Interviewing jewelers was very easy. I found traders—Yemenis who bought silver and sold gold to villagers and Bedouin—even more informative. They were the best informants for questions about the way that the pieces were worn and about regional differences. For example, I met a man from Mahwit in Hudaydah who knows the entire Tihama, as well as

the northern mountains. In the southern coastal region I traveled with a man who bought old silver and sold gold to the Bedouin for several years; he ended his trade about fifteen years ago.

I found most of the women I interviewed through jewelers or traders. It was easiest in the Tihama, where I was able to interview a number of rural women in thatched huts near Zabid and Hays, to hear their wonderful stories, and to photograph them. In the coastal cities of Garahi, Zabid, al-Dhahiyy, and Zaidiyya, I had productive meetings with women, but I could not photograph them. Elsewhere, I also was able to conduct some very useful interviews in the Wadis of Du’an, Amid, and Idim, where photography was, again, not allowed.

On the southern coast of the Hadramaut I was able to photograph a woman of African descent, but I was not allowed to photograph Bedouin women or the women of the cities of Shihr and al-Qusayr. In al-Qusayr, I was able to photograph a woman’s wedding jewelry, but she adamantly refused to let me even tape her voice. It was one of the few occasions when I

simply could not understand an accent and, unfortunately for me, there was no educated person around to interpret from dialect to educated Arabic.

I think I have made great progress towards identifying the regional styles of Yemen and that I will be able to document them with my photographs. What I found most useful in my interviews with jewelers, traders, and women, were the pictures that I brought with me of my own collection of Yemeni pieces. I am now able to add to my photographic collection additional pictures of the traditional jewelry worn for weddings in al-Dhahiyy in the Tihama, in al-Qusayr on the southern coast of the Hadramaut, and in the three wadis I visited in the Hadramaut. A

wonderful jeweler in Hajjarain in Wadi Du'an showed me a wedding belt that he rents out for weddings. It weighed seven kilos, but for a buxom bride he can add to the weight to make it ten kilos!

In all cases, silversmiths, traders, and individuals have been generous in letting me photograph their pieces and I have assembled a glossary of jewelry terms, many of which differ from region to region.

Future Research

My project is not yet finished. I have not gone to Amran and Sa'adah, but I will go when I return to Yemen. I also intend to do research in Aden for at least a week; I want to learn who the silversmiths were and



Necklace with stamped granulation typical of the craftsmanship of Jabal Wasab.



These handsome beads or “duqaq” were made in Sana’a and belong to the dealer Yahya Rassam. Each bead is signed by the Yemeni Jewish craftsman who made it.

the history of silver work in Aden. There are other out-of-the-way places where silver jewelry may still be worn and I would like to visit these areas in the winter months. In addition, I still have many interviews to conduct in Sana’a. The head of the silver *suq* or *aqil* was in Japan when I tried to interview him earlier, and there are many more silversmiths and dealers whom I have not met.

I would also like to interview women in the northern mountains and Taizz. I have met very successfully with women in Mahwit, but I particularly want to interview women in the Taizz area.

In general, I want to spend more time with women. It is the women of my age who wore the jewelry, who know about it, and who love talking about it. I feel confident that if I spend more time with them these women would let me take their picture. In Sah, about one hour south of Tarim in Wadi Idim, a lovely old lady

donned her complete wedding costume twice in the course of the afternoon. The second time, she put on two very heavy wedding belts and started dancing around the room. About thirty women and girls had gathered in the room and they started clapping in tune with her dancing. The excitement was palpable. A veiled young woman of marriageable age told me that it was her mother dancing and that she herself had never seen the jewelry or the wedding dress. The young woman was moved to try on some of the jewelry. The family debated letting me photograph one young married woman, but, in the end, opted to dress up a young man to pose as a veiled woman for me.

In every home I visited I was able to strike a warm bond with the old ladies, who are my age after all. They hide their silver and say that it should be saved to pay for the cost of their funerals! In the Tihama, they

showed me the wedding dresses they were able to wear when they were young: the fitted bodices with a bare midriff over their skirts.

But, in every case, I have gained access to the women through men. And it was the men, usually sons, who were so adamant that I must not photograph the women.

Fading Tradition

In summary, I was shocked to discover that the use of traditional silver jewelry by women has nearly died out. In the Hadramaut, the silversmiths who remain survive by making the two items that are worn at weddings: the very heavy belt with clanging dangles and the heavy, similarly belled anklet. Also, the

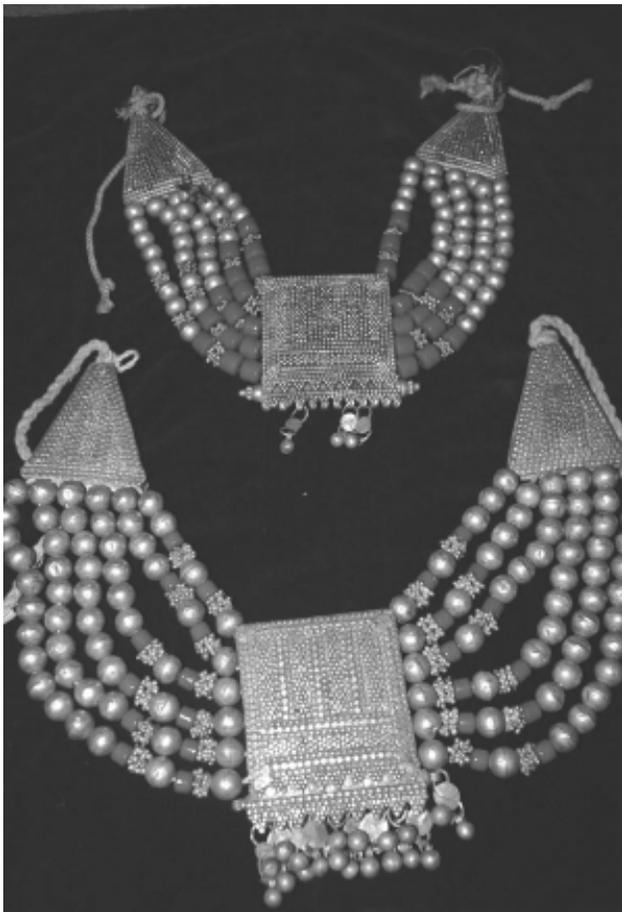
married women wear a narrow silver belt to hold up their long skirts.

In the Tihama, al-Dhahiyy is the most active jewelry-making center with as many as 50 silversmiths working. But they are working to fill the demand for jambiyyas and swords. They are not making jewelry for women.

In fact, I found no silversmith in the Tihama who was making silver jewelry for women. I interviewed a silversmith in Zabid whose health was actually affected by the drop in demand for his products. I interviewed him and his two sons. All were skilled silversmiths, but there was no demand for their jewelry. The two sons were engaged in other occupations. The elder silversmith appeared to be in



A Bedouin woman on the southern coast of the Hadramaut wore ten earrings such as these in each ear. They were made in Shihr.



Necklaces with stamped granulation typical of Jabal Wasab; top: from Wasab Safil (the lower Wasab), bottom: Wasab Ali (the upper Wasab).

his eighties, although he was in his early sixties; he had lost his sense of productivity. Later, I was sent word that the family would like to sell all their jewelry-making equipment.

I find it impossible to study silver-making in Yemen without mourning its demise. Everywhere I traveled in pursuit of the history of traditional silver jewelry, I met and heard of skilled silversmiths who were following other pursuits because the demand was no longer there.

When I gave a summary of my findings at a meeting in London to a group of specialists on Yemen (among them Shelagh Weir and Werner Daum), I was urged to tell the story of the silversmiths; they said that no one else is doing it. This will be easy for me, as I am now in touch with a wide network of silversmiths.

I feel very blessed in my two consultants: Hassan Bahashwan in Sayyun and Kamal Abdullah Ali al-

Rubaih in Sana'a. They have given invaluable advice and information. Hassan was especially helpful in opening the doors to Hadrami homes.

My project is an ambitious one because it covers all the regional styles of Yemeni jewelry. I want to tell the story of the silver, the men who made it, and the women who wore it. I plan to return to Yemen in late January to continue my research.

Marjorie Ransom, who is a non-resident associate at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University, was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 2003-2004 competition. The title of her project was "Arab Women's Heritage: Researching the Disappearing Tradition of Silver Jewelry in Yemen."



The women of Mahra wore many gilded pieces such as this necklace.



Roots of Agriculture (RASA) Project 2005: A Season of Excavation and Survey in Wadi Sana, Hadramawt



Joy McCorriston
The Ohio State University

With Catherine Heyne, Michael Harrower, Nisha Patel, Tara Steimer-Herbet,
Ietha al Amary, Abd al Karim Barakany, Mohammed Sinnah, Ramzy Ladeh, Eric Oches,
Remy Crassard, and Louise Martin

Introduction

Since 1998 the RASA team (Roots of Agriculture in Southern Arabia), composed principally of archaeologists and paleo-ecologists, has sought to document the prehistoric landscape of the highlands of the southern Hadramawt and the activities of the ancient people who used them. The team's principal interests have been to investigate the changes that occurred 7,000-5,000 years ago both in the environment and in human activities during the middle Holocene (about 5000-3000 BC), when Yemen's monsoon-borne rainfall rapidly declined, and to investigate the causes and circumstances that resulted in the adoption of domesticated animals and plants into Yemen's prehistoric foraging lifestyle.

Near the end of the Pleistocene era (the last major ice age—the current era, or Holocene, began about 11,000 years ago), the southern Arabian peninsula and much of Saharan Africa experienced a slow increase in rainfall and surface water in the form of lakes, spring-fed pools, marshes, and streams. Humans foraged for food and developed annual movements to use many of these wetlands. The Holocene era brought a more stable climate with significantly less variation than the dramatic climate fluctuations of the previous ice ages, and this stability also contributed to greater human reliance on newly available water resources. The Middle Holocene began around 5000 BC, bringing with it a decrease in rainfall in comparison to the Early Holocene. The subsequent aridification was relatively rapid and may even have been experienced within a few generations

of humans, who would have had to change age-old strategies of survival in drying lands. Archaeologists have long suspected that this significant climate and environmental change is implicated in the introduction of herding and agriculture, but there has been relatively little data from Arabia. In Africa, Saharan foragers domesticated indigenous cattle in the early Holocene, then gradually accepted sheep, goats, and domesticated plants in the middle Holocene. Agriculture appeared around 5000 BC in Egypt, but the earliest indications in Arabia place the first cultivation and domesticated plants around 3500 BC (Ekstrom and Edens 2003, Wilkinson 1997, McCorriston and Oches 2001, McCorriston 2005). Cattle, sheep, and goats were almost certainly herded earlier (Cleuziou and Tosi 1997, Uerpmann and Uerpmann 2000).

The RASA team has focused on one highland region, the Wadi Sana of southern Hadramawt, to develop a long-term sequence of human activities and environmental change in the Holocene. By 2005, the RASA team had located and tested a site occupied frequently between about 7000 BC and 5500 BC (dates based on one radiocarbon date in the middle of a 2.5 meter sequence of deposits that contain multiple changes in stone tool technology). This site provides the earliest stratified evidence for Holocene human activities in southern Hadramawt and will undergo further investigations in the future. In developing a better understanding of the later parts of the Holocene sequence, the RASA team relies partly on the investigations of two researchers, Catherine Heyne and Nisha Patel, both supported by an AIYS fellowship to Professor McCorriston.

During the months of February and March of 2005 the RASA team conducted six weeks of fieldwork throughout the Wadi Sana drainage of the Hadramawt province. We excavated at three prehistoric sites identified during our previous field survey (McCorrison et. al. 2005, McCorrison & Harrower, in press), did a targeted survey of cairns and tombs using high-resolution satellite imagery, and completed geological investigations of water flow, sedimentation, and spring activity. Catherine Heyne excavated an unusual find of a ring of cattle skulls buried nose down beside an enigmatic 7,000-year-old stone slab oval structure (5000 BC), and Nisha Patel sought to develop the analysis of satellite imagery as a method for accurately locating archaeological sites. Both worked closely with other RASA team members. What follows here is a report on some of the discoveries and their implications for prehistoric society in Hadramawt.

The Site of Kheshiya 151-1

The middle Wadi Sana region lies about 45 km north of Ghayl Bin Yumain and today is occupied by goat-herders of the al-Aly clan of the Humum tribe and a small military garrison (Checkpoint Fagash). Upstream the Wadi Sana collects tributaries from the relatively broad Ghayl bin Yumain catchment and funnels these waters through a deep limestone gorge with a gravel and bedrock floor. During the early Holocene (9000-5000 BC), deep sediment blocks formed. Downstream, at the middle Wadi Sana, these blocks contain stratified archaeological remains of the southern Hadramawt's prehistoric foragers, cattle herders, and earliest agriculturalists. Here a broader wadi channel provided the conditions for slowed floodwaters, oxbow ponds, marshy terrain, and small crop lands. RASA field and laboratory studies have shown that archaeological remains buried within the



Figure 1. Cattle skull ring (left) and stone slab ring (right) at Kheshiya 151-1, over 7,000 years old.

sediment predate a phase of erosion associated with middle Holocene climate and environmental change. At the confluence of Wadi Sana and its tributary Wadi Shumlya lie particularly extensive sediment terraces, and it is in this Khuzmum area that the RASA group has concentrated archaeological excavation and survey (McCorrison et al. 2005). In 2004 the RASA team noted a semi-circle of upright limestone slabs at the edge of a natural gully cutting the sediment terrace. Known locally as “the small khor along the left silt bank of Wadi Sana adjacent to Shi’b Kheshya,” we called the archaeological site Kheshya 151-1.

Kheshiya 151-1 Excavations

The stone slab structure was quite small, roughly 2.5 by 2 m in a tear-drop shape. In 2004, RASA archaeologist Catherine Heyne removed 6 animal skulls from the gully section where they were likely to collapse at the next rainfall. Regional sedimentation sequences and extensive ^{14}C dating suggested that the structure and any associated remains should be older than 5000 BC. A nearby hearth, which appears to be stratigraphically higher, returned a ^{14}C date of 6097 ± 39 BP (roughly 7,000 years old). With these indications and with the supposition that the small structure of stone slabs marked a grave or ritual construction (too small to be a house), the team decided to excavate. We sought to clarify the strange concentration of animal skulls, to determine species (cattle or camel?), and to investigate and interpret what we thought could not be a house. The investigation here would be useful to test our interpretation of a similar structure at another site (Khuzmum 037-3, which we believed was a house about 6,500 years ago) (McCorrison et al. 2002).

The tear-drop shaped stone slab ring at Kheshiya 151-1 proved to be one of two rings. Excavations were done inside and outside the stone slab ring that first drew our attention. They revealed four flat-lying layers of stone slabs inside. We speculate that these may have once been standing wall stones, bringing the original height of the structure to 1.75 m. It was impossible to determine whether or not there had originally been a roof, but no signs of internal supports, such as pillars or posts, were evident. Slab uprights of

the walls were originally set on end into a wet, ashy surface that had considerable evidence of human use: charcoal, seeds, fire-altered cobbles, and a few unretouched chipped stone flakes (lithics). There was good evidence for activities that took place inside the stone structure despite the lack of a clear door. Beneath the slab fill there were two clear episodes of local burning on the lowest interior surface (hearth fires?); we also found fire-altered cobbles and charred ‘ilb seeds (*Zizyphus spina-christi* or *Z. leucoderma*) that lay still scattered on the interior surface and within the lowermost clay-like strata. These clay-like deposits and the silty, sandy loam overlying them represent interior use of the structure after its construction but before its in-filling by stone slabs.

The stone structure was built next to a remarkable pre-existing ring of cattle skulls that would have been visible at the time of the stone structure’s construction and use. The skulls were placed nose down on a lower ashy surface, foreheads in-facing, and with horns interlocking. (Figure 1). An upper ashy surface developed in and around the ring made of cattle skulls, and it was on this surface that the stone slab structure was set. The upper ashy surface contained chipped stone (unfortunately without typological diagnostic value), bone, and fire-altered cobbles from human use of multiple hearths in the area (many seen and documented in the gully section to the south).

Whatever its purpose, when the stone slab structure was built one could still see, about 1 m to the east, a ring of cattle skulls set nose down, buried to eye-level through water-lain sedimentation, with horns and foreheads protruding. GOAM and RASA archaeologists Ietha al-Amary and AbdalKarim al-Barakany speculated that we had found evidence of deep antiquity to the pre-Islamic tradition of Sayin, the sun god, whose identity was signified by a horned cow. While we remain puzzled by the meaning of this cattle-skull ring, several points are clear:

- 1) Both cattle-skull ring and stone ring are at least 7,000 years old and are potentially much older. We have not yet received ^{14}C dates taken directly from bone or adjacent charcoal.

- 2) The cattle-skull ring pre-dates the stone slab structure; the latter may be a reconstruction of an even earlier structure, built on the same lower ashy surface as the cattle-skull ring and now severely cut by the

gully and/or robbed to build a later structure. The site had a long duration as a focus of symbolic activity.

3) Although we cannot expect to reconstruct fully the site's significance for ancient people, it seems reasonable to assume that a feast was involved, drawing together a sufficient number of people to consume and/or to smoke the meat of 43 head of cattle. All animals were mature, and the construction details show that the skull ring was built as a single year event, in which the animals were slaughtered. To stand upright and to have the excellent preservation we observed of the nasal, maxilla, and palette areas, which are thin and rarely preserved at other sites, the skulls would have been set into soft mud that usually appears once a year where marshy stream edges expand with annual rains. In contrast to the relatively well-preserved lower portions, the skulls and horn

cores proved extremely fragile and fragmented above the eye sockets, suggesting that frontal bones and horns were exposed for longer period—a season or two at least—during which the upper ashy surface was used and the stone slab ring built. These details are consistent for all skulls and all skulls are set into the same lower ashy layer, indicating a near-simultaneous formation and sedimentation of the entire ring. At least some of the skull areas revealed finely differentiated sediment differences characteristic of the internment of fleshed corpses, allowing excavators to trace the outline of hide in the sediment.

