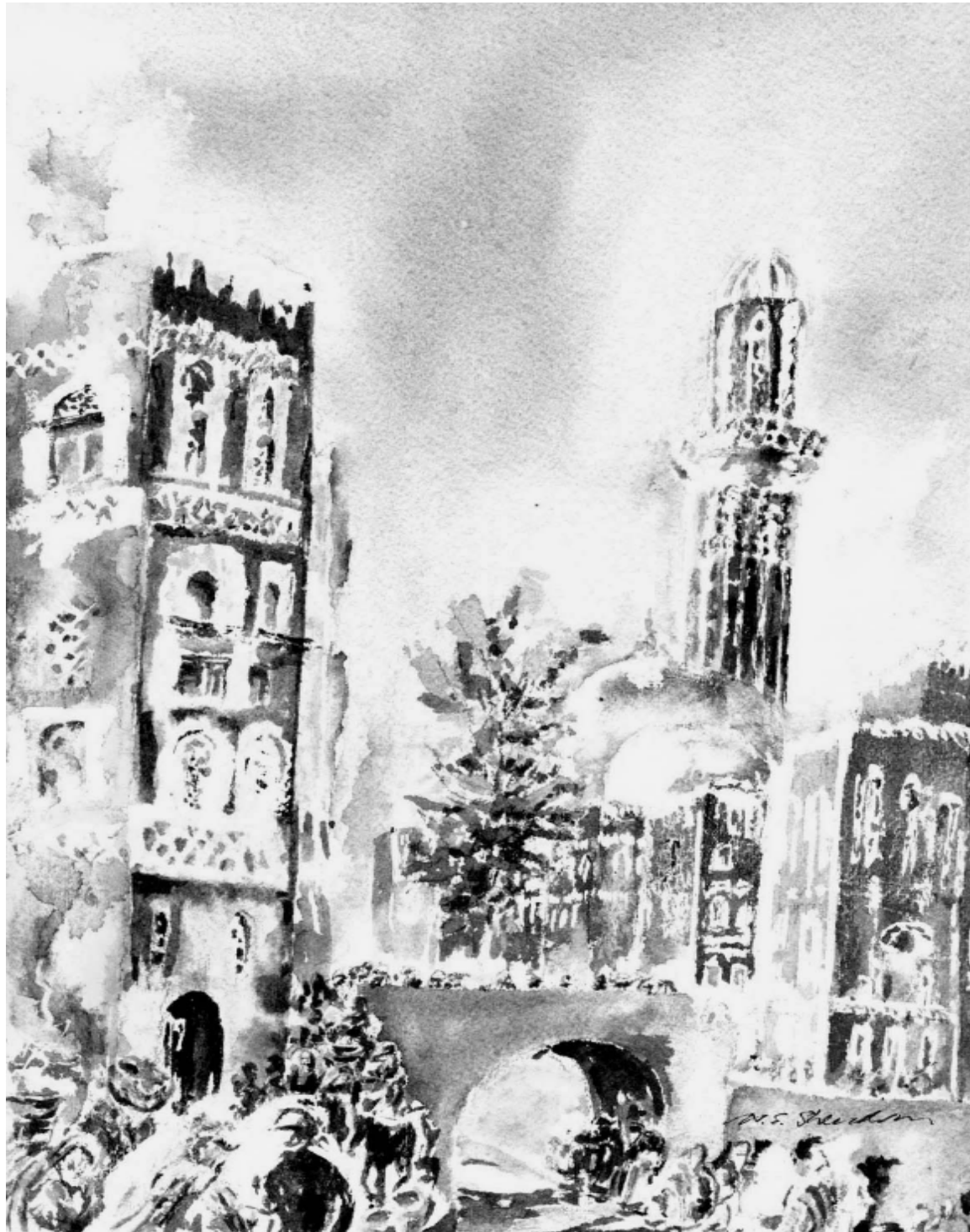


Yemen Update

Bulletin of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies

Number 51 2009



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The AIYS Bulletin - Yemen Update

Yemen Update is published once a year by the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS), a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of knowledge in all aspects of Yemeni studies. The content of the articles and reviews in *Yemen Update* do 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 the *Yemen Update* 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 separately, in both "hard copy" and 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 Mr. Lane Land.

