

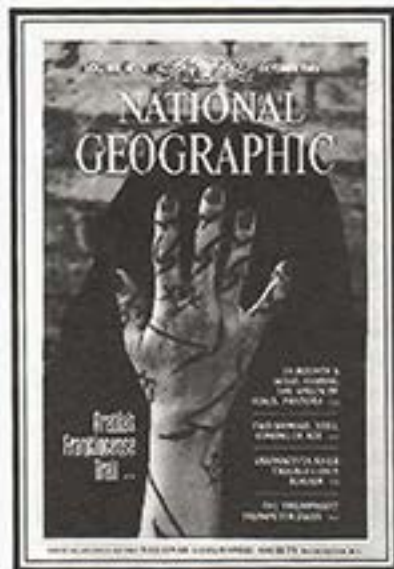


Yemen has a long and rich history, stretching back millennia, but it is still *terra incognita* to most people. There is no other part of the Arabian Peninsula as rich in heritage, including architecture, irrigation works, inscriptions and a vital tradition of poetry, proverbs, music, dance and intellectual writing.

Yemen Update Redux is dedicated to providing a variety of past writing and images about Yemen's heritage. This includes selections from the earlier print edition of *Yemen Update* and other brief writings on Yemen and its people. Yemen's past lives on no matter the turmoil of the present.



<https://www.aiys.org/update>



Over the years one of the most accessible ways to travel to foreign places and areas close to home has been **National Geographic**, published by the National Geographic Society in Washington since the beginning of the century. There have been many articles on the Middle East, including more than a handful on Yemen and Southern Arabia. Below is a sampling of some of the article with abstracts of what you can expect to find. For each article basic information is provided on the (1) author, (2) circumstances and date of trip, (3) maps, (4) photographs, and a (5) quotable quote. While the descriptive content is usually on a popular level, it can nevertheless provide useful information (especially in earlier issues). Yet, no doubt the most important documentation is the photographic record for which the society has long been justly famed.

Most libraries have back copies of **National Geographic** and it can be most rewarding to take a day looking at Yemen through the eyes of travelers who have made the trip before.

△Abercrombie, Thomas J. (1964) "Behind the Veil in Troubled Yemen," 125 (3): 403-445.

(1) The author is a **National Geographic** staff writer.

(2) The author visited North Yemen not

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long after the 1962 revolution and also made a film about his trip.

(3) On p. 406 there is a map of Yemen.

(4) Photographs of people in Şan'a', Ma'rib, qā'ā' tchewing, President Sallāl, Wadi Ḍahr, well near Dhamār, clepsydra, Ta'izz, Mocha and Hodeida.

(5) "A man's dagger belt is a status symbol. Sultan Fadhī's belt, I noted, served him as a cosmetic kit, lunch box, hip pocket, and briefcase as well." (pp. 417,421)

△Abercrombie, Thomas J. (1985) "Arabia's Frankincense Trail," 168 (4):475-513.

(2) The author retraces the route of the frankincense trail, beginning in Oman, traveling through Yemen, and then up the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia to Jordan.

(3) On p. 484 there is a historical map of the frankincense trade route around A.D. 100 and a regional geographic map of the Arabian Peninsula.

(4) Photographs by Lynn Abercrombie include shots of the following: mud-brick architecture, myrrh and frankincense trees, hamlets, native people and costumes, a Nabataean mausoleum, camel caravans along the Frankincense trail.

(5) "Across the Roman world incense perfumed cremation rites. Nero, it was said, lavished the equivalent of a year's Arabian production on the funeral of his consort Poppaea. To the Magi who bore gifts to the Christ child, frankincense symbolized divinity, an offering on a par with gold and myrrh, another Arabian incense also prized for medicine. A darker, richer aromatic, myrrh perfumed the royal mummies of Egypt and was a main ingredient specified by the Old Testament in the sacred anointing oil of

the Jews." (p.483).

△Eilts, Hermann F. (1957) "Along the Storied Incense Roads of Aden," 111:230-254.

(1) Hermann F. Eilts was a United States Consul at Aden 1951-1953.

(2) Traveled along what the British called "the Great Circuit" along the 1,500-mile journey from Aden up to Veshbum, northwestward to Beihan Qasb, across to the Wadi Ḥaḍramaut, south to Mukallā, and back down the coast to the colony. (p.235).

(3) On pp.234-235 there are maps of the author's route through the Aden Protectorate.

(4) Photos by Brian Brake, Magnum, include shots of the following: Bedouin cameleer, Mukallā boatman with U-shaped scabbard, date farmers, Sultan of Lahj, Kathīri Palace in Sa'yūn, Shibām City with its gleaming whitewashed mud walls.

(5) "Yet, after all, I had just been journeying in a long circuit through a land itself still half asleep, destined to wake soon from the slumber of centuries, but today still somnolent. As a tribesman, holding in his hands a fragment from the ruins of Qohlān, once said to his Western friend: 'We Arabs live in an ancient house, and it has fallen on us. Now we lie helpless under the weight of its stones. You must tunnel down to us and open a door for us, so that we may pass out into the daylight and build our house anew.'"

△Grove, Noel (1979) "North Yemen," 156(2):244-269.

(1) Noel Grove is a staff writer.

(2) Traveled throughout the north, including a trip to Şa'da.