4) It may ultimately be impossible to demonstrate that these were domesticated cattle from the preserved skeletal remains, but the tooth morphology, eruption patterns, and recessive congenital traits will show herd structure and cull patterns. It seems likely

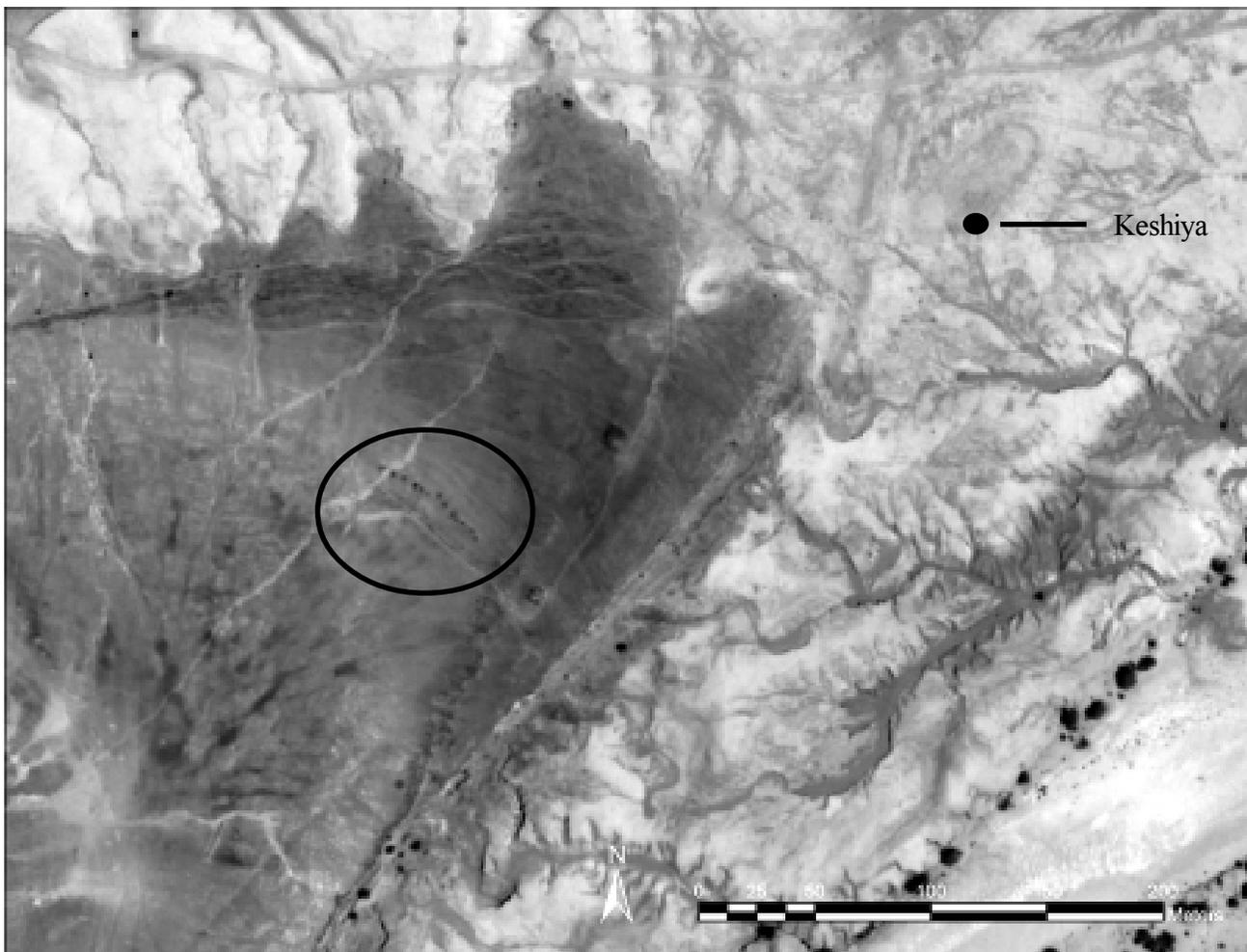


Figure 2. Digital Globe image of the Kheshiya area. The darker alignment of circles across the upper section of the darker landcover (circled area) is a set of hearths before a trilith. Image analysis by Michael Harrower and Nisha Patel.

that the 43 mature animals, killed nearly simultaneously, came from a domesticated, not a wild herd. This information provides a rare insight into some of Arabia's first foragers and their cultural practices.

5) If the cattle skulls retain sufficient DNA (in the teeth), this data may yield important insights into the pattern and history of cattle domestication. Specifically, we might determine whether or not Yemen's first domesticates came from Africa or from the Northern Levant (Hanotte et al. 2002, Grigson 1996). In turn, this insight could offer significant new understanding of Arabia's post-Pleistocene immigrants and their cultural origins.

Future analyses, yet to be completed, will include ¹⁴C dating of hearths and skulls, analysis of the internal and external surfaces for phytolith assemblages, DNA assays on cattle teeth, consolidation and zoo-archaeological study of the cattle skulls that are now stored in the Mukalla Museum, and wood charcoal analysis of hearths. In addition, geo-morphological studies will be done on sediment from a nearby ancient oxbow area, which we believe provided marshlands for Yemen's prehistoric cattle herders during the early Holocene period.

Wadi Sana Cairn Survey: a Pilot Project

Throughout the autumn of 2004, Nisha Patel and Michael Harrower labored to rectify, pan-sharpen¹ and manipulate a Digital Globe Quickbird™ image of the middle Wadi Sana that we acquired to serve as a base map for RASA. Because the satellite image has a 0.6 m pixel size (i.e., 0.6 m resolution), it offers great potential to identify archaeological structures that typically range from 2-8 m in diameter. Therefore the RASA team is developing a method to identify archaeological cairns and to differentiate types of cairn from each other and from the surrounding land surface. We focused our efforts on the middle Wadi Sana, already well-known through our archaeological survey. Throughout the autumn, Nisha Patel compared the image to known cairn locations, and she produced image maps of 0.25 x 0.25 km sectors of the middle Wadi Sana for field use. At the same time, she marked several quadrants with locations where she expected to find cairns based on the appearance of the

digital imagery. Her preparations gave the survey team targets to ground-truth in the field. (Ground-truthing is the process by which reference data, usually acquired by visiting and checking the area imaged, are used to analyze the image itself.) (Lillesand et al. 2004: 27).

With the welcome addition of Dr. Tara Steimer-Herbet to the field team, we were able to develop a refined typology of cairns for the middle Wadi Sana. Field studies, which included both walking to sites readily visible in designated areas and walking in straight and evenly spaced lines (transects) across designated areas, located and described 13 major cairn types with sub-types in several cases. Some of the cairns were funerary monuments: circular tower tombs, wall tombs, oval tombs, tumuli, dolmens, and graves from the Islamic period. Additional types—tear-drop shaped structures, sub-rectangular structures, semi-circular structures, rectangular structures with monolith, horse-shoe shaped structures, monoliths (alone or in a stone ring), and trapezoidal structures—have unknown functions. They could have served in ritual activities and as mnemonic devices to organize and perpetuate social activities, as we are beginning to suspect was the case for the tear-drop shaped stone structure at Kheshiya 151-1.

The team noted several promising approaches to recognizing cairns from remotely-sensed imagery, including the distinctive shadow formed by a circular tower tomb and the darkened line of hearths that characterizes the foreground (or rear?) of a trilith. (Figure 2) Further visual comparisons by Nisha Patel identified problems either with rectification or with GPS real-time differential correction where some GPS points appear several meters from clearly visible cairns. The data awaits further analysis, including digital image filtering, pattern-searching, and statistical applications.

Future Directions

The excavation of Wadi Sana's mysterious structures and the survey of cairns using remote imagery are linked to important questions about the emergence and development of southern Arabia's distinctive social frameworks that were organized historically around kinship and client-patron relationships, assuring people's social affiliation, identities,

and protection. Historically, and to the present day, these social frameworks (call them “tribes”) had material correlates in territories and dress. It may also be that there are other material correlates—Yemeni ethnographers like Abdalaziz bin ‘Aqil and Ietha al-Amary have noted architectural styles and decoration that have regional differences closely linked to tribal territories. Both ethnographers have contributed immensely to RASA interpretations of historic and prehistoric remains in Wadi Sana. Abdalaziz bin ‘Aqil and Joy McCorrison co-direct a project that is affiliated to RASA and funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation; it seeks to correlate material evidence with social identities in the southern Hadramawt. The RASA team ultimately hopes to understand the emergence and changes in the economic and social life-ways distinctive to southern Yemen by using a broad application of remote imagery to analyze the spatial distribution of cairns—their position in the landscape—and through the excavation of prehistoric ritual or symbolic “houses.”

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Notes

¹ The pan-sharpening process combines panchromatic and multi-spectral bands with different resolutions to generate a merged image with effective spatial resolution greater than the original spectral bands (Lillesand et al. 2004, 459-461).



Interview with Qadi Isma‘il al-Akwa‘

Kamal Ali al-Hijri and Gregory D. Johnsen, Notes by Christopher Edens*



Qadi Isma‘il b. ‘Ali al-Akwa‘ is a prominent player on the stage of Yemeni scholarship, best known for his writings about traditional institutions in the landscape, history, and culture of Yemen. The diversity of his interests may be gauged by the titles of a few of his publications: the two volumes of *Yemeni Proverbs* (al-amthal al-yamaniyyah, 1968-1984), the one volume of *The Islamic Schools of Yemen* (al-madaris al-islamiyyah fi al-Yaman, 1980), the two volumes of his edition of Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Hajari’s *Encyclopedia of Yemen and its Tribes* (majmu‘ buldan al-yaman wa-qaba‘ili-ha, 1984), and the five volumes of *Refuges and Strongholds of Knowledge in Yemen* (hijar al-‘ilm wa-ma‘ aqil-hu fi al-Yaman, 1995). He has also published articles on subjects as diverse as the baths of Sana’a and Turkish words adopted into Yemeni usage. Qadi Isma‘il is well-known to a generation of North American historians and archaeologists, as the founder and long-time (1969-1990) president of the General Organization for Antiquities and Libraries. In this position, he took great strides toward study and preservation of Yemen’s pre-Islamic and Islamic heritage, and he encouraged new research by Yemeni and foreign scholars.

Less widely known to a foreign audience is the qadi’s life and activities before he turned his attention to writing and preservation of Yemen’s cultural heritage. On 25 March and 15 July 2004 Kamal ‘Ali al-Hijri and Gregory D. Johnsen sat down with qadi Isma‘il al-Akwa‘ to talk about his life and times as a Yemeni revolutionary, diplomat, and scholar. An edited version of the two discussions, both of which took place at the judge’s house, follows.

Interviewer: To begin with, could you tell us where you were born and a little bit about your childhood, including the schools you attended?

Qadi Isma‘il: I was born in the city of Dhamar in 1338 AH [1920 CE]. When I was a child I studied mathematics and calligraphy at the local *kuttab*.¹

Later I studied at the *Madrrasah al-Shamsiyyah* and at the ‘Amr Mosque,² both of which were in Dhamar. I went to both of these because I wanted to study with a particular sheikh and every student can study with the sheikh he likes. My driving passion was a desire to do well. I was raised in an intellectual and scientific family. We had a strong tradition of learning. My father³ was one of the greatest scholars in Dhamar.

I: I know you have written a book about the history of your family, al-Akwa‘, which I would like to talk about later, but for the moment I would like to ask you about the name al-Akwa‘. I have heard that it is a sort of nickname that refers to your family’s reputation as scholars, since the word *akwa‘* has to do with being bent, and many in your family were always bent over a book. Is that correct?

QI: No, the name al-Akwa‘ first appeared about 1,000 years ago. The original name was al-Huwali, and al-Akwa‘ was taken by Muhammad b. Ibrahim⁴ because he had a bent bone in his hand.

I: OK, let’s get back to your own history. Did you complete your education in Dhamar, or did you eventually move on to another city?

QI: The next step in my education was to go to Ibb, where I studied under my brother Muhammad.⁵ My brother was one of the few people in Yemen who had a good knowledge of the modern sciences and I was lucky to study under him. He knew people like Sheikh Arsalan, Muhammad ‘Abduh, and Muhammad Rashid Rida.⁶

I: Did you only work with your brother, or did you study under other teachers as well?

QI: Yes, I also received part of my education from Hasan ibn Zayd al-Daylami. He lent me a great number of books, as did Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Warith.⁷ I benefited greatly from all the books they lent me. I also borrowed Hafiz’s *Diwan* from ‘Abdallah ‘Ali al-Shajani.⁸ I enjoyed that book quite

a lot. All these books and all these teachers were a part of my education.

I: While you were in Ibb, you also joined a reform movement that your brother led, correct?

QI: Yes, that is correct. My brother Muhammad led a reform movement⁹ in Ibb and in Ta'izz. My role in the movement was very small compared to that of other people. I delivered pamphlets and newspapers that had been printed in Aden to houses and mosques in Ibb, Sana'a, and Ta'izz. In addition to transporting these papers, I also sometimes wrote articles for the reform movement that appeared in periodicals and newspapers such as *Sawt al-Yaman* and *Fatat al-Jazirah*.¹⁰ Many of the articles I wrote never made it to Aden to get published. Eventually, in 1944, I was arrested by the Imam for my membership and activities in the group. We wanted justice; we wanted the Imam to establish vital projects that the country needed, things like roads.

I: What happened after you were arrested?

QI: Well, as I said, I was arrested in 1944 and I spent two years in the Imam's prisons in Ibb, Sana'a, Ta'izz, and Hajjah. And I was arrested again in 1948; after Imam Yahya was killed, Imam Ahmad arrested many people on general suspicion. I spent the greater part of my incarceration in the prison in Hajjah. About 50 people were in jail with me at the time. People like qadi al-Iryani, Nu'man, al-Sallal, al-'Amri and al-Marwani.¹¹ All people who would later play important roles in Yemen's revolution. There were two chambers in the prison, and all of us [prisoners] used to spend a great deal of time talking to one another. We would read and pass books to each other, and work together in different study groups. Strangely, there was more freedom, at least intellectually, inside the prison than there was outside of it. One could do things in prison that one could never do outside. During my final days in prison, some of the prisoners, including myself, were allowed to receive books from our friends and family. And some of us wrote poetry or essays to pass the time. In Hajjah, I spent most of my time reading and studying [Arabic] grammar.¹² Actually, the time in prison was a little like time spent in a garden. We used to laugh and dance even though our feet and hands were chained. I could do things in

prison I could never do in the outside world.

I: What did you do after you were released?

QI: I was released in late 1946, but I was sick, worn out, and very scared of being arrested again. I was scared about everything; my life and my safety. I was scared of the Imam. I even went into hiding for a while, traveling between Dhamar, Ibb, and Sana'a. I never spent a great deal of time in one particular place before I traveled to Aden in 1950. But after I had been out of prison for a while, I went to Imam Yahya and asked him to release my brother Muhammad. But as it turned out, Muhammad stayed in the prison in Hajjah until 1955, seven years after Imam Yahya was killed.¹³

I: You mentioned that you moved to Aden in 1950. What did you do there?

QI: The first thing I did in Aden was to get medical treatment for some health problems that had been bothering me since my release from prison. More importantly, I was able to continue helping the Yemeni reformers. Even though I played a very small role, I was able to work with associates of Muhammad Mahmud al-Zubayri.¹⁴ We did a number of things in Aden connected with reformist activities, things like meetings and writing articles.¹⁵ I also worked as a school teacher during my years in Aden.

I: Were you influenced at all by working with so many extremely talented and capable men during your time in Aden?

QI: I was most definitely influenced a great deal. I learned a tremendous amount in Aden. I made a number of friends, participated in study sessions that greatly benefited me, met with leading scholars and poets, and so on.

I: At that time, the early 1950s, Aden was under British rule and Yemen was under the rule of Imam Ahmad. What differences did you notice between the two places?

QI: Yes, there was a huge difference between Aden and Yemen. In Aden there was absolute freedom. One could do anything one wanted to do in Aden. In fact, there was a saying in Yemen at that time: "if you get bored, go to Aden." One could find complete freedom to live in any way one wanted in Aden at this

time. The exact opposite, however, was the case in Sana'a at this time. And this is why the great liberals like al-Zubayri and Nu'man fled to Aden.

I: You said that you stayed in Aden for about four years. Where did you go after that?

QI: In 1954, I took my son Muhammad, and went to Cairo. I studied for a while in Cairo, and I even joined *Dar al-'Ulum* but I did not study there.¹⁶ My son spent his time in an elementary school there. I stayed in Cairo until 1958, when I traveled to Syria.

I: Why did you go to Syria?

QI: I went to Syria to look at the situation in Damascus. The Free Yemenis¹⁷ wanted to scout out Syria as a possible destination for exiles from Yemen since Egypt might not always be available, and they chose me to go. I was also chosen because they wanted me to supervise a group of young Yemeni students who were going to study in Damascus.¹⁸ The Syrian officials wanted some sort of a leader for the students, or at least some adult supervision for them, and so I went to Syria in this dual role. While in Syria I also spent a great deal of time talking and discussing a number of issues with friends and professors.

I: And then you returned to Yemen?

QI: No, actually I returned to Egypt in 1959, and it was from Cairo that I left to go on the *hajj*. It meant a great deal to me not only because it was the first time I had gone on the *hajj* but also because I met my brother Muhammad in Mecca, and he brought my wife and daughter, whom I had not seen since I left Yemen. It was a very happy time for me. After the end of the *hajj* season I returned to Egypt for a short time, and then returned to Yemen.

I: So you returned to Yemen in 1959?

QI: Yes, in late 1959. My brother Muhammad had taken a position as a judge in Ibb.

I: Did you then work with your brother again in Ibb?

QI: Well, eventually Imam Ahmad asked me and Ahmad al-'Amri to travel to the Soviet Union and to establish a Yemeni mission there, because the Soviets had recently opened one in Ta'izz.¹⁹ This was in 1961.

I ended up staying in Russia until just after the revolution. I returned to Yemen in late 1962 or early 1963; I can't remember exactly when.²⁰

I: So you heard about the 1962 Revolution when you were in Moscow. How did you find out? What was your reaction?

QI: Yes, I heard about the revolution while I was in Moscow. Words fail to describe how extremely happy I was when I heard the news of the revolution. I felt unlimited happiness. It was like a day of release. Freedom had finally come to Yemen, especially in the form of the six principles of the revolution.²¹ I first heard about the revolution from friends of mine – Arab ambassadors in Moscow – who told me to listen to the radio. I did, and I heard the news that Yemen was free.

I: What was the reaction of the Soviets you saw to the news of Yemen's revolution?

QI: The Soviets seemed very pleased with the revolution as well. They were even more pleased when a Yemeni delegation headed by Muhammad Qa'id Sayf and Salih al-Ashwal arrived in Moscow.²² The delegation asked for weapons to use against the royalists, who were supporting Imam [Muhammad] al-Badr, and they were received by the Soviet prime minister.

I: Can you describe what life was like for you in Soviet Union? What was it like as a Muslim to live in a non-Muslim country?