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

Cover illustration: Sana'a, after a watercolor painting by Herbert E. Sheridan of Queensland, Australia. We sincerely appreciate the gift of the painting and his permission to reproduce it.



Yemen Update: ISSN: 1072-9062

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Membership fees and tax-deductible contributions over the years have supported AIYS in its 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. 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 lists below give the names of those who made donations during the 2007, 2008, and 2009 fiscal years. The AIYS officers and the scholars who serve on committees are not included in the donors list, although their service is a valuable and much-appreciated contribution to AIYS’ programs.

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Report from the Executive Director

Maria deJ. Ellis

Because the *Yemen Updates* for 2007 and 2008 were circulated as a single special issue featuring Tim Mackintosh-Smith's translation of *Hijrahs and Other Refuges of Learning* by Qadi Isma'il al-Akwa', this report covers 2007-09, as do the lists of fellows named and donations received elsewhere in this issue.

This period was eventful for AIYS. As reported earlier, in September 2003, then-Ambassador Edmund Hall had arranged for State Department funding to help purchase a permanent home for the institute. These funds became accessible in 2004 and the search for new housing was started in earnest at that time. It took a long time, with several last-minute disappointments, but in early 2006 a suitable property was located and the owner agreed to sell to AIYS. The house, set in spacious grounds, needed serious reconstruction work and was not quite large enough to accommodate the existing needs of AIYS. The original plan was to include the office, library stacks, workrooms, and reading room on the first floor, to locate the researcher's hostel on the second floor, and to add a third floor for additional hostel space. It became clear, however, from engineering reports that this would not be feasible. So the existing building was rehabilitated and plans were made to construct a second building on the grounds, which would include a guard room, storage space, and additional living space; the new construction was to begin after the institute had been resettled in the original building. In the meantime a foundation for the new building was built as work on the main house was finishing. As such things tend to do, this took much longer than originally anticipated.

AIYS had moved out of its previous quarters in Bayt Hashem at the end of 2006, but work on the new house was not yet finished, so the library was packed up and stored in a secure space in then-Resident Director Chris Edens' house. The office and its files were also moved into his house, which functioned as a temporary office. The hostel and office furnishings

went into commercial storage; visiting students and researchers were placed in appropriate hotels until the new hostel was finally opened in December 2007. The long task of installing the office and library into the new building began in March 2008.

Over time the scope of the plans for the additional building changed as needs were reassessed and possibilities were evaluated. In late 2009 construction was started on part of the available space. The new construction followed plans created by the well-known restoration architect Abdullah Hadrami, who also supervised the project. The building design, constructed exclusively by traditional methods, includes the necessary storage space and a guard room, and also a self-contained apartment for the Resident Director, as well as some additional space that could be used for handicapped-accessible hostel space or other institutional needs.

In 2007, long-time AIYS Resident Director Chris Edens had indicated his desire to resign his position but agreed to wait until a suitable replacement had been named. That search also took much longer than anticipated, but in the summer of 2008 AIYS named Stephen J. Steinbeiser II, J.D. as the new Resident Director; he took over the position from Chris in January 2009. AIYS is grateful to Chris for the devotion with which he superintended a very busy and complex period in the history of AIYS. At 7 and 3/4 years in office, Chris Eden's service as Resident Director was the longest ever for AIYS. An archaeologist by profession, he worked closely with the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) on behalf of the various teams that had projects in Yemen, as well as for his own research and for projects supported by AIYS. He facilitated the research of numerous students and post-doctoral scholars with the Yemen Center for Studies and Research (YCSR) and other agencies of the Yemeni government. He played an active role in the administration of the State Department's Fulbright Program for junior scholars, and he worked

extensively as a liaison with the U.S. embassy on matters of researcher's needs and especially on cultural resource questions. His most onerous task, however, was probably the local administration of non-GOAM funding for Selma al-Radi's part in directing the long-running Amiriya Restoration Project (ARP). The project itself was completed in 2005 and won an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in the 2007 cycle (see photos). Final financial reports, audits, etc. kept Chris working on the tail-end of ARP well into 2007. A future issue of *Yemen Update* will feature an appreciation of the project and of Selma's part in it.