(3) General map on p. 250 with histori-

cal maps of South Arabia for 950 BC, AD 630 and AD 1904 on p. 251.

(4) Photographs by Steve Raymer. Most of the photographs are of people, but there are general scenes near Dhamâr, Ma'rib and Wadi Dahr.

(5) "With Jon Mandaville [Editor's Note: Jon was AIYS Resident director at the time] I headed north again. Two hundred kilometers from Sana on an open stretch of highway, a gray pickup ahead of us suddenly turned sideways and stopped. Two of the three young men inside jumped out and leveled the familiar AK-47's at us... They wanted our car, a rugged new four-wheel drive vehicle, but we refused to get out... Clearly confused by our stubbornness, they grabbed for a cooler of food from the rear seat, but Jon held onto it, while protesting in Arabic: 'Who are you? These things belong to us.'" (p. 260)

△Moser, Charles (1917) "The Flower of Paradise": The Part Which Khat Plays in the Life of the Yemen Arab," 32:173-186.

(1) Charles Moser was formerly an American Consul in Aden.

(2) Aden and a trip up to Şan 'â'.

(3) Mapp. 181 "Outline Map of Arabia": Map of the entire Arabian Peninsula.

(4) Ten photographs by Moser: *q â t* auction, *q â t* chewers, caravans, market-place.

(5) "When the European is weary he calls for alcohol to revive him; when he is joyful he takes wine, that he may have more joy. In like manner the Chinese woos his "white lady," the poppy flower, the Indian chews bhang, and the West African seeds surcease in Kola. Khat is more to the Yemen Arab than any of these to its devotees. It is no narcotic wooing sleep, but a stimulant, like alcohol. Unlike alcohol, it conceals no demon, but a fairy. The khat eater will tell you that when he follows this fairy it takes him into regions overlooking paradise. He calls the plant the "flower of paradise"." (p.173).

△Swayne, H.G.C. (1935) "The Rock of Aden: The Volcanic Mountain Fortress, on the Sea Route from the Suez to India, Assumes New Importance," 68:723-742.

(1) H.G.C. Swayne, travel-writer and British resident of Aden, and officer in British armed forces.

(2) Swayne traveled around the "Rock of Aden", including the Aden Peninsula.

(3) On p. 726 is a map of the Aden Protectorate: Gulf of Aden, Little Aden, Aden Peninsula and Volcanic Aden.

(4) Photographs by Walter Bosshard, Herford Tynes Cowling, Charles K. Moser, Alex Stocker, Merl La Voy, Addison E. Southard, Maynard Owen Williams, and Col. H.G.C. Swayne include shots of the following: Gulf of Aden, market with coffee shops and pottery stores, shipping, a seven-man power roller smooths Aden's streets with statue of Queen Victoria in the background, volcanic peaks, camels pulling salt trains and reservoir tanks for rain-water.

(5) "Well enough does the rock deserve the description given it by Kipling:

*"Be 'old, acrowd upon the beam
And 'umped above the sea, appears
Old Aden, like a barrick stove
That no-one's lit, for years an' years"*

The sun-saturated barren rock seems to suck the life and moisture from the human bodies. In 20 square miles of brown precipices and patches of sandy plain grow only a few trees, no grass, and one important flower, the Aden lily, found in remote rock crevices." (p.723).

△van der Meulen, D. (1932) "Into Burning Hadhramaut: The Arab Land of Fankincense and Myrrh, Ever a Lode-stone of Western Exploration," 62:387-429.

(1) David van der Meulen was a former charge d'affaires for the Netherlands at Jidda. In April 1931, with Dr. H. von Wissmann, he traveled to the Hadhramaut at the behest of the government of the

Netherlands to report on the political and economic conditions of the region and to contribute to the scientific knowledge of the land.

(2) They sailed from Aden to Mukallâ, and then by caravan to the interior.

(3) Large map of Arabia and the Wadi Hadhramaut on p.389.

(4) 32 photos from D. van der Meulen and H. von Wissmann, mainly architecture and landscape. Includes photo by Charles K. Moser of a frankincense tree and aerial photos by the Royal Air Force.

(5) "Finally the last wadi bank was scaled and we came out onto the jol. The endless plateau of rock, stands out against the far horizon. Here there was practically no vegetation and no water at all; the plain is covered with sharp metallic stones, through which the camel-path runs like a shining ribbon. For centuries the calloused pads of tens of thousands of camels have been set down on this same narrow path, so that its gleaming, polished strip affords more striking evidence of the land's antiquity than is found in its partly buried ruins." (p.397)

△Villiers, Alan (1948) "Sailing with Sinbad's Sons," 94:675-688.

(1) Alan Villiers was an Australian journalist and during the war a commander in the Royal Navy.

(2) Sailed in a dhow around the Arabian Peninsula from the Red Sea to Aden, Mukallâ, Oman, Muscat, the Persian Gulf and finally Kuwait. The journey also includes a trip along the East Coast of Africa to Zanzibar.

(3) On p.678 a large map of East Africa and the Arabian Sea display the sailing route of the author.

(4) All photos by the author: dhow, lateen sail, crew members at work and rest.

(5) "Though I suffered injury, hunger, dysentery, and malaria during my years in dhows, I would not trade the experience for a berth in the *Queen Elizabeth*." (p.688).

△Compiled by D. Robbins