QI: My faith was very strong, and I had no problem as far as my belief in God was concerned. I have always attempted to gain knowledge and to seek after information, and I did the same thing in the Soviet Union. In contrast to some of my colleagues, I often spent a great deal of time in the Lenin Library, reading everything I could find.

I: You then returned to Yemen soon after the revolution. Did you join the government? what role did you take on?

QI: I only ended up staying in Yemen for a very short time after I returned from the Soviet Union. In 1963 I traveled back to Egypt, to take up a position as a cultural adviser to the Yemeni Embassy in Cairo.²³ I spent most of my time in Cairo at *Dar al-Kutub*,

reading and writing. That is where I worked on *al-Amthal al-yamaniyyah*. In Egypt, I was also able to meet a number of important international scholars such as Ahmad Fakhri, Dr. Shawki Dayf, and Dr. Husayn al-Hamdani,²⁴ all of whom contributed a great deal to my intellectual development.

I: Did you have any political role in Egypt at this time?

QI: I did not participate in any political activities in Egypt.

I: Can you talk for a moment about the other Yemenis who were in Cairo during the civil war in Yemen?

QI: There were a number of Yemenis in Cairo at this time, from students and leaders to visitors and patients in hospitals. People differed in their reactions to the war. The republicans and their supporters were very happy, while the royalists were not, and still others fell in between the two.

I: What were your feelings about the Egyptian military presence in Yemen during the civil war?

QI: I felt that in the first stage of the revolution it was extremely important and even necessary to have the benefit of Egyptian assistance. Egypt played a very important role in the success of the revolution. There were a number of opportunities to kill the revolution, but that never happened thanks in large part to the Egyptian presence in Yemen. Later on, in 1966 and 1967, I wished the Egyptians would give more weapons so that we might better defend ourselves.

I: At some point during the war you returned to Yemen and took up the position as Minister of Information for the Yemeni government, correct?

QI: Yes, I returned to Yemen some time in 1968, I believe.²⁵ My role was essentially to announce republican victories, and to welcome and host friends and brothers such as visiting delegation from other countries. But there were not a great many foreign reporters in the country at this time. I was Minister of Information until May 1969, I believe it was.

I: Can you tell us a few of what must be many memories of the revolution?

QI: Yes, the first was that all the people loved Yemen, and we were all working towards one goal. I remember that under the Imam punishment was extremely strict. The revolution changed that. My memories of the revolution are beautiful memories. But some good things existed under the Imam. For example, people were able to save money.

I: What did you do after you ended your time as the Minister of Information?

QI: Well, initially President al-Iryani asked me to serve as Yemen's ambassador to Ethiopia. Yes, I think it was Ethiopia. But I turned him down. I did not want to leave Yemen, after having spent so much time in foreign countries; I wanted to stay in Yemen. I eventually told him that I would like to establish an institution to preserve and collect the intellectual treasures of Yemen such as manuscripts, cultural artifacts and antiquities. The government later issued a decree establishing this institution to collect manuscripts and antiquities.

I: You started this institute?

QI: Yes, *Dar al-Kutub*. The idea was modeled on the one I had visited in Egypt, but it was eventually established as part of the General Organization for Antiquities and Libraries.²⁶ I wanted to do something like this to collect and preserve Yemen's rich heritage. I was the president of GOAL from March 1969 until 1990. I did not ask for the position but it was given to me since I had established the organization.

I: Can you tell us some of the things that you oversaw during your tenure as the director?

QI: Besides collecting and organizing a number of private libraries into one big library, I was able to bring in a number of foreign researchers to work on subjects that were important to Yemen.²⁷ I was also able to buy 3,000 books for the Great Mosque. We were also able to save a number of very early Qur'anic manuscripts. These are extremely important works from the first century of the *hijrah*.²⁸ I was also able to transfer Imam Yahya's library, known as *Dar al-Sa'adah*, to the Great Mosque, and also Imam Ahmad's library from Hajjah.

I: I would like to talk a bit about all the books you have written. When did you find the time to write during your extremely busy life?

QI: I did most of my writing when I was the director of the institute. During my life I have benefited a great deal from libraries and from the scholarly personalities that I have met. For instance, while I was in the United States²⁹ I made a number of photocopies at the Library of Congress. I have used the books that I have read as a guide and a reference to my own work.

I: Many of your books, such as *al-Amthal al-yamaniyyah*, are very extensive. Can you mention some of the work that goes into a book like that?

QI: Yes, *al-Amthal al-yamaniyyah* was the first book to compare Yemeni proverbs and sayings with those in Syria, Egypt, Iraq and other Arab countries. After the book was published some friends recommended that I limit my writings to Yemeni proverbs only, and not deal at all with those of other countries. I was able to do this in a later book, in which I focused solely on Yemeni proverbs and their origins. The book turned out to be a two-volume work over 1,000 pages long. After that I began to work on subjects like the language, customs, traditions and history of Yemen.

I: What about the book you wrote on the history of your family? Where did you get the idea from?

QI: The idea of writing a book about my family came to my mind after I read other books of family histories such as the one on the al-Iryani family.³⁰

I: You recently won a prestigious award for your scholarly work. Does this, in your mind, justify what you have chosen to do with your life?

QI: The prize from Turkey³¹ was very satisfying and important to me as a scholar since it came from an Islamic organization.

I: What are you currently working on? What direction is your research taking?

QI: I am working on a great many things, and some I hope to publish in the future, possibly something on the Rasulid dynasty in Yemen.

I: Do you think your children or grandchildren will follow in your footsteps of becoming a scholar?

QI: My sons and grandsons are many things, each with their own interests. But I am sure some of them will be scholars.

I: I noticed that you wrote the article on your brother Muhammad that appeared in *The Encyclopedia of Yemen* published by al-'Afif Foundation. Is there a reason that the encyclopedia does not include an article about you?

QI: Yes, there is a reason: the encyclopedia is only about people who have died; living people do not have entries.

I: How would you like people in Yemen to remember you after you have passed away?

QI: I will leave that for those who remember.

I: Thank you.

QI: Thank you.

Notes

* Kamal al-Hijri is currently an education consultant with GTZ in Sana'a; he held an AIYS fellowship (2004) for a study on popular poetry, and he has collaborated with several AIYS members in their research. Gregory Johnson is a graduate student at the University of Arizona, working on a thesis about the 70-day siege of Sana'a; he was an IIE Fulbright fellow (2003-4) and AIYS research fellow (2005) in Yemen. Dr. Christopher Edens (AIYS resident director in Sana'a) edited the text of the interview and wrote the footnotes.

¹ The "elementary" school for traditional Qur'anic instruction, in this case state-funded; the young Isma'il studied Qur'an and also arithmetic.

² The *madrakah al-shamsiyyah* was built in 1540 by Imam Sharaf al-Din Yahya (d. 1558), who is best remembered for his resistance to the first Ottoman invasion of Yemen; the minaret, ablution facilities, well, and student "dormitory" were later additions. In interviews for a recently published biography, qadi Isma'il said that he attended classes at the Madrasah al-Shamsiyyah and at the 'Amr mosque on different days during the same period and he also described the school routine (see Ibrahim Bajis 'Abd al-Majid al-Maqdasi, 2005, *Isma'il bin 'Ali al-Akwa'*, *'allah al-Yaman wa-mu'arrikhu-ha*, Damascus, p. 23).

³ ‘Ali b. Husayn b. Ahmad al-Akwa’ (1863-1944), a judge and administrator of *awqaf* in Dhamar, Ibb and Rada’.

⁴ Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Akwa’ b. Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Huwali, a native of Sana’a who moved to al-Shaharah in the 11th century CE, during Sulayhid times. Muhammad b. Ibrahim belonged to a branch of the Dhi Huwal, of Himyarite roots; the Yu’firid dynasty that ruled sections of the highlands during the 9th-10th century CE was another branch of the Dhi Huwal. Although qadi Isma’il does not typically sign his publications as “al-Huwali,” his brother (see n. 5) did. The word *k*’ (pl. *akwa*’) means “angle; bend, curve” (in a pipe, road, etc.), but also elbow and wristbone.

⁵ Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Akwa’ (1903-1999) was trained in traditional Islamic jurisprudence, but he also received exposure to Muslim modernists (Muhammad ‘Abduh, Muhammad Rashid Rida, and others). Early in his career, in the mid-1920s, Muhammad al-Akwa’ succeeded his father as teacher in Ribat al-Ghaythi in the village of al-Ma’ayin on the outskirts of Ibb; he introduced the Arab modernists to his students’ readings. During the 1940s he was jailed several times for his political activities (see n. 9). After his release from prison in 1955 he was a *nahiyah* (“county”) judge in the Imamate administration. Following the 1962 revolution, qadi Muhammad served as minister of justice, of *awqaf*, and information in three republican governments between 1963 and 1966. In addition to these public activities, Muhammad al-Akwa’ was a historian of high repute: he edited the four surviving volumes of al-Hasan b. Ahmad al-Hamdani’s *al-Iklil* (1963-1985) and his *Sifah al-jazirah al-‘arab* (1974), ‘Umarah b. ‘Ali al-Hakimi’s *al-mufid fi akhbar San’a’ wa-Zabid* (1967), ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Ali al-Dayba’s *qarrah al-‘uyun fi akhbar al-Yaman al-maymun* (1977), ‘Ali b. al-Hasan al-Khazraji’s *al-‘uqud al-lu’lu’iyyah* (1981), Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Janadi’s *al-suluk fi tabiqat al-‘ulima’ wa-l-muluk* (1983-1989) and other writers; he composed or compiled other works such as *al-watha’iq al-siyasiyyah al-yamaniyyah*, *al-Yaman al-khudra’ mihd al-hidarrah*, and *safnah min tarikh al-Yaman al-ijtima’i* (his memoirs in three volumes).

⁶ Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905), Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and Shakib Arsalan (1869-1946) were three noted participants of the “Arab awakening,” whose writings debated the relationship between religion and “progress” in the context of European domination of the time. Muhammad Rashid Rida edited *al-Manar*, a journal influential both in Imamate Yemen and in southern Yemen, while Shakib Arsalan visited Yemen during the 1930s and, more famously, proposed that Imam Yahya assume the caliphate in the early 1920s.

⁷ Hasan b. Zayd b. ‘Ali al-Daylami (1894-1980), trained partly in Sana’a (his father later was judge in the Imam’s court of appeal in Sana’a), was but one of the teachers whom qadi Isma’il lists in printed accounts of his education (e.g. pp. 175-6 in his *tarikh i’lam al-Akwa’*, 1990). Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Warith (1911-1940) was born in

Dhamar and spent part of his youth in Yarim. After teaching in Dhamar for several years, in 1937 he went to Sana’a at Imam Yahya’s invitation, to be one of the four participants in the Imam’s “History Committee.” In addition he edited the mildly progressive but short-lived (1938-1941) literary monthly *al-Hikmah*. He was yet another prominent Yemeni intellectual influenced by the writings of the “Arab awakening.” Qadi Isma’il provides a biographical sketch of al-Daylami and al-Warith in his *al-madaris al-islamiyyah* (1980, p. 389 and pp. 391-92 respectively).

⁸ ‘Abdallah ‘Ali al-Shajani (1919-1993), a student of al-Warith who accompanied the latter to Sana’a, was a noted poet and occasional participant in the mildly political *barid al-adabi* group; the latter was a “literary correspondence circle” active in the mid-1940s. In this context, Hafiz is Muhammad Hafiz Ibrahim (c. 1870-1932), the widely-read Egyptian associate of Muhammad ‘Abduh (see n. 6), whose innovative poetry addressed political and social issues. His *Diwan*, published posthumously in 1937, circulated in Yemen and was quoted by e.g. the *barid al-adabi* participants (see, e.g. p. 272 of Sayyid Mustafa Salim, *al-barid al-adabi*, 1999).

⁹ Muhammad al-Akwa’ formed the *jam’iyyah al-islah*, literally “reform society,” in 1944, following the flight to Aden of al-Zubayri and Nu’mān. Other prominent members of this group included ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Iryani, Ibrahim al-Ba’dani, and Muhammad Sabrah. Both the al-Akwa’ brothers had also participated in al-Zubayri’s group *shabab al-amr bi-l-ma’ruf wa-l-nahi ‘an al-munkar*, a branch of which had formed in Ibb in 1941; the two groups had many members in common. The new group had links with the Aden-based “Free Yemeni Party,” and the latter assisted in printing the new group’s pamphlet *Barnamij al-islah*, copies of which Isma’il al-Akwa’ carried to Sana’a. As qadi Isma’il later relates, he and the other members of the *jam’iyyah al-islah* were all arrested later in 1944, but he does not explicitly mention the brief detention of various members of *shabab al-amr* in 1942, including both of the al-Akwa’ brothers (see p. 58 of L. Douglas, *The Free Yemeni Movement 1935-1962*, 1987). During his time in prison, qadi Isma’il received the Imam’s hospitality in Dhamar, Sana’a, al-Rawdah, Ta’izz and Hajjah, and during these movements from prison to prison the qadi enjoyed his first car ride; see al-Maqdasi’s biography, pp. 42-48.

¹⁰ Two opposition newspapers printed in Aden. *Sawt al-Yaman* (The Voice of Yemen) was a weekly published 1946-1948 by the Great Yemen Association, which al-Zubayri and Nu’mān had founded after fleeing to Aden in 1944. *Fatat al-Jazirah* (Youth of the [Arabian] Peninsula) was the first Arabic language newspaper (1940-1967) in British Aden; although basically conservative regarding local affairs, its editor Muhammad Luqman, whose son and subsequent editor was educated at AUC during the 1930s, encouraged reform in Imamate Yemen.

¹¹ ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yahya al-Iryani (1910-1998) had been

a member of both *shabab al-amr* and *jam'iyyah al-islam* (see n. 9) and later participated in the first republican governments of the 1960s and eventually was "president" 1967-1974. The Imam arrested many relatives of Ahmad Nu'man in 1944, and Ahmad Muhammad Nu'man (1909-1996) himself, the close collaborator of Muhammad al-Zubayri in the Free Yemeni movement, was detained in 1948. 'Abdallah Yahya al-Sallal (1917-1994), a member of the first military training mission to Iraq (1935-37), later headed the first republican governments during the civil war of the 1960s. Hasan Husayn al-'Amri (1916-1989), also a member of the first military training mission to Iraq, was the minister of communications during the first republican governments (he had been a clerk in the Imam's ministry of communications), and then head of the government during much of the period 1965 through 1971, including the period when qadi Isma'il was minister of information). Ahmad Husayn al-Marwani (1920-2001), yet another member of the first military training mission to Iraq, was active in reformist movements of the 1940s, for which he was jailed on several occasions. He served in half of the first sixteen republican governments during the 1960s as minister of information, education, or *awqaf*, and then was ambassador to Iraq and elsewhere during the 1970s and 1980s; he also was the first president of the Yemen Center for Studies and Research.

¹² While in prison Muhammad al-Akwa' began preparing editions of al-Hamdani's *al-Iklil* and 'Umarah b. 'Ali al-Hakimi's poetry.

¹³ Qadi Isma'il is here glossing a more complicated history: both the al-Akwa' brothers were in fact jailed twice during this period, the first time for several years following their arrest in 1944, and then again in the general round-up following the failed "constitutional revolution" of February-March 1948. Isma'il was released in 1950 (having passed a total of three or four years in prison) but Muhammad al-Akwa' remained in prison until the final release in 1955 of the prisoners detained in 1948.

¹⁴ Muhammad Mahmud al-Zubayri (1911-1965; many publications give his birth year as 1919, but an alternative older date is cited here to give him time for education and appointment as an Imamate functionary in Ta'izz during the late 1930s), one of the leaders of the Free Yemeni movement, noted polemicist and poet. He spent nearly two decades of his life in exile in Aden, Pakistan, and Egypt, returning to Yemen only after the September 1962 revolution, but he soon grew unhappy with the direction that the new government was taking. Al-Zubayri was assassinated in 1965 while attempting to rally support for his own vision of Yemen's future.

¹⁵ While in Aden, qadi Isma'il participated in the activities of the Yemeni Union (*al-ittihad al-yamani*), which formed in 1952; he also wrote, under a pseudonym, for the reformist newspaper *al-Fudul* ("the remainder"), which existed between 1948 and 1953. The Yemeni Union had strong connections with shaykh 'Abdallah al-Hakimi and the

Yemeni community in Cardiff, and also established a branch in Cairo led by Muhammad al-Zubayri beginning in 1953. The British authorities in Aden had refused al-Zubayri refuge following the failure of the 1948 revolution, and he went first to Pakistan and then, soon after the 1952 revolution in Egypt, to Cairo.

¹⁶ *Dar al-'ulum* ("the house of sciences/knowledge") was founded in 1872 as part of al-Azhar for more western-style instruction. In 1946 it became a faculty in the University of Cairo (then King Fu'ad University). In published autobiographical notes (p. 186 in *Tarikh i'lam al-al-Akwa'*, 1990), qadi Isma'il writes that he initially entered *Dar al-'ulum* to study for a certificate, but withdrew after a year in order to devote his time in support of Muhammad al-Zubayri; the latter was then struggling, unsuccessfully, to prevent an ideological split within the Yemeni Union in Cairo.

¹⁷ Free Yemenis, *al-ahrar*, is a general term applied to the various opposition groups that formed and dissolved during the 1940s and 1950s both inside and outside Imamate Yemen. Only the short-lived "Free Yemeni Party" (*hizb al-ahrar al-yamaniyyin*) of the mid-1940s actually carried this name.

¹⁸ In 1947 the Imamate government began sending groups of young men to Egypt (the first group went to Lebanon in 1947, but were soon moved to Egypt) and then elsewhere for education; other young men made their own way out of Yemen for a similar purpose; see R. D. Burrowes, *The Famous Forty and their Companions: North Yemen's First-Generation Modernists and Educational Emigrants*, *Middle East Journal* vol 59 (2005), pp. 81-97. Qadi Isma'il here refers to a group with a Syrian stipend, about whom little is published. Many "educational emigrants" played important roles in the creation of republican institutions after their return to Yemen.

¹⁹ The Soviet Union had opened its legation in Ta'izz in January 1958. The Soviet Union and Imamate Yemen first entered a formal agreement in 1928, following the visit of a Soviet delegation to Sana'a. This basic agreement was renewed in 1955, soon followed by others concerning, e.g. commercial relations, and the crown prince al-Badr Muhammad visited the Soviet Union in 1956 to strengthen relations and to seek Soviet manufacturing and training projects, and Soviet military aid. During the late 1950s, the Soviets built a deep-water port in al-Hudaydah, supplied Yemen with modern armaments including tanks and airplanes, and launched several medical and other projects. Ahmad al-Amri became *chargé d'affaires* in the Moscow embassy.