In the spring of 2006, at the request of CAORC, AIYS had undertaken to organize a new group program for intensive study of Arabic on the intermediate and advanced levels, to be held in Sana'a in the summer of 2006. This project was part of a larger *Critical Language Scholarship* (CLS) program initiated by the State Department. AIYS arranged with Sabri Saleem of the Yemen Language Center (YLC) to house the 15 students in YLC's hostel, and to provide the teaching staff that was necessary to meet the program's requirements as determined by CAORC and AIYS. The program was successfully concluded; CAORC then applied for and won a 3-year contract for similar programs. AIYS' share of students was raised to 30, and arrangements were made again through YLC for 2007. This time, however, the students were housed by groups in hotels because of a shortage of hostel rooms in YLC. There were some concerns because the curriculum for the CLS program, an intensive immersion program, had a different focus and different needs from the standard curriculum of YLC for the intermediate and advanced levels, but appropriate adjustments were made and Chris Edens, who supervised the program, arranged for additional sessions and opportunities for the students covering questions of culture and society. Of the 28 CLS fellows who went to Yemen in June 2008, 25 completed the course successfully; three male students having chosen to leave the program in early July after a terrorist attack on Spanish tourists. The funding was similar for the Summer 2008 program, but in preparation for the program Chris worked hard to expand and to enhance the curriculum to include areas of study beyond direct language

learning. He also approached both YLC and the other language centers with which AIYS had been placing its individual fellows, to ask them to consider placing teaching staff at the sole disposal of the AIYS-run program for its 10-week duration. However, because of attacks near the U.S. embassy earlier that spring the Summer 2008 program was canceled and moved to Jordan after the fellows had been named (but luckily before their tickets had been bought).

The ban on federally-funded fellowship travel to Yemen that canceled the CLS program also applied to AIYS and Fulbright fellows. As a result the Fulbright fellowship program in Yemen, for which AIYS had always provided extensive facilitative services, was suspended and a number of AIYS research and Arabic language fellows could not undertake their projects as planned, but were instructed to wait until the (temporary) ban would be lifted. This did not happen. In the spring of 2009 AIYS we were informed that AIYS research fellows who were still waiting to go to Yemen might amend their projects to carry out their research in venues other than Yemen; outstanding Arabic language fellowships were canceled. Beginning with the 2009-10 fellowship competition, applications for the fellowship competition for U.S. nationals can until further notice only be submitted for research on Yemen in venues other than Yemen. A list of fellowships awarded and carried out during the period 2007-2009 can be found in this issue.

In January 2009 Stephen Steinbeiser, an experienced study-abroad specialist with a degree in law and prior Arabic study in Sana'a, became the new Resident Director in Sana'a. Stephen took on AIYS in a time of continuing change and uncertainty. He oversaw the completion of the installation of AIYS' office and library in the new premises, and turned the AIYS facility from a construction zone into a respectable institutional venue. He is following up the contacts with Yemeni scholars and officials that Chris and his predecessors had established and is making new ones. And in 2009 he initiated the work on the second building on the grounds, at Abdullah Hadrami's suggestion exclusively using traditional techniques and materials. His reports on this and other matters can be found in forthcoming issues of *Yemen Update*.



Notes on the Yemenis in Guantánamo

Charles Schmitz



We are at war, and ...

“If we had treated this Christmas Day bomber as a terrorist, he would have immediately been interrogated military-style, rather than given the rights of an American and lawyers,” Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) said on CNN. “We probably lost valuable information.” (DeYoung, 2010)

“He was trained, equipped and directed by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula,” Lieberman said on ABC. “That was an act of war. He should be treated as a prisoner of war, held in a military brig, questioned now, and should have been ever since apprehended for intelligence that could help us stop the next attack or get people in Yemen.” (DeYoung, 2010)

“...Mr. Cheney sent a statement to Politico accusing Mr. Obama of ‘trying to pretend we are not at war’ with terrorists. ‘We are at war and when President Obama pretends we aren’t, it makes us less safe,’ Mr. Cheney said.” (Baker, 2009)

Yemenis are dangerous.