²⁰ Qadi Isma'il neglects to mention that on his way home from Moscow he visited Germany, France, Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, and Italy. He is in fact extremely well-traveled outside the Arab world, having visited many European countries (both west and east), as well as China, Cuba, the US, and various countries in southeast Asia and east Africa

(summarized in al-Maqdasi's biography, *op. cit.*, 2005, pp. 59-61).

²¹ The six principles of the revolution, still printed on the front page of each issue of official newspapers such as *al-Thawrah* ("the revolution") and *al-Jumhuriyyah* ("the republic"), are:

1. liberation from despotism and imperialism, establishment of republican justice, and elimination of class distinctions;
2. establishment of a national army to protect the country and the gains of the revolution;
3. improvement of the economic, social, political, and cultural condition of the people;
4. creation of a democratic society, the laws of which are based on the true spirit of Islam;
5. striving for national unity within the framework of Arab unity; and
6. affirmation of Yemen's existing covenants with the UN and with international organizations, adherence to the principles of non-alignment, and of peaceful co-existence among nations.

²² Muhammad Qa'id Sayf attended school in Aden and then the Military Academy in Cairo during the 1950s; he was minister of information and then of military affairs in the second republican government, and directed the office for presidential affairs in several other governments during the mid-1960s. Salih al-Ashwal was also a military officer, and served at the ministerial level in several republican governments during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

²³ Here again qadi Isma'il omits some details. In published biographical interviews (al-Maqdasi, 2005, *op. cit.*, p. 52), the qadi states that he was the cultural advisor in Cairo only briefly (he did not like the position, in which the difficulties of Yemeni students demanded constant attention, and so he spent much of the time at home working on *al-Anthal al-yamaniyyah*). In 1964 or 1965 he returned to Sana'a, to work in the Foreign Ministry where he rose to the rank of assistant deputy minister. He was then appointed as a roving ambassador, and returned to Egypt among other countries; he was in Egypt after the June 1967 war, and remained there until his return to Sana'a the following year.

²⁴ Ahmad Fakhri (1905-1973), an Egyptian archaeologist who wrote *An Archaeological Journey to the Yemen* (1951-2) about his 1947 visit to Yemen, where he arrived in the company of Fudayl al-Wartalani, the Muslim Brother involved in the "constitutional revolution" of 1948. Shawqi Dayf is an Egyptian intellectual historian and literary critic whose multi-volume *History of Arab Literature (tarikh al-adab al-'arabi; 1960-1973, Cairo)* addresses the social and political context of pre-Islamic through Abbasid literature. Husayn b. Fayd Allah al-Hamdani (1901-1962), a member of the Tayyibi Isma'ili community in India with Yemeni ancestry, was an historian trained at the University of London and specialized in Fatimid history; while many of his early writings were in English, his best remembered work is *The Sulayhids and the Fatimid Movement in Yemen (al-*

sulayhiyyun wa-l-harikah al-fatimiyyah fi al-yaman; 1955, Cairo), in Arabic. His son Abbas Hamdani, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, is a former president of AIYS.

²⁵ In published autobiographical notes (p. 187 in *Tarikh i'lam al-Akwa'*, 1990), qadi Isma'il states that he returned to Yemen in August 1968, and was then named Minister of Information in the new Hasan al-'Amri cabinet. This government, the fourteenth since September 1962, dissolved in April 1969.

²⁶ As its responsibilities evolved, GOAL became the General Organization for Antiquities, Museums and Manuscripts, and recently the General Organization for Antiquities and Museums. Among its various responsibilities, the organization issues research permits to foreign archaeological teams and monitors their field work. For this reason qadi Isma'il is well-known to the first generation of North American archaeologists in Yemen.

²⁷ Archaeological fieldwork tentatively began in the mid-1970s, and has accelerated since then with increasing international as well as Yemeni participation. During the second half of the 1970s qadi Isma'il also brought in foreign consultants to help organize the collections and exhibitions in the National Museum in Sana'a and also in several local museums (e.g. at Zafar, near Yarim). Dr. Selma al-Radi was among these consultants, and her recently completed project to restore the 'Amiriyyah Madrasah in Rada' began in 1983 with qadi Isma'il's urging and encouragement.

²⁸ When, in 1972, repairs were undertaken on the western portico of the Great Mosque in Sana'a, workmen found a cache of 15,000 fragments of parchment manuscripts, almost all of which are from copies of the Qur'an that collectively date to the first four or five centuries AH. The manuscripts were conserved by a German project during the 1980s and are currently housed in the Dar al-Makhtutat ("House of Manuscripts") just outside the Great Mosque.

²⁹ Qadi Isma'il visited Washington, DC in 1979 following an official invitation; he was in the US for a month and visited several states (see al-Maqdasi's biography, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 61).

³⁰ Qadi Isma'il presumably refers here to *subhah al-mirjan fi tarajim 'ulama' iryan*, written by Hasan b. Ahmad al-Iryani (1899-1968). In the book about his own family (*tarikh i'lam al-Akwa'*, 1990), qadi Isma'il mentions other examples of family histories composed as early as the 14th century CE. These histories, including that of the al-Akwa' family, take the form of biographical dictionaries of prominent men, in which the entries are arranged alphabetically by first name.

³¹ The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), based in Istanbul, awarded this prize to qadi Isma'il for excellence in research.



Stations of Bewilderment

A Poem by Ahmad al-'Awadi
Translated by Lucine Taminian



How can I obtain a water-colored language to transcend meaning and experience, the details of the final surprise? In the evening of the world serenity, I saw dusk dangling or was it her thick braids? The brick redness or the city's lips. The lemon savor at the first call for the glorification of God, the beginning of morning miniature in the markets. The voices of birds, of women angels. The rustle of mulberry trees hidden in her alleys. The features of plaster scribbled between her horizon and the earth, strings adjusted for singing. The integrity of noon's gesture, the middle-sky clouds. The chanting of times retreating to their hidden places of origin.

Wherever you turn your gaze, you get into the planes of divine manifestation. From the script of passionate love and interpretation emerges the Nun, al-Nuhas Caravansary, a horizon of dreams, a nymph of stones, of thresholds and rhyming beams. The Qalis Hole, the mole on her soft cheeks or sky's reprehension. The hoofs of destiny form men's countenance. Noah, the incarnation of travels—Oh You, the God's prophet—where is the end of the flood? Did the ark land between the bow of Nun and the city's adorned hand? Here, the details of creation began. Thousands of windows open to the world. A door made of the poem's gold.

Who has seen the earth's affection concealed in a stone? To God's glory, oh, her compressed structure; oh this horizon of brilliance. Whoever made bricks has captured childhood, the cookie of its dreams, the clue to talismans and amazement. The purity of meaning. Time's shadow on vision's hands. Unseen angels. The source of divine support. The heart's ink has dried up. Ascend to her *mafarij* and arches. Her lowest sky is me. The source of divine support, I said: Oh God! How can the letters' flames prevent me from ascending to see what is unseen? To talk to the brick in its retreat on the twentieth night? Oh you, the source of divine support! Bestow on me a realm where I can craft the worries of the poem. Grant me the legend of

meters. Let me join al-Khalil's caravan. A ringing passion has seized me. I, who am experiencing the wavering state, came driven by my passion and vanished between the poem and the city. The most beautiful name is al-Nuhas caravansary, and the most beautiful girl is the city's facade.

The clouds of death passed by. Swarms of locusts. Stones of baked clay. The war's gunpowder. The earth's hunger ended. The city has not died. She recited her prayers gaudily. Her face, kneaded with piety, smiled. She ascended the throne of affection and supplication. She defies explanation. Her veil is God's horizon. She gradually ascends from the initial station of surprise to annihilation in His signs. She is about to converse intimately with God. The spirit's talk in its major travels. The pebbles of God's glorification. The names of the city are innumerable. As if her stature—the decorated horizon—deprives every talent its sphere for imagination and speech.

People are indignant, prepare whatever available of self-serenity. Then let your innocent insight wander twice. You'll see the city prostrating under God's throne, she shines and bestows on things the secrets of sacrifice and purity. Her visionary talk is the remnant of revelation. The secret of her buildings' uniqueness. The stones' ambiguity leading to the station of ecstasy: between awe and anticipation. Her character [is embodied] in water. Throw your rod in the city—the land of God—it swallows instantly the dust save herself.

The eyes' pupil. Her concealed earth. The jewel of annihilation. My beloved neglect to recollect the city. I said the ruby of love wanes and the city's ruby is never belittled. A golden wreath of thousand years. Whoever touches her approaches madness, ascending gradually to passionate love. How did our names get scattered in the wind? How are we going to gather the names? Who can put an end to the longevity of worries, the harshness of fever and the sinking of

seasons into oblivion? Who will decorate the names? You bestowed eternity on the Yemenis in their travels. We have our time and you have the space as your times. She is more magnificent than birds' feathers. A lover of God. Palms on the kingdom's shores. God's ark. From her stones, secrets set sail between the pupils of the eyes.

I said I love the sea the languages are weary of me, things blamed my memory and God's horizon threatened me with plague. How you love blue water imprisoned in its sorrow. Your hands touched the city, fondled her hair locks. You whispered to her. You'll have fever if you leave her. You would die if the city cried, or turned her face towards the East. My morning besieges me with reproof and frowns. I say: Oh God! I am a unique lover, I wanted to taste names. All save the city is salty. I will say: give me the dreams' carpet I'll spread it and sleep. The city's feet are like flowers. Give me the dreams' carpet, the city's waist is like al-Buraq. You will see if you pray in her temple. And read respectfully the Books' first verse.

Ahmad al-Alawi is a young Yemeni poet known for his Sufi poems, such as the poem above, from his collection Stations of Bewilderment (Maqamat al-Dahsha. 1999. Azmina: Amman).

Born in a small village in al-Bayda, the home of his semi-nomadic tribe, he moved to Sana'a to live with his uncle when he was six years old. Ahmad spent his childhood and youth moving between his village, known for its oral poetic traditions, and Sana'a, where modern poetic genres dominated the poetic scene. Ahmad came to master both, and he composes in the two genres that represent two distinct social worlds.

Ahmad rose to fame as a modern poet with the publication of his first collection I Have a Desire to Cry, which went into a second edition within months of its publication in 1994. Since then, Ahmad has gained fame in regional and international poetic circles, and he was invited to participate in annual poetry festivals held in Jordan, Iraq, and Norway. His poetry has been translated into English, French, and Norwegian.



Flowering plant, Yemen (photograph by Richard Ellis, 2004).



Activities of the General Organization for Antiquities and Museums, Yemen



Abdallah Bawazir, Chairman of GOAM, Sana'a, the Republic of Yemen

The General Organization of Antiquities and Museums, which I will call by its English abbreviation GOAM, is an agency within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. I have been the Chairman of GOAM since August 2004. I would like to talk today generally about GOAM, and more specifically about GOAM's role in archaeological research in Yemen.

The organization was established in 1969, just seven years after the 1962 Revolution, as the General Organization of Antiquities and Libraries, at the initiative of Qadi Isma'il al-Akwa' who headed the organization until 1990. He undertook many initiatives for the preservation of historic manuscripts, and for the protection and restoration of historic buildings; he encouraged foreign archaeological research in Yemen, and he also sought to strengthen Yemeni capacities in this field. Until 1990 GOAM was responsible for antiquities only in the Yemen Arab Republic, but in May 1990 the two Yemens unified as the Republic of Yemen, and the antiquities services of the two countries combined.

GOAM's responsibilities have changed somewhat during its history, especially with the creation of agencies responsible for specific aspects of historic preservation in Yemen, for example, the National Archives and the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities of Yemen. Even so, GOAM remains the basic agency responsible for the protection and management of Yemen's historic heritage, and we now have branches in each of the governorates to implement our activities more effectively.

In my remarks, I will focus on archaeology, and in keeping with the theme of this panel I will draw attention to North American participation in Yemeni archaeology. But first I will give you an overview of GOAM's activities.

As our name implies, museums are a major part of our work. The National Museum in Sana'a occupies buildings that include an Ottoman military hospital and

Imam Yahya's palace, Dar al-Sa'adah. The facilities received major up-grades during the past five years: the buildings themselves have been renovated, the exhibition spaces have been improved, new underground storage facilities have been installed, and facilities for support services have been expanded. The Museum has been closed for several years during these activities, and many of the Museum's most attractive artifacts have been on tour in Europe and most recently here in Washington D.C. (unfortunately the exhibition at the Freer closed in September). We are looking forward, however, to re-opening the National Museum in December 2005, and to welcoming home an important part of our national heritage.

The National Museum also contains facilities available for use by archaeological teams, as a base in which to work and to store their finds. The Yemeni-Italian Archaeological Center in the National Museum offers training courses to Yemeni colleagues in the conservation of different types of materials and the analysis of different kinds of artifacts. This is an invaluable form of international collaboration, and we hope that other countries see the Italian program as worthy of emulation.

Until recently, few other museums existed in Yemen outside Sana'a and these were usually facilities in the south, such as the museums in Aden, Mukalla, and Say'un. GOAM has recently launched a program of building new regional museums in other parts of the country and new facilities are now in places like Dhamar and Abyan. The US embassy in Sana'a is helping these efforts with its pledge to build a museum in Marib and we hope that this project gets under way soon. The regional museums also offer space for work and storage to archaeological projects and we encourage visiting researchers to take advantage of these facilities.

GOAM also has an important role in protecting manuscripts. Yemen is as rich in Islamic manuscripts

as it is in pre-Islamic antiquities. Manuscripts might be copies of the Qur'an or works of *fiqh* or *tafsir*; they might be histories of Yemen; they might be medical or mathematical works, or they might be administrative compilations and abstracts. Manuscripts are an irreplaceable part of Yemen's heritage and they inform us about our history and the roots of our traditions and our society. Qadi Isma'il, during his time as Chairman of GOAM, took special pains to preserve and protect manuscripts, and he established the House of Manuscripts for this purpose. Dar al-Makhtutat possesses a large collection of manuscripts of many different kinds, and in addition to conserving and cataloging its collection, the library allows scholars to consult and study manuscripts.

Other important manuscript collections are open to the scholarly public; they exist in other places around the country, such as in the Say'un Museum and the Ahqaf Library in Tarim. The National Archives in Sana'a are more focused on relatively recent government documents and newspapers. In addition, private collections throughout the country hold enormous numbers of manuscripts, and we know very little about the contents of such collections. Perhaps the lost volumes of al-Hamdani's *al-Iklil* still survive in private hands. The descendants of officials under the imams or the Ottomans hold inherited government records from times past, and these documents contain invaluable information, not only about administrative practices, but about the economic and social history of Yemen. They are in private hands, however, and we simply do not know what manuscripts still exist in the country. Attempts are being made to inventory the private collections in Zabid—the famous university town in Tihama—where it seems that almost every family possesses an inherited private library. We urgently need other projects to catalog libraries, and if possible, to make digital copies of manuscripts. We also need greater efforts to conserve manuscripts.

GOAM's most visible activities deal with the protection of Yemen's historic monuments and antiquities. Here we can consider several different kinds of activities.

Yemen contains a large number of historic buildings. Some of these buildings have great architectural or artistic merit, others have significant historical associations; many of them are in poor

condition and urgently need restoration. From its beginning, GOAM has seen meeting this need as one of our main responsibilities. For example, Qadi Isma'il al-Akwa made extensive repairs to the Great Mosque of Sana'a during the early 1970s, and he also encouraged the development of similar projects elsewhere in the Yemen Arab Republic. We find several examples of successful restoration projects in which foreign organizations played major roles. One of these is the French-led restoration of the Abbas Mosque in al-Asnaf in Khawlan, which last year won an Agha Khan prize. Another is restoration of the Madrasa Amiriya in Rada', a project completed this year that achieved spectacular results, culminating in the cleaning and conservation of the brilliant paintings inside the prayer hall. The project was a bilateral Yemeni-foreign effort, implemented by Yahya al-Nasiri and Selma al-Radi with funding from the Yemeni government and three different foreign governments; the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS) administered the foreign contributions to this project.

Restoration work is becoming more common, sometimes at GOAM's initiative, sometimes at the initiative of other national or international organizations. Recent restoration projects have included Queen Sayyidah Arwa's mosque in Jiblah, the al-Kathiri Palace in Say'un, which is now the regional museum in Wadi Hadramawt, the Ishshah Palace in Tarim, and the citadel in Zabid. The latter three projects had North American funding or administrative facilitation. Other important work is starting in Sana'a, Ibb, Taizz, Mukalla, and other historic places in Yemen.

A second kind of preservation activity concerns archaeological sites. Here the goals are similar but the technical issues are different. One condition of excavation permits for foreign archaeological missions is the protection of the sites by putting a fence around it and arranging for a guard; these measures are intended to prevent looting and other damage to the site once the excavation has drawn attention to it. Another condition of permits is the conservation of the architecture uncovered by excavations. Only a few foreign projects have reached the stage of conservation, but these have given spectacular results. The Italian team working at Baraqish has skillfully

restored the temple of Nakrah. The German Archaeological Institute completed its excavation in Marib at the Baran Temple with extensive conservation measures, and fitted the site with viewing platforms. We are looking forward to similar conservation of the magnificent architecture recently uncovered at the Awwam Temple.

A third kind of activity is the basic safeguarding of Yemen's antiquities. Looting of ancient sites is a serious and growing problem, especially in certain parts of the country, such as the Jawf and parts of Marib, where the looting is organized and systematic. The looters are looking for objects to sell inside Yemen or to smuggle across the border for sale. Many important objects have been lost in this way. The results are catastrophic. Without provenience, the objects themselves lose much of their scientific value. Yemen is denied part of its cultural heritage, which disappears into private collections or the international antiquities market. The sites themselves are destroyed. A similar if less destructive loss of manuscripts is a parallel problem.

We try to block these losses with several measures. GOAM representatives are stationed at airports, to look for artifacts being smuggled out of the country. The people caught sometimes have important objects, sometimes just souvenirs. The number of artifacts impounded at the Sana'a international airport runs over a thousand each year. We have also had some success in identifying the middlemen who buy artifacts from looters and then transport large collections out of the country. One recent case involved a foreigner who had 700 artifacts assembled in his house. Occasionally foreign governments assist in the return of stolen antiquities. Late last year the United States returned an alabaster funerary stele that had been stolen from the Aden Museum and then smuggled out of Yemen for sale.

The incentive to loot archaeological sites is economic; Yemeni art and artifacts command high prices on the international market. People sell manuscripts for the same reasons. GOAM has a policy of buying ancient art, artifacts, and manuscripts as a way to keep this heritage in Yemen. A committee evaluates the object and establishes a price that GOAM is prepared to pay. In this way, we have obtained a number of important archaeological

artifacts and manuscripts, but we do not have the means to buy everything, and sellers know that they can realize a higher profit by taking the risk of smuggling. So our heritage continues to move out of Yemen and into foreign hands. Despite our successes, the smuggling problem remains a serious one.

Late last year Prime Minister BaJammal and his Cabinet approved an initiative to create a National Inventory of Yemeni cultural heritage. GOAM participated in the preliminary planning for carrying out the initiative and we expect to play a major role in the future. Well before the proposal for an inventory, however, GOAM had already begun a national inventory of archaeological sites, arranged by the governorate and still on-going. The inventory integrates several kinds of information: historical sources, published studies of monuments or archaeological work, site lists from completed archaeological surveys, additional field visits, and so forth. In one case, an Italian team spent six months in Wadi Hadramawt and assembled a large data base of archaeological sites and monuments in an Autocad format. GOAM's inventory will greatly facilitate the national inventory effort and it will also be used to create an archaeological map of Yemen.

GOAM also conducts other kinds of archaeological fieldwork. We have a small research budget that allows GOAM archaeologists to carry out some surveys and to excavate sites. In recent years, GOAM archaeologists have made survey projects in places like southern Tihama, and they have excavated at al-Nakhlah al-Hamra' where early exploration had found the two statues now in the entry hall of the National Museum. Other excavations are producing very important work, for example at the pre-Islamic site at Hasamah in Lahj and at other places.

Yemeni archaeologists also participate in the field work of foreign missions, which by law must be accompanied by one or more GOAM representatives. Foreign archaeological projects are varied in nature, with some focused on prehistoric periods, and others on aspects of the South Arabian civilization. Islamic architecture also attracts considerable interest, but Islamic archaeology less so.

North American archaeologists have participated significantly in revealing and documenting Yemen's past, beginning with Wendell Phillips in the early

1950s. Four current projects are represented in the panel assembled here today. Joy McCorriston's project in Hadramawt is making fascinating, even revolutionary, discoveries about the neolithic period. Chris Edens and Krista Lewis represent different facets of the University of Chicago's survey and excavation program in Dhamar. If he had been able to attend, Abduh Uthman Ghalib would have presented recent results of the excavations at the Awwam Temple in Marib by the American Foundation for the Study of Man; the President of the Foundation, Marilyn Phillips Hodgson, is in the audience today. Our scheduled discussant Juris Zarins has conducted several seasons of research in al-Mahra.

Other North American projects are also worthy of mention. The Canadian team led by Ed Keall has done very important stratigraphic work inside the citadel of Zabid, and has made important prehistoric discoveries outside the city. Two other projects, one in Wadi Raghwan in Marib, the other on Soqotra, will soon start, and they promise to be very fruitful. We might also mention here the important work of Pamela Jerome, which is producing a comprehensive architectural documentation of the historic palaces in Tarim. Besides being numerous, American projects are generally good at publishing and making available their research results.

So the North American presence is strong in archaeological research in Yemen, particularly for the prehistoric period. But American involvement could easily be greater, to the benefit of both sides. Obtaining permission to do archeological field research is relatively simple in Yemen, and I would be happy to discuss the procedures with anyone who is interested after this panel session. Archaeology in Yemen has a brief history, at least compared to other countries in the region, and many important and significant discoveries remain to be made.

I encourage more American participation for somewhat self-serving reasons. GOAM bears many heavy responsibilities for protecting and conserving Yemen's cultural heritage. Yet our annual budget is not sufficient to achieve our mandated mission, and GOAM does not yet have the capacity in skilled personnel and institutional facilities to reach our policy goals. International cooperative projects are therefore essential to GOAM. I have already mentioned some

existing projects, for example the US funding of a museum in Marib, the Italian training programs at the National Museum, the multi-lateral efforts in the Amiriya Restoration Project, and so forth. Funding and other assistance for many of GOAM's activities, in fact, comes from many sources, including international agencies such as UNESCO, Yemeni agencies such as the Social Fund for Development in Sana'a, and individual governments. Just looking at current efforts, we might draw attention to several important projects:

- the Japanese government is funding the completion of the up-grades at the National Museum, and it is also equipping the new museum in Zabid;
- the World Bank is funding an Italian project at the National Museum for artifact registration and documentation, and it is also providing equipment and training for this effort;
- in a recent agreement with the Louvre, a team of French experts will assist in artifact conservation and museum displays; and
- another Italian project, funded by UNESCO, concerns documentation and conservation of manuscripts.

These projects are single-purpose and expensive, and each focuses on an important national problem or need.

Each foreign archaeological project in Yemen has the potential for making a different but equally important contribution. Fieldwork becomes a training opportunity for the GOAM archaeologists assigned to it, and I urge all the foreign projects to include a strong training component in the design of their projects. I would also urge the foreign projects to increase the number of Yemeni archaeologists in the fieldwork training. Foreign missions researching in Yemen have sometimes provided considerable additional assistance. I have already mentioned the Italian efforts in conservation and artifact analysis training. We hope that other projects can offer additional training opportunities for Yemeni students and professionals. Some foreign missions have arranged places for Yemenis in advanced university degree programs, notably in France, Germany, and Italy. I realize that the North American university system is different, and that these kinds of benefits cannot so easily be arranged. But North American projects can make a

significant contribution to the successful university application of Yemenis simply by supporting English language training of GOAM archaeologists.

In effect, I am suggesting that North American projects are in a position to invest in the skills, professionalism, and work standards that GOAM needs to carry out its duties. I am also suggesting that, over the long run, these investments benefit the projects just as much as GOAM, because the country's archaeological heritage is better protected and conserved, and GOAM representatives in projects make real contributions to the work.

Dr. Bawazir participated in an AIYS sponsored panel ("Archaeology in Yemen and Recent American Contributions") at the MESA convention in Washington D.C. on Tuesday, November 22, 2005.

Dr. Christopher M. Edens (Resident Director, AIYS) chaired the panel; the discussant for the panel was Dr. Juris Zarins (Southwest Missouri State University). Papers were delivered by Christopher Edens, Mohammad al-Nood, Joy McCorrison, Krista Lewis, and Abdallah Bawazir, who has kindly sent the text of his presentation for publication in this issue of Yemen Update.



Trainee at work on the conservation of the paintings in the prayer hall of the Amiriya in Rada, Yemen. CCA provided the conservation and training; the US Ambassador's Fund provided the funds for the training (photograph by Selma al Radi, 2005).

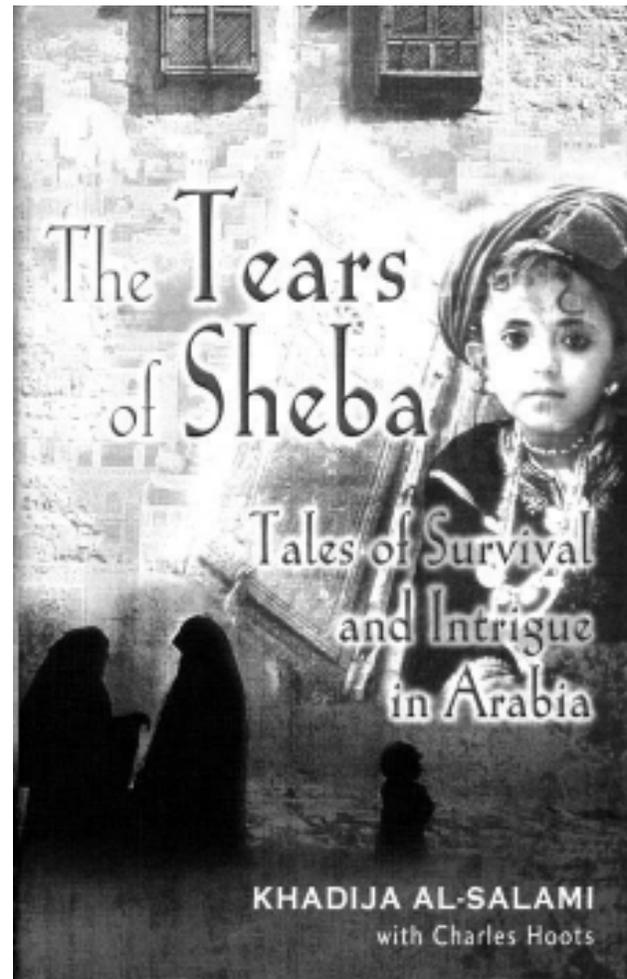
Yemen Update Reviews

The Tears of Sheba: Tales of Survival and Intrigue in Arabia, by Khadija Al-Salami with Charles Hoots
Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2003
ISBN #0-470-86725-6

Reviewed by Dr. Lucine Taminian

The Tears of Sheba tells the life history of three Yemeni women: grandmother Amina, her daughter Fatima, and her granddaughter Khadija al-Salami, narrated by the latter. Khadija's voice dominates the narrative, though the voice of her grandmother is heard when interviewed by the narrator. Al-Salami's narrative is woven against the background of tribal feuds, civil wars, political unrest, and violence. It sheds light on marriage, divorce, and family relations, exposing the power that males have over females, including deciding whom they marry and filing for a divorce on their behalf. Given the importance accorded to autobiography for the understanding of culture, personality, and society,¹ the book is essential for understanding the lives of Yemeni women during the last seven decades, and their struggle against the odds and patriarchal relations.

Through her narration, Al-Salami reveals her inner-self and portrays dramatic moments in her emotional life—expressing her feelings towards her parents, siblings, friends, and husband. Accordingly, *Tears of Sheba* constitutes a departure from Yemeni traditions of biographical writings that tend frequently to portray exemplary lives and conceal the private selves. It is consistent, however, with modern autobiographies and with autobiographical sketches written by modern Yemeni writers. For example, in his three-volume autobiography, al-Akwa' reveals his private self and openly discusses his sexual relations and the erotic poems that he recited to his wife in bed.² On the other hand, the testimonies of Yemeni female writers, situated within their experience in literary writing, portray only the literary aspect of their inner selves.³ In comparison to these autobiographies, *Tears of Sheba* is unique.



Tears of Sheba narrates the movement of the three women through space and time. This brings to mind Ghosh's description of an Egyptian village as a transit lounge where every man is a traveler.⁴ The same can be said about Yemen. Yemenis constantly move between their place of birth and other locations inside and outside Yemen. In moving, they change their attire and dialects, and oscillate between diverse worlds; the poets among them oscillate between different poetic discourses.⁵ Literature on movement and displacement focuses on male experiences of traveling, thus giving the false impression that women, like the famed Penelope, stay home waiting the return of their men. *Tears of Sheba* changes this false perception.

The narration starts with the al-Salami family's movement from Khawlan to Heima and then to Sana'a, tracing the "perpetual passage" (chapter seven) of the three women through time and space. It

recounts the “perpetual motion” that the grandmother experienced as a young child and as an adult, and her desire to end her travel and settle in Sana’a. It narrates al-Salami’s movement that takes her to “foreign” places that gave shape to her hybrid identity and somehow liberated her from patriarchal relations. *The Tears of Sheba* is about women’s complex experience of dwelling, moving, and their ways of sustaining connections with more than one place. It poses the question of family and identity, and how home is conceived and lived in relation to coming and going.

That said, the disturbing aspect of Al-Salami’s narrative is the framing of the three women’s lives with the life histories of three prominent Yemeni men whose life course intersects with theirs, giving the impression that women’s lives are worth narrating when told in conjunction with that of men. The title and jacket also frame the narrative, representing it falsely as that of exotic Yemeni women. The title invokes the legendary Queen of Sheba, and the jacket portrays the exotic queen, supposedly the author, looming over the shadows of a child and two women veiled from head to toe. It portrays Yemen as “a land straight from the Arabian Nights... in which proud Bedouins roam the desert,” thus underlining the widespread stereotypes about Yemen and Yemeni women.

Tears of Sheba provides insights into the socio-cultural changes that Yemen has experienced in the last seven decades and their impact on women’s lives and gender relations.

Notes

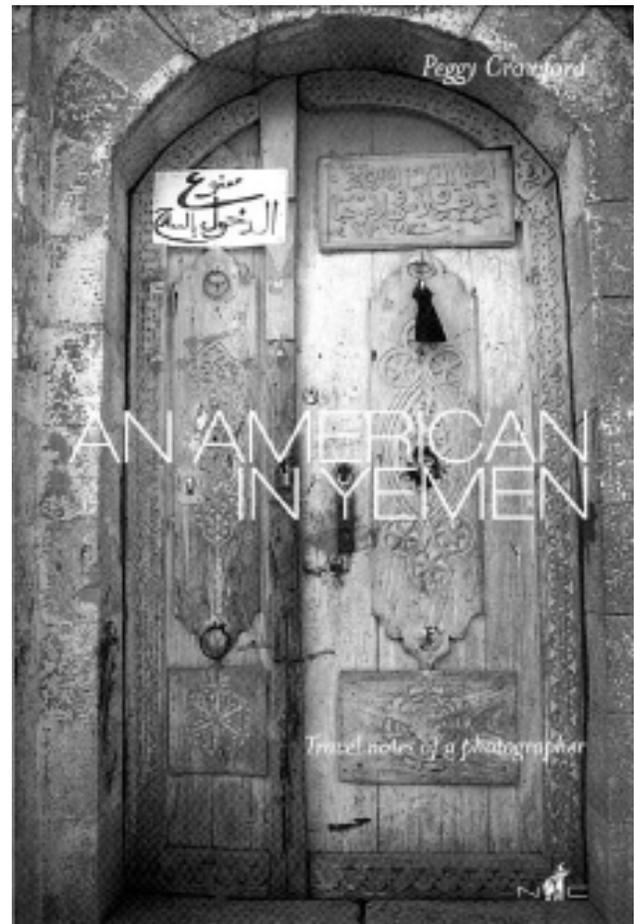
¹ Reynolds, Dwight. 2001. *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*. University of California Press.

² Al-Akwa’, Muhammad. 1991. *Safha min Tarikh al-Yamman al-Ijtima’i wa Qusat Hayati*. San’a’.

³ Sakr, Hatem. 2003. *Infijar al-Samt: al-Kitaba al-Nasawiyya fi al-Yaman*. San’a’.

⁴ Ghosh, Amitav. 1986. The Imams and the Indian. In *Granta*, 20. Quoted in Clifrod, James. 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Harvard University Press.

⁵ Taminian, Lucine. 2001. *Playing with Words: The Ethnography of Poetic Genres in Yemen*. A dissertation submitted to the Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.



An American in Yemen: Travel Notes of a Photographer, by Peggy Crawford
Paris, Éditions Nicolas Chaudun, 2005
ISBN #2-35039-007-1

Reviewed by Dr. Richard Ellis

This book is exactly what the sub-title says: travel notes of a photographer. Though it contains many spectacular photographs of Yemen and Yemenis, it is not a coffee-table book, nor a guide. The text gives fairly brief, episodic accounts of Ms. Crawford’s adventures in Yemen, and her observations on the people and places she visited. Her two major themes are the splendid architecture of Yemen, in danger of being replaced by modern materials unsuited to the climate and culture; and the kindness and hospitality of the people she met, with observations on the roles and situations of women.

Ms. Crawford first went to Yemen in 1985, in the company of a French friend who knew the country well. She has been back several times, most recently

in 2004. She was in her late 60s when she first went, and she found that being an elderly woman gave her entree to some venues that would have been more difficult for a younger woman, and impossible for a man. Many of the episodes in the book deal with the hospitality and friendliness displayed to her by Yemeni women, and sometimes also with the possibilities of crossed signals when dealing with a culture so different than one's own. As a photographer, she found that the openness of the women she met often ended when she brought out her camera. Many women, colorfully dressed in their homes, quickly put on the black, enveloping *sharshef* to be photographed, and the book in fact contains few photos of women, to avoid exposing them to shame if they should be seen. Most of the women she talked to, even those with university educations and those who came from the formerly-more-liberal South Yemen, said that they were perfectly comfortable with the *sharshef*, because it gave them a sense of who they were as Muslim and Yemeni women.

A large proportion of the photographs in the book are of traditional Yemeni architecture: the tall mud-brick houses with decorated windows, the bold painted designs on many buildings, the stained-glass and alabaster windows. Crawford expresses concern that many present-day builders and house-owners prefer the international prestige of concrete, in spite its poorer insulating properties, and its contrast with the traditions of the country.

Peggy Crawford's book, with its 54 striking photographs and its adventurous episodes, presents not an exhaustive, but a very interesting and attractive view of Yemen.

To order the English edition , shipped to addresses within the USA:

Contemporary Arts Center, CAC Shop

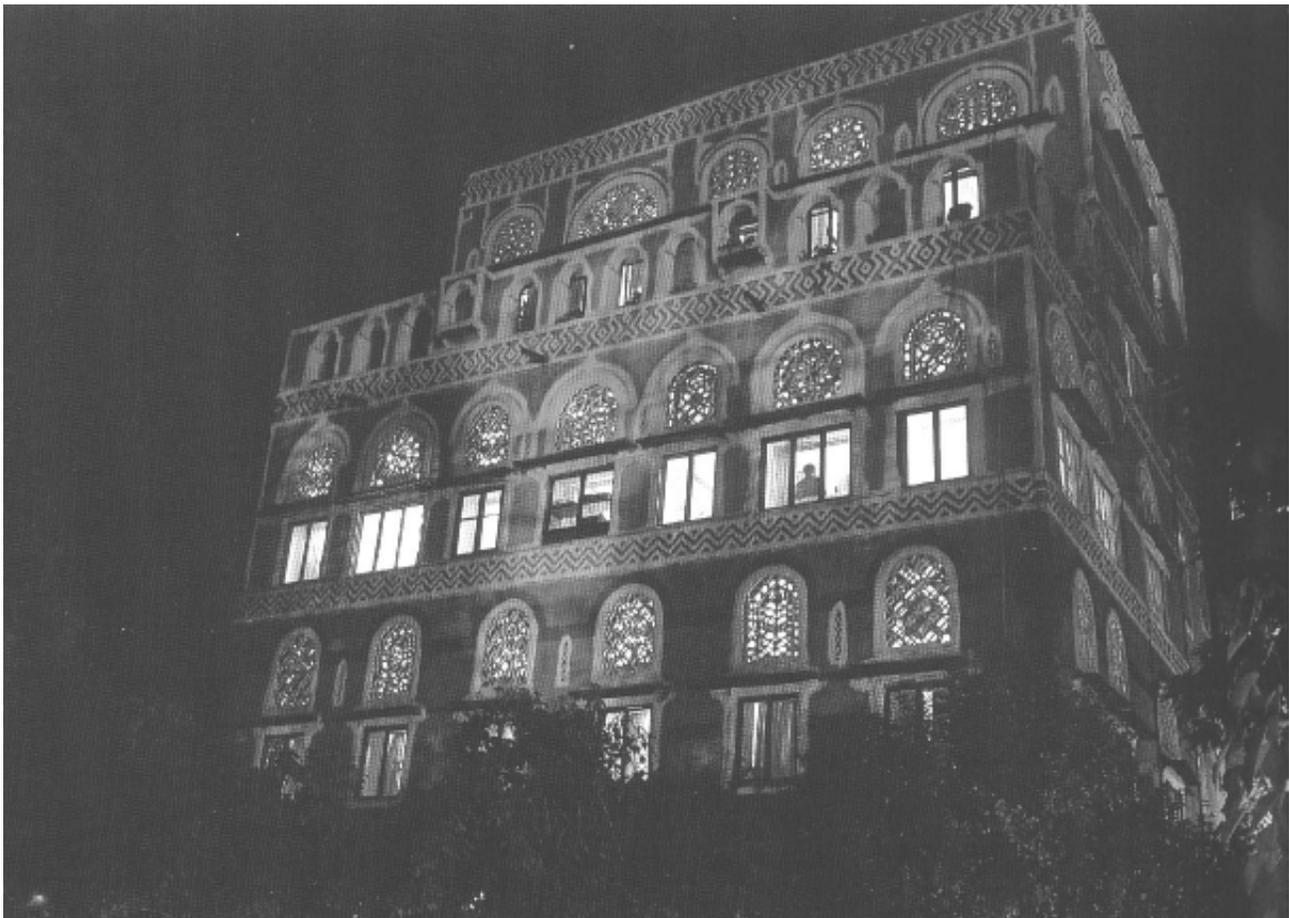
44 East Sixth Street

Cincinnati OH 45202

Phone: 513-345-8400.