“But the reality is simple: The overwhelming majority of the Yemenis currently detained at Guantánamo Bay are very dangerous individuals.” (Hayes and Joscelyn, 2009)

“Of particular concern is the fact that many current members of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula have brothers in Guantánamo... Lawyers for the detainees claim it is unfair and illegal to continue to hold them because of the acts of their relatives. But as al-Hazam told al-Arabiya TV, jihad is often a family business. To ignore historical patterns of radicalization and recruitment is to disregard years of difficult lessons.” (Johnsen, 2009)

“Wolf, who did not object when the Bush administration repatriated 14 Yemeni detainees to their homeland, said that ‘conditions in Yemen have dramatically changed’ with the emergence of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Wolf added that he had access to classified biographies of the six Yemenis sent back last week. ‘Did they read the bios? They are dangerous people,’ Wolf said.” (Raghavan, 2009)

Introduction

Political Prisoners

The Yemeni prisoners in Guantanamo are political prisoners. They are political prisoners in obvious ways and in more subtle ways. They are prisoners of American domestic politics as the quotes above make clear. Their detention is not so much about them, but about political angling between Democrats and Republicans. They are also held hostage to the political negotiations between the US and Yemeni government over a variety of issues related to the American metaphorical *war on terror*. At a more fundamental level, though, the Yemeni prisoners are political prisoners due to the war metaphor used by the United States government. War is a fundamentally political act. The use of the war metaphor, as former Vice President Cheney and many Republicans in Congress insist, is more than the use of the military or

the types of force used. It is about defining the enemy, what to do with the enemy, and what constitutes victory—three aspects of policy that the United States has not clearly considered. As a result pundits are left to create for the public various *ad hoc* criteria for the imagined danger of the remaining prisoners, the Yemenis in Guantánamo, largely based upon their preconceptions and political leanings. And as if by default, actual policy is being crafted in the courts by federal judges, also on an *ad hoc* basis (Wittes, 2009), because the President and the Congress are politically incapable of facing the challenges of placing US anti-terror policies on a more coherent foundation. In the words of Judge Brown in her extraordinary ruling on Jan 5, 2010 in the appeal of a Yemeni named Bihani:

But the circumstances that frustrate the judicial process are the same ones that make

this situation particularly ripe for Congress to intervene pursuant to its policy expertise, democratic legitimacy, and oath to uphold and defend the Constitution. These cases present hard questions and hard choices, ones best faced directly. Judicial review, however, is just that: re-view, an indirect and necessarily backward looking process. And looking backward may not be enough in this new war.

Why the Yemenis?

The Yemenis are currently the largest population in Guantánamo simply because their ranks have not been reduced, unlike the Afghani or Saudi detainees who have gone home. The US government has not released those considered safe or low-risk. When Guantánamo's prison population was at its peak of around 680 prisoners, the Afghanis and Saudis were the two largest national groups, followed by the Yemenis. But as President Bush's attempt to isolate the prisoners from the jurisdictions of both international and US domestic law unraveled, the Bush administration began negotiating the release of the bulk of the prisoners to their home governments. And most prisoners went home. Only those involved in terrorist attacks or considered dangerous (by some other criteria) were kept at Guantánamo. By January 2010 only 200 men remained, but only a few Yemenis had been released—counting the six released in Dec. 2009, only twenty Yemenis.

Most of the other prisoners at Guantánamo have been released because negotiations were successfully concluded between the governments involved. All the citizens of Europe and Australia were released. Their governments refused to recognize the legitimacy of detention or trial in Guantánamo. They demanded that their citizens and legal residents imprisoned in Guantánamo be released. And they were released; those prisoners were the first to leave. The only exception was the Australian David Hicks who pleaded to a nine month sentence. Even the “ideologically committed jihadists” (in the terms of Hayes and Joscelyn) or “historically radicalized” (in the words of Johnsen) were returned to their countries. Many were immediately freed upon return. In countries where the rule of law is not as strong, but

the state is, the Bush administration also released most of the prisoners. Some were convicted of violations of national laws and sentenced, others were released and still others were simply detained, as in Afghanistan.

The majority of Yemenis remain in Guantánamo, however, not because their population is any different from the other populations initially brought there, but because political negotiations have not been concluded for their release. There are several reasons why the Yemenis have not been released; all of these reasons are political and depend upon negotiations between governments. The most important reason is that the US government does not trust the capabilities or political will of the Yemeni government, and therefore the political negotiations between Yemen and the US have not led to mutually acceptable conditions for the release of prisoners.