For further information:

www.peggycrawfordphotography.com.



Beit al Halali, Former American Embassy (after the color photograph by P. Crawford, p. 156).

Fellowship Narratives - U.S. Citizens

Every year AIYS conducts a fellowship competition for US citizens. All fellows, upon the completion of their research or study in Yemen, submit a narrative report. We present here a small selection of narratives from past fellows of AIYS: Aja C. Bonsu, Carolyn Han, and Gregory D. Johnsen.

AIYS fellowships are made possible through funds from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Aja Cittrece Bonsu
Fellowship: Arabic Language Study
AIYS Fellow 2003 – 2004

Summer 2004

One of the strongest appeals of coming to Yemen was the opportunity that I would have to practice my spoken Arabic, more so than I had during my studies in the US or the time that I spent in Cairo, Egypt. My hopes were fulfilled; I rarely spoke English except with my colleagues at AIYS, and sometimes even we spoke Arabic to each other. Coming to Yemen was also an opportunity for me to experience life in another Arab country, supplementing both my education and previous travel experience in the region. Yemen was an incredible learning experience, not all of it enjoyable, but something that I would never give up.

I decided to enroll at the Yemen Language Center close to Midan Tahrir, not too far from AIYS. I didn't have much contact with other foreigners, other than at school and in the hostel, and so I felt that my life was integrated with actual Yemeni life. Living among the local community did wonders for my Arabic. Over the ten weeks of my stay in Sana'a I made a point of getting to know shopkeepers, juice boys, bakers, the men who worked at the laundry, and some of the children on the walk to YLC. This made me feel much more comfortable, as if I were a part of the community rather than a strange, suspicious foreigner. This became important to me because I was not always received in a friendly way by Yemenis.

Most Yemenis have not had extensive contact with foreigners, especially foreigners who look like me, an African-American with dreadlocks. After about two or three days, it became obvious that I needed to blend in more, so I purchased my first *abaya*, or *baltu* (a long overgarment), *hijab* (headscarf), and a *niqab* (face veil). When I arrived I

understood the need for modesty. I didn't realize, however, that it would be much harder for me to be accepted wearing modest Western clothing than it was for some of my more European-looking female colleagues. In my first two weeks I experimented with the *niqab*; it gave me the anonymity I needed to acclimate during this transition period. Then I settled on wearing the *hijab* and the *baltu*. But in general, being African or black in Yemen is not a desirable situation. I tried to understand the reasons for this phenomenon. Of course, there is resentment toward the Somali refugee population in Yemen and I felt the backlash; people assumed I was Somali. There is also a hierarchy in Yemen, in which Africans or those perceived as African are at the bottom. My skin tone, however, became more acceptable when it was discovered that I was American.

It helped me to discuss the issue with friends, both Yemeni and American. The friends that I made, made it possible for me to ignore the negative aspects of my experience and to enjoy Yemen to the fullest during the short time that I was there. On my first full day in Yemen, I met a wonderful family with whom I spent a lot of time. None of them spoke English, except for the daughter. I was lucky to be welcomed into the bosom of a typical Yemeni family; they gave me the opportunity to become very close to the women and to experience their daily lives. As an American woman, my status as the "third sex" enabled me to sit with the men of the family, to go to their house, sit, chew *qat*, talk, and watch television; this became a weekly habit for me. I went to the wedding of one of the daughters. I went to their village in the mountains of Ibb and stayed at their homestead for the weekend. I played chess with the kids, and they threw me a birthday party and gave me a farewell. They made me feel as if I were one of the family and I've made promises to visit them in the future. Spending time with them also provided me with a crash course in Sana'ani

Arabic. I only picked up a few phrases (despite being bombarded with the dialect), but my progress was amazing in speaking more comfortably and fluently in Modern Standard Arabic. This, along with my lessons at YLC, helped me to achieve the language goals that I had set for myself, and it has provided even more impetus for me to continue my language study.

I completed 200 hours of instruction at YLC: 5 hours a day for the first six weeks and then 2 hours a day for the remaining four weeks. I focused on completing the second book of *Al-Kitaab*, and also learning media terminology. The time that I spent in individual sessions was focused on discussing different aspects of Yemeni life and culture (in Arabic), and during the last four weeks of individual study I read and discussed Yemeni folktales.

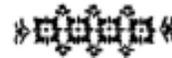
While in Yemen I was also able to contact the Forum for Civil Society (one of the focuses of my master's thesis); I had lunch with the Secretary General, Jamal al-Adami, and we discussed the goals of his organization, his group's involvement in Dr. An-Na'im's "Rights at Home" project, and his thoughts on An-Na'im and the project. Adami mentioned that the participants felt encouraged when they gathered with other like-minded individuals and discussed human rights issues and their struggles. From the initial group of participants, ISIM* chose certain individuals to receive further training, but the majority was left to accomplish the discussed goals on their own. I learned that although the ISIM project continues, Adami's group pulled out after about six months. Adami retains all the transcripts and tapes of the discussion sessions and meetings held between ISIM and the local leaders chosen to participate in the program. These records are currently in the office of the Forum for Civil Society.

It was unfortunately impossible for me to meet any of the women participants in the project during the short period of time that I was in Yemen. My initial research regarding this issue has shown that there is indeed much that can be gleaned from the information within those documents. Analyzing the records and then doing follow-up interviews with some of the participants, and with religious leaders, journalists, and lawyers, would shed light on the practicality of An-Na'im's project, vis-à-vis human rights reform, religion, and Islamic law.

*ISIM is the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World, which is headquartered in Leiden.

The "Rights at Home" project "focused on challenges and opportunities facing human rights activists in Muslim societies and communities." The ISIM sponsored seminar met in Yemen in the summer of 2003. (www.isim.nl)

At the time of her fellowship, Aja Bonsu was a graduate student in Middle East Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.



Carolyn Han
AIYS Fellow 2001-2002 (and 2000-2001)
Title: Two Children's Books: *Queen Arwa, The Little Sheba & Sufi Stories of Yemen*

"The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page." St. Augustine.

Summer 2002

Traveling to Yemen had added challenges this year; in Bangkok I was not allowed to board the Emirates flight. I was told that my Yemen visa was not in order, in fact, the official said, "It's been cancelled." There is little point in arguing with the airport staff—they would not relent. It was my first lesson in not taking things personally.

The following day I took a slow-moving taxi through Bangkok's congested streets to meet with Ahmad Salem Ba-Olayan, Consul for the Republic of Yemen. He took one glance at my passport and Yemeni visa and said, "I'll call the Emirates office." After another long taxi ride to the Emirates Airline office, where the director apologized and I was booked on a flight to Sana'a, which left three days later—I waited.

On May 25th I was thrilled to arrive in Sana'a. Met at the airport by Aumar, a familiar face and bright smile, I was taken to the AIYS hostel and headed for "my" room.

The next day Kamal Ali al-Hegri, my Yemeni

friend and translator with whom I have worked for three years, brought armloads of material on Queen Arwa. We spent the morning discussing how best to present her to children in the western world. Queen Arwa is little known outside Yemen, and many Yemenis do not know that she symbolizes Isma'ilism, a major branch of Shi'ism. We talked about the Sufi stories and what direction we wanted to go—there was a lot of work to do in a short period of time.

During the previous summer, Kamar Ali al-Hegri and I worked together on a collection of twenty-four Yemeni folktales for children, which was accepted at Amana Publications in March 2002. However, one of the tales did not meet editorial approval—it involved a story about *jinn*—the editor thought the reference might offend Muslims. I asked Kamal Ali al-Hegri if he could find a replacement story. A few days later he delivered a tale titled “Za’afaran’s Door,” and after writing and rewriting sent it as an e-mail attachment to Amana Publications.

Most of my time in Sana’a is spent writing in my room — sometimes I look out the window and realize that Yemen’s mountains are in the distance. I wonder to myself if I could do the same work in Hawaii, but I know that the inspiration I need and receive comes from the people, culture, and land. To do this work I must be in Yemen.

It always surprises me how much I accomplish in just a few weeks; this year I was able to complete two books and five stories — six counting “Za’afaran’s Door.” Although I sit for hours working on the stories, much of my writing comes effortlessly. The final paragraphs of *Queen Arwa: The Little Sheba* came as a gift. Another gift came from an old man in the Haraz Mountains, while walking from village to village he told stories about Queen Arwa as if she were alive today. In Yemen the past is always present. I was able to use one of his enchanted stories to make the manuscript even better—it shows the depth of Arwa’s intelligence.

During her lifetime Queen Arwa enlarged the Great Mosque in Sana’a; she had the east wing constructed. Because I was writing her story, it seemed reasonable that I would be allowed to go inside and photograph the ceiling of the mosque. Each wooden panel on the ceiling is painted with its own individual design. However, I could not get permission. Finally, I gave

Kamal Ali al-Hegri my camera and he photographed the inside of the Great Mosque.

Weeks later, a friend I’ve known for three years called and asked me to meet him on Friday morning. “Where are we going?” I asked.

“There is something you need to see,” he replied.

The following Friday the taxi dropped us in front of Bab al-Yemen. We walked through the *sug* and came to the entrance of the Great Mosque. “Follow me,” he said. I did. We spent the morning inside the mosque, he telling wonderful stories and me listening. Miracles happen in Yemen.

Sufism is the mystical side of Islam and Sufi stories are still told. But practicing Sufism today in Yemen is considered on the fringe of Islam, and unacceptable. It’s believed that only in the past—a long time ago—miracles happened. Nonetheless, we have collected fourteen (14) Sufi stories and hope to have them published. Dr. Steve Caton suggested that I find an Indian or Pakistani publisher. I will check this out. The manuscript, with a simple introduction and glossary, is ready to send to prospective publishers.

The “Queen Arwa” manuscript is almost finished and will be sent to thirteen (13) publishers who have favorably replied to my query letters. It is a long process—*Inshallah*—“Queen Arwa” will find a good home.

The five additional stories, I’m calling “Stories from the Mosque,” they are delightful and I’ll submit them to children’s magazines. This time in Sana’a I fed a no-name cat, and he inspired me to write a story titled “Abdul.” I’ve lost track of how many stories I collected—*Alhumdallah*.

My plan is to write short stories about my experiences—the magic that happens day after day. The stories I collect are embedded as threads in the fabric of a much larger tapestry. Weaving this together will take time.

During my short stay in Yemen, I was able to travel and photograph different places. This helps the artists to better illustrate the books. Amana Publications has one hundred and seventy-five (175) slides that I took on earlier trips to Yemen. The slides from this year will also be used when I give lectures on Yemen to the many civic organizations in Hawaii. I’m scheduled for the first presentation on September 12th at the University of Hawai’i-Hilo from 10:00 AM - noon.

While traveling I was able to gather more information, which also adds necessary details to make the books come alive. When I'm in Sana'a, The AIYS Library supplies me with resources and reference books to check facts and information. This time I used many books and I'm very grateful to AIYS for maintaining a library.

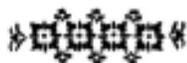
My time in Yemen went too quickly. *Inshallah*, I'll return again soon and continue my work. There are many books on Yemen that I would like to write—for children and adults. My time in Yemen fills me with creative ideas. Next summer I plan to ride/walk camels across the Ramlat as Sab'atayn (the fourteen sand dunes) from Marib to Shebwah and write about my inner journey. Then later, if the short journey agreed, I will travel across the ancient incense route—Marib to Tarim and south to Qana on the Arabian Sea.

Kamal Ali al-Hegri is gathering information on Ahmad ibn Alwan, a Yemeni Sufi and poet, and we hope to write his story and include Sufi poetry. It's just the beginning.

It has been an honor and privilege to receive the AIYS Fellowship for 2002, and I have done my best to live up to its high standards. My heartfelt thanks to everyone involved who has made this wonderful opportunity possible.

Carolyn Han has been an AIYS Fellow twice. She received an AIYS Fellowship for the 2000-2001 competition. Her project was titled "The Children's Book of Miracles: Sufi Stories of Yemen." The above narrative report reflects her experiences and thoughts during her most recent fellowship research, which took place in Sana'a, Yemen from May 25, 2002 through July 29, 2002. Carolyn Han is a writer and, until her recent retirement, a lecturer at Hawai'i Community College at Hilo.

Some of the results of her AIYS fellowships can be seen in her most recent book for children: Carolyn Han (ed.), From the Land of Sheba: Yemeni Folk Tales, Interlink Publishing Group, Inc. 2004. ISBN: 1566565715.



Gregory D. Johnsen

AIYS Fellow 2004-2005

Fellowship: Arabic language study and preliminary research on the Yemeni Civil War of 1962 - 1970.

August 2005

The AIYS Fellowship for 2005 allowed me to return to Yemen to study Arabic. Additionally, I was also able to use it to continue my research on the 1962-70 civil war in North Yemen, which I began in September 2003 as a Fulbright Fellow.

I decided to focus my research in Yemen on one particular aspect of the civil war, the siege of Sana'a, which lasted from November 1967 to February 1968. Consequently, both my work with my Arabic tutors and my interviews with participants of the civil war revolved around this 70-day period. I wanted to use my relatively short time in Yemen, roughly 10 weeks, to work on the siege because it will be the focus of my master's thesis this coming year in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona.

I arrived in Yemen on May 26th and returned to the US on August 12th. During my stay I resided at the AIYS hostel in Sana'a. Due to my previous experience in the country I was able to begin my research almost immediately after arriving in Sana'a, by communicating with old contacts and arranging for Arabic lessons at the Center for Arabic Language and Eastern Studies (CALES).

I began taking lessons at CALES, eventually taking 10 weeks of coursework. After the initial period of setting up a schedule and resolving conflicts in times for classes, I settled into a schedule of 3 hours of classes, three days a week. I completed 74 hours of in-class work with two different tutors (some time was lost due to illness and a series of protests in late July).

I began class at 8 am and worked straight through until 11 am on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. I set up the course so that each hour focused on a different aspect of Arabic. In the first hour I concentrated on grammar, largely on verb and noun patterns as taught in al-Kitab, an Arabic textbook used by most US universities. The second hour was devoted to reading through a book on the siege of Sana'a, *Hasar San'a*, by Ali Muhammad al-'Alafi.

The book contains many interviews with the participants of the siege. My tutor and I read through a number of these, often taking the time to consult other works such as the Encyclopedia of Yemen, which helped to elucidate points such as troop movements and geographical locations that I found confusing. I found it extremely beneficial to read through these interviews with Yemeni tutors who were familiar with the language and allusions of a fellow Yemeni writer. The third hour was divided among several activities: 1) reading articles in the local press, especially those from the newspaper 26 September, which often publishes memoirs or other articles dealing with the revolution, civil war, or the siege, 2) listening to tapes of lectures, particularly those of Sheikh Abd al-Majid al-Zindani; he participated in the civil war and devoted a number of tapes to the life of Muhammad Mahmud al-Zubayri, a fellow revolutionary who was killed in 1965 and, 3) reading yet more interviews from al-'Alafi's book. Most days, I focused on al-'Alafi's book.

In addition to the intensive study of Arabic I did fieldwork, i.e., getting to know potential contacts. This can take a great deal of time because it involves getting introductions, sometimes introducing yourself, and undertaking a variety of activities to build a relationship of trust with the people who have first-hand experience of this period, so that they feel comfortable sharing their stories and experiences. This was more difficult than I had anticipated, but I was still able to collect a number of interviews. Unfortunately, I was not able to complete some interviews for lack of time or difficulty in coordinating my schedule with that of the informant. Despite these setbacks, however, I was able to lay the groundwork—often the most time consuming part of doing research in Yemen—for future interviews with a number of people.

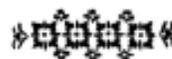
In addition to the interviews, I spent a great deal of time on research in the libraries at the AIYS hostel, the French Center, and the Yemeni Center for Studies and Research. I also collected recently published books and periodicals on the civil war. For example, Sinan Abu Luhum's three volume narrative history and collection of documents has been extremely valuable to me as a primary source. Additionally, I was able to re-establish contact with a number of informants from my last visit to Yemen in 2003-04, and I was able to

fill-in some of the gaps and questions that were still lingering from previous interviews.

In these respects—laying the groundwork for future interviews, the interviews themselves, and collecting source material—my time in Yemen was extremely beneficial for the continuation of my research on the civil war and particularly the siege of Sana'a. My Arabic continued to improve and I met more and more people. I improved my skills in conducting research in Yemen, but I still experienced difficulty contacting men who had fought with the royalists during the civil war, and more importantly, contacting men who were willing to admit and discuss their participation with the royalist faction. For example, a contact arranged for an interview with a former royalist, but unfortunately it was cancelled numerous times due to conflicting schedules and a tribal dispute that called the informant away from Sana'a for the duration of my stay in Yemen. The offer of an interview was, however, a step in the right direction. On the other hand, I was pleased to make another contact in the last week of my stay in Yemen who had fought with the royalists around Sa'dah.

Contacts are a difficult problem that I will endeavor to overcome in the future. I continue to be amazed at exactly how long it takes one to establish a relationship with contacts in Yemen. One is never "off-duty" when doing research on an historical topic that is still in the living memory of Yemenis. Yemeni friends, after a period of establishing our relationship, offered access to private family documents—previously unknown to me—from the civil war period. Other informants require weeks or months of one's acquaintance before they confide information on their role in the civil war. Research on such a modern and still sensitive topic is truly time-intensive, but the research can be enjoyable—for the personal relationships that one establishes and for the historical research that will bring to light memories and documents that may have died with their owners. I am excited at the prospect of continuing the project.

Gregory Johnsen is currently a graduate student of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona.



Recent AIYS Fellows

Fellowships Awarded in the 2004-2005 Competition

A. Competition for US Citizens

Caton, Steven Charles (Professor, Harvard University), "Environmental Events and State Governance: Ethnography of a Crisis in the Sana'a Basin"

Johnsen, Greg (Graduate student, University of Arizona), Arabic language study and preliminary research on Yemen's Civil War

Miller, Whitney Flagg (Graduate student, University of Wisconsin at Madison), "The Poetics of Lament and Death in Contemporary Muslim Ethics in Yemen"

Patel, Yousha (Graduate student, Duke University), Arabic language study

Phillips, Sarah Grant (Graduate student, Australian National University), Arabic language study and "Maintaining the Status-quo Amid Political Openings in the Arab World: The Republic of Yemen (1990-2004)"

Reese, Scott (Professor, Northern Arizona University), "Using the Global to Create the Local: Muslim Discourses of Reform in Colonial Aden"

Walker, Iain Bruce (Professor, Macquarie University), Arabic language study to support project: "Arabian Africans or African Arabs? The Dynamics of Islamic African Identity in the Arabian Peninsula."

B. Competition for Citizens of Yemen

Abdul-Wahab, Mahboob Mohamed (Marine Science and Resources Center, Labour Island, Aden), "Assessment of Shrimp Stocks in the Eastern Waters of Yemen"

Ahmed, Nada Al-Syed Hassan (Dr., University of Aden), "Chemical and Biological Analysis of Drinking Water in Some Primary and Secondary Schools in Aden City"

Ali, Nasser Abdullah Awadh (Dr., University of Aden), "Ethnopharmacognostical Study of Socotra"

Asrar, Fatima Fouad Abo Al- (British Embassy, Sana'a), "Promoting Democracy, Between Reality and Implementation in Yemen"

Hababy, Adel Mohammed Al- (graduate student), "On the Effect of Fishery Activities on the Coral Reef Conditions at Northwest Kamaran Island, Red Sea West Cost of Yemen"

Kafayan, Fahd Saliim (Saba Wire Service, reporter, and high school teacher), "An Analysis of the Characteristics of Soqotri Poetry"

Mansoob, Muhammed Abdul Kareem Al- (Dr., Sana'a University), "Analysing Birth Intervals of Yemeni Mothers"



Kathiri Sultan's palace in Sayun. Now the Sayun Museum (photograph by Richard Ellis, 2004).

AIYS Fellowship Program for Study and Research in Yemen

The American Institute for Yemeni Studies conducts two competitions for fellowship programs of in-country research or Arabic study in Yemen, supported by a grant from the United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). One program is for US citizens and the other for citizens of the Republic of Yemen. Both competitions have strict eligibility requirements that must be met before applications may be submitted. Before inquiring about the fellowship program, please be sure that you meet the requirements for the program in which you are interested. The fellowship program is described in detail on the AIYS website, <<http://www.aiys.org/fellowships>>; the annual deadline for applications is December 31.

Competition for US Scholars

Fellowships for research and Arabic Study:

Proposals are invited from graduate and post-graduate scholars for Arabic language study, feasibility studies, or research projects. Collaborative or group projects are eligible for funding. It is permissible to combine Arabic language study with a research or feasibility project. Arabic language training grants provide funds for a 10-week program at one of the language centers in Sana'a and for residence at the AIYS hostel in Sana'a. These fellowships, for which all local arrangements are made through AIYS' Sana'a office, are primarily intended to enable persons to conduct research in Yemen; applicants are encouraged to relate their intended use of fellowship funds to their present interests and to future research plans.

Eligibility for this program is limited to U.S. citizens who are enrolled as full-time graduate students in recognized degree programs or who are post-graduate researchers. Awards will be made on the basis of merit as determined by a review committee of scholars from AIYS member universities. All funds currently available or pending come from US government sources and may be awarded only to US

citizens. These fellowships are fully taxable after legitimate deductions for professional expenses. There is no restriction as to field or discipline, but project funds may only be used to support research costs incurred in Yemen. Projects are not normally funded above \$10,000. Applicants may need to secure additional funding for other expenses or for extended research periods, but in the case of multiple awards AIYS reserves the right to modify or cancel its fellowship offer. A full statement of conditions governing fellowships may be obtained from the AIYS office or the AIYS website. Researchers whose projects will take them to more than one country are advised to consider applying to CAORC's Multi-Country Fellowship Program as well as to AIYS.

How to Apply

All applicants must submit the original and five (5) copies of each of the following:

–a completed application form (available from AIYS administrative office and at www.aiys.org);

–a curriculum vitae;

–an application narrative consisting of:

(a) for applicants for Arabic language training grants: a short statement explaining their interest in Yemen.

(b) for all other applicants: a project description and proposed budget. Five pages suggested maximum length.

The following supporting documentation is required and should also be sent directly to AIYS by the application deadline; single copies are acceptable.

–all applicants should provide three (3) letters of recommendation;

–pre-doctoral applicants must submit both undergraduate and graduate transcripts; recent Ph.D. recipients are encouraged to provide a graduate transcript.

Deadline for Applications

The annual deadline for receipt of applications is December 31. To be certain of consideration applications must be complete and in the AIYS office by the deadline. This includes letters of reference and transcripts sent directly to AIYS by third parties. For

further information see www.aiys.org or contact the AIYS office (AIYS, PO Box 311, Ardmore PA 19003-0311; 610-896-5412, aiys@aiys.org).

Research Fellowships for Scholars who are Citizens of the Republic of Yemen

The American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS) supports research projects proposed by qualified researchers who are citizens of the Republic of Yemen. The annual deadline for receipt of completed applications is December 31.

*The proposal must be for original research or field study within Yemen. Work to be done elsewhere does not qualify for fellowship support.

*Fellowships are not available for translation or publication projects.

*AIYS cannot consider applications from researchers who have had an AIYS fellowship within the previous three years.

*The maximum award for any one project under this fellowship competition is \$2,000. Applicants should provide a detailed project budget justifying the amount requested. Preference will be given to applications that explain clearly how AIYS funding will be used for research purposes. Only research-related expenses will be considered for funding. The level of approved funding will be decided by AIYS.

*Applicants must show qualifications for undertaking the project described in the proposal. An advanced degree is not a requirement, nor is fluency in English. However, the application cover form must be submitted in English.

*Upon completion of the project, the applicant must provide a final report (3-8 pages) in Arabic or English. Two copies of this report must be submitted to AIYS. It may be published in the AIYS bulletin, *Yemen Update*.

*Researchers should also submit a financial accounting of how the research funds provided by the AIYS fellowship were spent.

*Any publications resulting from this project must acknowledge the aid of the fellowship from AIYS and two copies of each of these publications must be provided to AIYS for its library in Sana'a.

*Researchers are responsible for obtaining

whatever permission is necessary for their projects.

*Research proposals submitted for funding should follow the guidelines in the application packet; incomplete proposals or proposals that do not conform to the guidelines cannot be considered.

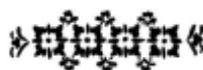
*Inquiries, requests for applications, and completed applications originating in Yemen should be addressed to the AIYS Resident Director in Sana'a (P.O. Box 2658, Sana'a; tel. 1-278-816; fax 1-285-071; aiysyem@y.net.yet). The annual deadline for receipt of applications in Sana'a is December 31.

*Eligible applicants who are currently in the U.S. should address questions and completed applications to the AIYS office in the U.S. (P.O. Box 311, Ardmore PA 19003-0311; 610-896-5412; aiys@aiys.org). The annual deadline for receipt of applications in the U.S. is December 31.

*The application form is also available on the AIYS website (www.aiys.org/app-yemeni).

New Opportunity for Arabic Study in Yemen

In the summer of 2006 AIYS is cooperating with the State Department's critical languages scholarship program, organized by the Council of American Research Centers, by administering intensive courses in advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced Arabic language study at the Yemen Language Center. This summer program is open to advanced undergraduate students and graduate students, as well as to persons who are between degrees. Applications to this program are handled centrally through CAORC; the program is administered in Yemen by AIYS. Students will be in Yemen for 10 weeks, including 8 weeks of intensive class work, offered by the Yemen Language Center (YLC), one week of organized group travel, plus several free days for initial orientation and optional post-instruction travel. Three course options are offered: advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced; placement is at the discretion of the Yemen Language Center after initial evaluation of the students. Course work in Arabic will be supplemented by activities that place the language in its wider cultural and historical context.



Mellon Research Fellowships For Central and East European Post-Doctoral Scholars in Yemen

The American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS) is pleased to invite applications for Mellon Research Fellowships in Yemen for 2007-2008. AIYS is offering two fellowships to scholars from East European and Baltic countries including Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Applicants must hold the PhD or its equivalent. They may engage in individual advanced research projects in any research field of the humanities or the social sciences involving Yemen. The fellowships are for two to three months for research to be carried out in affiliation with the AIYS center in Yemen.

AIYS maintains a research facility in Sana'a, Yemen that contains an office, library, and hostel for visiting researchers. The AIYS Resident Director in Sana'a and his staff provide general assistance and introductions to colleagues, institutions, and authorities in Yemen and arrange for the research permit and other official documentation needed by researchers in Yemen.

Funds for the fellowships have been provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) to administer for the purpose of bringing East-Central European scholars of the humanities into a broader research community. Bulgarian, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, and Slovak scholars who are citizens of—and permanent residents of—one of the included countries are eligible to apply. Applicants who have previously held a fellowship under this program may apply only after five years have lapsed since the prior fellowship. Where appropriate, preference will be given to scholars in the early stages of their careers. Fellows are expected to devote full time to their projects and to participate in the activities of the Institute.

The program offers a stipend up to \$11,500 to cover the costs of conducting the scholar's research project for two to three months, including travel, living expenses, and work-related costs.

How to Apply

Fellowship applications should consist of (1) a brief project statement (3-5 pages) outlining the project and its significance; (2) a current curriculum vitae; and (3) two letters of reference from scholars in the relevant field, including comment on the value and feasibility of the project.

Deadline for Applications

Applications and supporting letters (which may be sent separately) must be submitted by **March 5, 2007**, to the US office of AIYS in Ardmore (see page 2 in this issue).

Application Format (Please follow this format as completely as possible.)

1. Full name.
2. Work or preferred address, including phone and fax numbers and e-mail address.
3. Home or alternate address, including phone and fax numbers.
4. Citizenship and residence information.
5. List any others who would accompany you to Yemen.
6. Current position, academic institution or other affiliation, address.
7. List college and university degrees, beginning with the most recent.
8. Include professional curriculum vitae and publications, including title of dissertation.
9. List fellowships previously held, with dates.
10. Proposed fellowship project:
 - a. Project title.
 - b. Location(s) during the fellowship period.
 - c. Approximate work plan, schedule, and length of project period.
 - d. Summary budget for project.
 - e. Statement of proposed research. Please provide a typewritten, double-spaced statement, not to exceed 1500 words, describing your proposed research project. Be as specific as possible concerning the purpose of your project, your plan of

study, and the broad significance of the work you expect to do in Yemen. Your name should appear on each page. Applicants should supply visual material, archival references, bibliography, etc. as appropriate.

11. Arabic language competence; competence in other languages as necessary.

12. List name, position, and address of the individuals from whom you have requested letters of reference. Letters of reference should be mailed or faxed separately to AIYS.

13. Date of application for Yemeni research permit, see below.

14. List other fellowship and grant applications submitted.

15. List any additional funding available, such as sabbatical salary or other grants.

16. Sign and date the application.

Note for Successful Applicants

Yemen requires that all foreign scholars planning to carry out research in Yemen must obtain formal permission from the agency charged with oversight of

their particular discipline. Forms and information on the research application procedures may be obtained from the AIYS Resident Director in Sana'a, to whom the completed research permit application must be submitted at least three months before the anticipated arrival date. The Resident Director and his staff will then submit the documents to the appropriate authorities and track the process of the application. Applicants are urged to learn the procedures involved in gaining permission as early as possible. Inquiries about research permits and the completed permit applications should be addressed to: Dr. Christopher M. Edens, AIYS/Sana'a, P.O. Box 2658, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen; email: aiysyem@y.net.ye; tel. 967-1-278-816, fax 967-1-285-071.

For further information call AIYS in Sana'a: 967-1-278-816, fax: 967-1-285-071, e-mail: aiysyem@y.net.ye; or AIYS in the US: 1-610-896-5412, fax 1-610-896-9049, e-mail aiys@aiys.org, or see the AIYS website at <http://www.aiys.org>.

AIYS expects to notify applicants of the decision of the Committee on Fellowships in late May of 2005.

Winners of the Mellon Fellowships

The winners of the 2005-2006 Mellon Fellowships, the second year of the competition, are:

Dr. Dariusz Włodzimierz Kolodziejczyk (Warsaw University, Poland, Institute of History), "Northern and Southern Ottoman Borders in the Early Modern Period: From the Crimea to Yemen"

Dr. Anna Malecka (Wyszynski University, Poland, Art History Institute), "Wealth of Arabia Felix: Precious Stones, Gems, and Jewelry"

The fellows from the first year of the competition (2004-2005) were:

Dr. Viktor Cerny (Institute of Archaeology, Prague, Czech Republic), "The Archaeogenetics of Yemeni Populations"

Dr. Obadi Saleh Mothana (Institute of Slovak and World Economy, Bratislava, Slovak Republic), "The External Trade between Yemen and the EU and the USA,"



AIYS Publications

Please note that AIYS publications are distributed by:

MESA Secretariat
1219 N. Santa Rita Avenue
University of Arizona
Tucson AZ 85721

Make check payable to MESA.

Back issues of *Yemen Update* should be ordered from the AIYS office in Ardmore.

Items marked * are out of print.

Yemen Bibliography Series

1. *Studies on Yemen, 1975-1990: A Bibliography of European Language Sources for Social Scientists*, compiled by Thomas B. Stevenson, 1994 (xx + 197 pp.). ISBN 1-882557-01-8. \$15.
2. *Visions of Yemen: A Filmography*, by Thomas B. Stevenson, 2003. ISBN 1-882557-11-5 (pbk.). \$20.

Yemen Development Series

1. *Yemeni Agriculture and Economic Change: Case Studies of Two Highland Regions*, by Sheila Carapico and Richard Tutwiler, 1981 (x+191 pp.). Was out of print, but a few copies have become available. \$15.
- *2. *Bibliography on Women in Yemen*, by Joke Buringa (edited by Marta Colburn), 1992 (158 pp.). ISBN 1-882557-00-X. Out of print.

Yemen Research Series (translations of Western-language research into Arabic)

- *1. *Political Studies on Yemen, 1990-1994* (edited by Abdu Hamood Al-Sharif), 1996 (ii + 222 pp.). ISBN 1-882557-03-4. Out of print.
2. *Studies on the Ethnology of Yemen* (edited by Lucine Taminian with the assistance of Abdul Karim Al-Aug), 1997. ISBN 1-882557-04-2. \$15.
3. *Studies on Women in Yemen* (edited by Lucine Taminian), 1997. ISBN 1-882557-05-0. \$15.
4. *North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Yemen* (edited by Noha Sadek). 2002. ISBN 1-882557-08-5. \$15.

5. *Studies on Medieval Yemen* (edited by Noha Sadek), 2003. ISBN 1-882557-09-3. \$15.

6. *Anthropological and Historical Studies* (edited by Lucine Taminian). Forthcoming, Summer 2006. ISBN 1-882557-14-X.

Yemen Translation Series

1. *My Journey through Arhab and Hashid*, by Eduard Glaser (translated by David Warburton), 1993 (xi+31 pp.). ISBN 1-882557-02-6 \$5.
2. *Visits and Customs: The Visit to the Tomb of the Prophet Hud*, by Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Muhammad al-Sabban (published in Arabic and in an English translation by Linda Boxberger and Awad Abdelrahim Abu Hulayqa; introduction by Linda Boxberger), 1999 (112 pp.). ISBN 1-882557-06-9. \$10.
3. *City of Divine and Earthly Joys: The Description of Sana'a*, by Sayyid Jamal al-Din 'Ali al-Shahari (translated into English by Tim Mackintosh-Smith from the Arabic text edited by 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Hibshi), 2001 (xii+34 pp.). ISBN 1-882557-07-7. \$10.
4. *Social Issues in Popular Yemeni Culture*, translated, edited and annotated by Janet C.E. Watson. Based on the radio program, *Mus'id wa-Musida*, written by Abd al-Rahman Mutahhar (Sana'a Social Fund for Development, 2002, iv + 217 pp.). \$18.
5. *The Book of Sana'a: Poetry of Abd al-Aziz al-Maqalih. Kitab Sana*, originally published in 2000 by Riad el-Rayyes Books. Text in English and Arabic, translated into English by Bob Holman and Sam Liebhaber, with introductions by S. Liebhaber, B. Holman, and Muhammad Abd al-Sallam Mansur, and annotations by Christopher Edens, 2004. ISBN 1-882557-12-3. \$20.

Miscellaneous Research and Documentation Publications

1. *Ma'alim al-zira'a fi-l'Yaman (Agricultural Knowledge in Yemen)* by Yahya Al-Ansi. Sana'a: Published jointly by the Centre Français d'Études

Yéménites (CFEY) and the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. Volume 1: 1998. Volume 2: 2003. Vol. 1 distributed by CEFAS (POBox 2660, Sana'a, Yemen; www.univ-aix.fr/cfey/). Vol. 2 will be available through MESA and CEFAS.

2. *The al-Hasan bin al-Qasim Mosque Complex: An Architectural and Historical Overview of a Seventeenth Century Mosque in Duran, Yemen*, by Bruce Paluck and Raya Saggar, 2002 (xvi + 79 pp., 23 drawings, 3 photographs, and frontis map). ISBN 1-882557-10-7. Published jointly by the American Institute for Yemeni Studies and the Centre Français d'Archéologie et de Sciences Sociales Sanaa (CEFAS). Text in English and French, with Arabic translation. \$20.

Yemen Update, the Bulletin of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (annual from 38 [1996]).

Issues 1-27 (=AIYS Newsletter) \$3.00 per issue

Yemen Update: vols. 28/29-38, \$7.00 per issue

Yemen Update: vols. 39-42., \$12.50 per issue

Yemen Update: vols. 43 ff., \$25.00 per issue

Non-member subscription service, \$40.00 per issue

Video Documentaries

The Architecture of Mud, a video documentary project of Pamela Jerome and Caterina Borelli supported by an AIYS NMERTA fellowship; produced by Caterina Borelli. 1999. 52 mins. The video is available in Arabic (PAL format) or English

(NTSC or PAL format). To order, contact DER Documentary Educational Resources (617-926-0491, fax 617-926-9519, docued@der.org). AIYS institutional members receive a discount on the purchase price and should place their order through the AIYS office. The video may also be rented from Anonymous Productions (917-743-5696, fax 212-226-3976).

Murshidat: Female Primary Health Care Workers Transforming Society in Yemen, a video documentary by Delores M. Walters, whose work was supported by a USIA fellowship, is distributed by Penn State Multimedia Sales <<http://www@mediasales.psu.edu>>. 1999. 35 mins. \$50.

Qudad: Reinventing a Tradition, a video documentary project by Caterina Borelli supported by an ECA-funded AIYS fellowship. 2003. 52 mins. The video is in Arabic with English subtitles (PAL and NTSC formats). To order, contact DER Documentary Educational Resources (617-926-0491, fax 617-926-9519, docued@der.org). AIYS institutional members receive a discount on the purchase price and should place their order through the AIYS office. The video may also be rented from Anonymous Productions (917-743-5696, fax 212-226-3976).

AIYS publications are produced with financial assistance from the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs



Yemen Update News

Proposals for AIYS-Sponsored MESA Panels

AIYS, as an organization affiliated with MESA, is entitled to sponsor three panels at the annual MESA meeting. AIYS members wishing to propose a panel for AIYS sponsorship need to do so *before* submitting the panel proposal to MESA for consideration. Panels should conform to all applicable MESA rules and proposals should be submitted to AIYS on the MESA form; if in doubt about a projected speaker's eligibility to participate, contact MESA at <http://www.mesa.arizona.edu>. The annual deadline for submitting a panel proposal to AIYS for consideration by the AIYS Program Committee is February 1; the MESA deadline is February 15. The AIYS website carries a list of panels sponsored in previous years at <http://www.aiys.org/mesahist.html>.

A Public Library for Soqotra

Books are in short supply on Soqotra. The islanders have increasingly expressed a need for a public library accessible to all within the capital town of Hadiboh with the successful establishment of the English Speaking School, the College of Further Education, and the general development of education (Hadiboh has the largest primary school on the island and the only secondary school).

There is a need for reference books such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases, and basic science books, as well as books on the culture, ecology, and history of the region. Publications that refer to Soqotra—historical sources as well as the increasing number of new books and articles—are especially requested.

As a result of discussions with islanders, it was decided to set up a public library for Soqotra in the island capital, Hadiboh. Salim Sa'id Bu Haqibah, the Soqotran Representative to the Consultative Council was contacted, and he fully supports the idea. Dr. Sa'ad Qaddomi, the Director of Health on Soqotra, has agreed to supervise the project on the island. The name was chosen— *Maktabat al-Zahra' al-Suqutriyah I-il Thaqafah* (*The Al Zahra Cultural Library for Soqotra*).

Initial funds were raised to rent rooms in central Hadiboh and to fit them out with extremely basic furnishings and shelving. Nadhera Abdullah was taken on as the part-time librarian and she has been equipped with an Arabic typewriter. The Director of the British Council, Elizabeth White, donated US \$1,500 to help set up the project; some of these funds have been used already to purchase books in Yemen. Miss Margaret Munro also donated US \$700 for the purchase of books. The funds were used to purchase high quality Arabic books from the Al Saqi Bookshop, including reference books and children's books (either directly from the bookshop in London or ordered from Lebanon through Al Saqi). The bookshop generously gave a 10% discount to the project for book purchases.

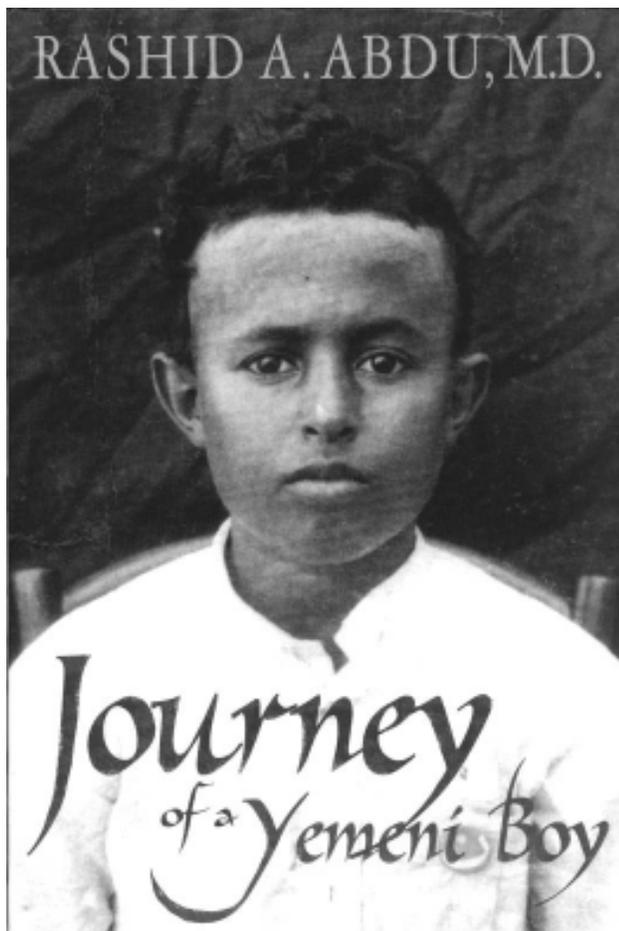
Recently the Iara Lee & George Gund Foundation in San Francisco has made a most generous donation of US \$10,000 for the Public Library Project, writing that the funds should be used for "direct support of Soqotran people's education and cultural heritage preservation." They have agreed that some of the funds should be used to translate key historical resources on Soqotra into Arabic. This work will begin in the autumn.

The library is aimed mainly at literate Soqotris, and will concentrate on material in Arabic. The Soqotri language is an ancient and preliterate language, but they now learn Arabic at school. If funds permit, the public library would also like to include audio or visual material and to hold film shows (especially nature films and the increasing number of films made on or about Soqotra). The hope is that the audio-visual material will encourage children to come to the library, but also that older, illiterate members of the community will benefit from the library.

Anyone interested in helping with this very worthwhile project can send donations to the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (P.O. Box 311, Ardmore, PA 19003, USA). The gift is tax deductible. Checks should be made out to AIYS, but please specify that the gift is for the *Al Zahra' Library of Soqotra*.

Dr. Miranda Morris. September 14, 2005

New Publications



Journey of a Yemeni Boy, by Rashid A. Abdu, M.D.

Pittsburgh, PA: Dorrance Publishing Co., 2005

ISBN #0-8059-6711-7

556 pp., 130 ill., paperback

Rashid A. Abdu, M.D. was born in Yemen (when that country was still in the dark ages). Driven by poverty, curiosity, and adventure, he left his village at the age of nine and went to Aden, where he worked successively in a coffee shop, laundry establishment, and with the American Red Cross on a US airbase. Later, the American consul, Harlan B. Clark, hired him as a houseboy.

Because of Dr. Abdu's desire to go to school, Mr. Clark enrolled him in school five mornings a week as a first-grader. Through a path filled with obstacles and hardships, and against strong family wishes, he followed the Clarks to the United States where he

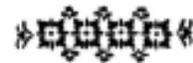
continued to work and study. Finally he fulfilled his childhood dreams and became a surgeon.

Although he became a citizen of the United States and raised a family, he never forgot his roots. He continued to help his siblings with their education and has returned to Yemen several times as a teacher, medical educator, and healthcare consultant.

Dr. Abdu is Emeritus Director of Surgical Education at the St. Elizabeth Health Center and Professor Emeritus of Surgery, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine.

To order the book call Dorrance publishing: 1-800-788-7654, \$35.00.

Dr. Abdu is also a member of AIYS and he published an article about a recent Yemeni experience in Yemen Update 46 (2004) pp. 25 - 39.



The Queen of Sheba's Round Table: A Study of the Most Favoured Daughters of Eve, by Annelies Glander

Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2004

European University Studies, Series XXIII, Sociology, vol. 398

ISBN 3-631-52939-2

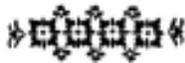
238 pp., no illustrations

The Queen of Sheba's Round Table is not intended as an imitation of or a gender-sensitive counterpart to King Arthur's famous colloquium, rather it presents an imaginary meeting of spiritually noble ladies who tell their illustrious life stories. The study presents real women from the past in a manner that is natural and comprehensible for the reader, by showing them in a fictional conversation, yet it is a conversation based on documented texts. The activities and ideologies of the heroines in this unique story are examined for particular features that would explain their outstanding achievements, achievements that are believed to be inheritable, in some way or other, and thus transferable to others. The accounts are interspersed with questions that are asked by the listening participants, and they are intended to reflect

the opinion of the author.

Contents: A survey of the latest genetics - The legendary role of the hoopoe - The riddles of Solomon - The Ark of the Covenant - Jewish origins in Ethiopia - A woman's correspondence with the Pope - The importance of women in the creation of religions - Women as founders of universities - Heroines and alleged traitors.

Annelies Glander, who is a member of AIYS, studied languages and, simultaneously, started to explore other civilizations. She obtained a masters degree in Social Anthropology and a doctorate in Sociology. She works as a linguist and terminologist, and she continues to devote her free time to study trips, field research, and writing. (Inheritance in Islam, 1998, The Oriental Child, 2001).



Peggy Crawford

An American in Yemen: Travel Notes of a Photographer

Paris, Éditions Nicolas Chaudun, 2005

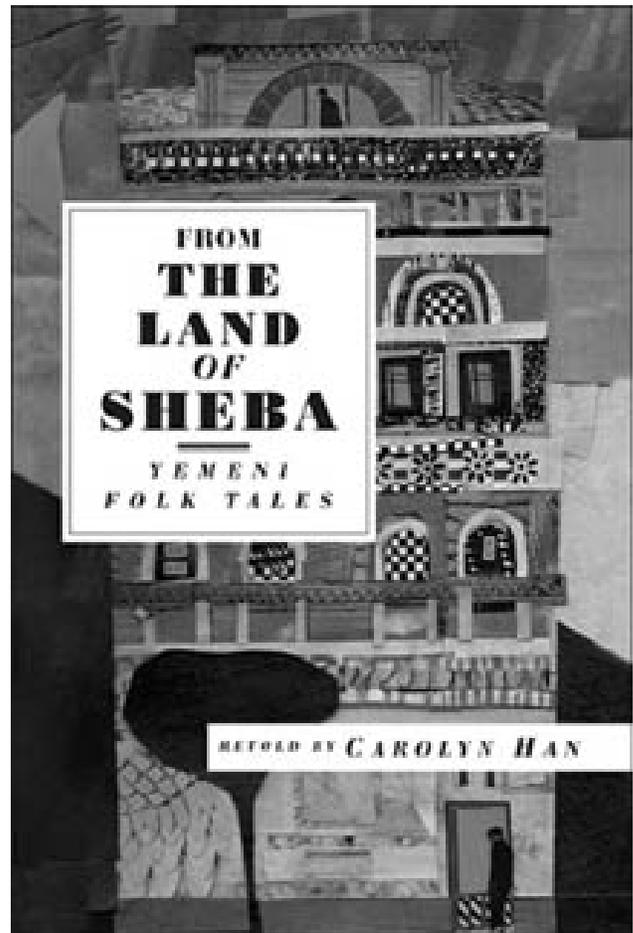
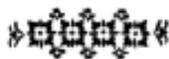
ISBN #2-35039-007-1

160 pp. 54 ill. hardcover

www.peggycrawfordphotography.com

After spending her early years in Cincinnati, Ohio, Peggy Crawford traveled widely in Europe, China, Japan, and the Middle East. In 1985, invited by Claudie Fayein, French doctor and ethnologist, she visited Yemen for the first time—it was love at first sight. She has returned there 8 times since then, having entered with tact and tenderness into the intimate lives of a discreet people not easily encountered by a casual Westerner. She has brought back thousands of images and stories of the inexhaustible wonders of this mysterious land, and this book is an anthology of those treasures.

Ms Crawford is a member of AIYS. A review of her book appears in this issue on pp. 45-46.



From the Land of Sheba: Yemeni Folk Tales, retold by Carolyn Han, collected and translated by Kamal Ali Al-Hegri
Northampton, MA: Interlink Publishing Group, Inc., 2005. Paperback, 112 pp.
ISBN: 1-56656-571-5

Although Yemen, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is one of the oldest inhabited regions of the world, in the West, it is one of the least known places. Ancient Yemen is mentioned in the Bible as the home to frankincense and myrrh, which was once more costly than gold; but what else do we know of this place the Romans called Felix Arabia? As stories often moved with commerce, perhaps some of our earliest stories were born in Yemen's legendary incense groves and traveled with caravans around the world. The Romans called this land happy or prosperous because of the region's geographic diversity; it is not just another country of vast deserts, and its history goes back thousands of years. Legends tell us, in fact, that Sana'a, the present-day capital, was

established by Noah's son, Shem. The fabled past is ever present in Yemen, and stories are told about events that happened long, long ago—as if they happened only yesterday. From the Land of Sheba brings a rich assortment of folktales from this ancient land.

Carolyn Han lectured at Hawaii Community College in Hilo, when she was not writing or traveling. Although now retired, she still lectures to a variety of interested groups. Carolyn is a member of AIYS and she was twice an AIYS Fellow. Email: carolynh@hawaii.edu.



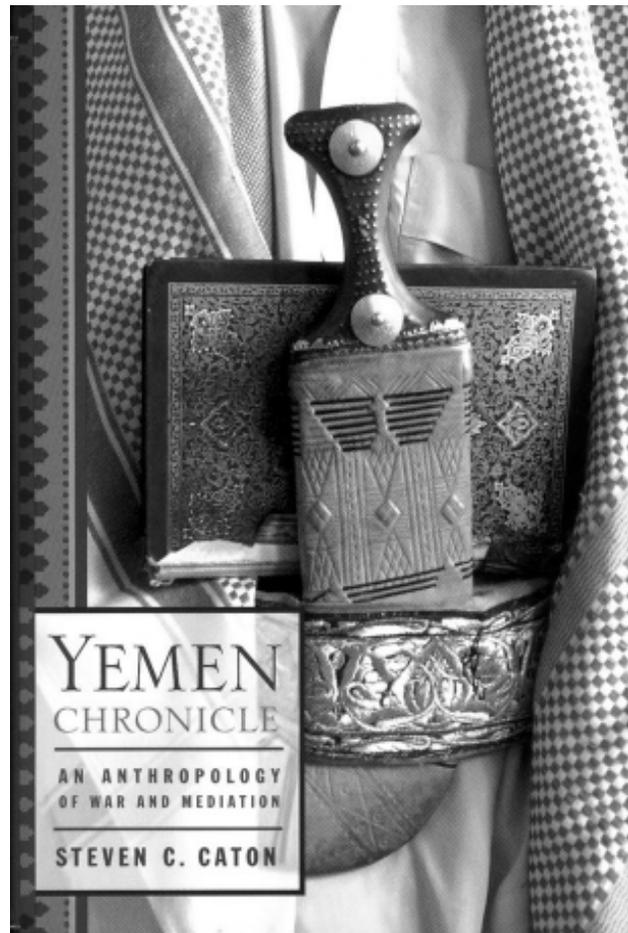
Documentation for Ancient Arabia, Part II, Bibliographical Catalogue of Texts. K. A. Kitchen

Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000. (The World of Ancient Arabia Series, Documentation for Ancient Arabia)

ISBN 0-85323-860-X

This new volume provides an indispensable guide to the proliferating bibliography (often hard to access) of several thousand Ancient Arabian inscriptions through one-and-a-half-millennia (c. 1000 BC to c. 570 AD), mainly in South Arabia, but including also some monumental texts from NW Arabia and others from E. Arabia. The Bibliography offers important information on each principal text (all sigla by which each is named, with ample cross-references; location, date, nature, besides the vital list of publications in which each appears). A comprehensive compact set of charts provides a basic Paleography, to help in the dating of texts that lack a royal name. Updates are given for the chronology, king-lists, and lists of Sources in Part I (*Chronological Framework and Historical Sources*) and (to complement the minimal dates in that work) fresh maximal dates for those wishing to base their dates on the supposed Assyrian synchronism with Karibil Watar of Saba in 685 BC.

The companion volume, *Documentation for Ancient Arabia, Part I, Chronological Framework and Historical Sources*, is also available from Liverpool University Press, ISBN 0 85323 3594.



Yemen Chronicle: An Anthropology of War and Mediation, by Steven C. Caton

New York, Hill and Wang, 2005. 341 pp.

ISBN: 0-8090-2725-5 (hardcover); 0-8090-2725-9 (paperback)

In 1979, Steven Caton, then a young graduate student, traveled to a remote area of Yemen to study the famous oral poetry of its tribes. Although he knew his time there might be dangerous, he felt only mild concern for the simmering hostilities—and impending war—between North and South Yemen. Yet Caton was soon embroiled in a violent local conflict: A sheikh from a neighboring tribe claimed that a man from the sanctuary where Caton was living had abducted his daughter and another girl. Even though the abductor was soon captured and mediations started (often in verse, precisely what Caton was there to study), hostilities between the tribes festered for months. Then, unexpectedly, Caton himself was arrested and jailed for being an American spy, a completely false accusation.

In *Yemen Chronicle: An Anthropology of War and Mediation*, Caton reflects on his experiences during that extraordinary year, and offers as well a striking, intimate portrait of Arab-Muslim culture. By demonstrating the many connections between the tribal poems he studied and larger conflicts, Caton opens up new and surprising perspectives on the Arab world.

Steven C. Caton is professor of anthropology at Harvard University and director of its Center for Middle Eastern Studies. He is also author of Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology and "Peaks of Yemen I Summon": Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemeni Tribe. Prof. Caton has won an AIYS fellowship two times, first in the 2000-01 competition and again in 2004-05.



Sana'a street scene (photograph by Carolyn Han, 2002).



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