The American distrust of Yemen stems from differences between the governments on how to approach the issue of fighting terrorism. The Americans wanted the prisoners to be detained in Yemen: a State Department official in Yemen characterized the American view of “rehabilitation” as basically detention (Human Rights Watch, 2009, 2). Earlier, the US government had offered to build a prison in Yemen, as they had done in Morocco and in Afghanistan. The Yemeni government refused because it did not want to become America's jailer and would not detain someone simply because the Americans asked—there had to be some basis in law. The government of Yemen publicly declared that Yemeni citizens should be returned to Yemen and that if the Americans were able to present any evidence that these men had violated Yemeni law, then they would be tried in a Yemeni court. The government of Yemen wanted to know the basis for their detention. While the Americans distrusted Yemeni capabilities, the Yemenis distrusted American intentions.

Difficult Questions Unanswered

Yemenis have a way of asking difficult questions. What is the legal basis of detention in Guantánamo? It is a question that the US has not adequately answered and as a result the public is left to speculate on the nature of the Yemenis. (I always wonder what the precise implication is in the minds of those who regularly remind us that Yemen is the homeland of Bin

Laden's father.) Furthermore a lack of coherent political leadership on this issue has left the courts struggling to define who can and who cannot be held.

Why can't the US answer the questions, who is the enemy, who can be held, and what is the process by which the US determines who can be held? The answer is that the American government is avoiding aspects of both international law and domestic law in its fight against terror. In effect the Bush administration did a cut and paste job, pulling from domestic and international law those elements favorable to the administration's immediate political goals and eschewing those elements that got in the way of its political goals. The results have been a mess for which the Yemenis are paying a particularly high price.

Aftermath of 9/11, Bush Chooses "War"

After the attacks on New York and Washington DC of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush argued that (as the former VP Cheney says) "we are at war." The President went to Congress and got an *Authorization for the Use of Military Force* (AUMF, September 18, 2001), very much in accordance with the laws of war. He then went to the United Nations Security Council and got a resolution saying that the nation was threatened, thereby justifying war. (War can only be defensive for members of the UN.)

War, however, is more than the use of big guns and soldiers. War is also a mode of action, and it is a mode of action that is fundamentally political. Going to war is a political decision. Political leaders must decide that military action is warranted, as President Bush did. The immediate goal of military action is to destroy or capture the enemy, to neutralize the threat, but political leaders define the threat and the enemy. In the case of the United States, Congress makes the political determination. Once the enemy is destroyed, once the threat is neutralized, wars are concluded with treaties. Treaties stipulate conditions that govern the relations between the two states at the conclusion of hostilities. International laws of war are built upon this model of warfare between states.

Enemy or Criminal?

Departures from International Law

The legal foundations of modern warfare lie in our

understanding of the political structure of the modern world, in which the entire globe is divided into territorial states, each with its own sovereignty and domestic laws. These are our primary political communities in which citizens agree to submit to the legal authority of the state in return for the collective good of order and peace. Citizens submit to the authority of the law because of the collective benefits that the rule of law brings. The domestic laws of each state reign within the confines of the territorial state, regardless of the citizenship. A Canadian citizen is subject to US law when within the territory of the US, so that the entire globe is covered by the domestic laws of sovereign states. (Interestingly, government lawyers argued that Guantánamo Bay is sovereign soil of Cuba and therefore the US Supreme Court had no jurisdiction there.)

The police enforce domestic laws. Police action is very different from military action. Rather than being a political decision, police activity is designed to be neutral and avoid politics. Police act when they detect a violation of law; they do not write the laws, they chase criminals. Legislators determine the law and the courts sometimes correct and interpret the laws. Criminals are those who violate laws that all citizens have agreed to abide by. Of course, the best guarantee of police neutrality is an independent judiciary. Judges determine whether the police are right in detaining a person. Judges assure us that there is a basis in law for the detention of persons and that it is not simply some prejudice of the police that led to detention. The difference between police and military is not a matter of firepower. SWAT teams (Special Weapons and Tactics) sometimes have the firepower of military units. The difference lies in the mode of action: what triggers action, what is the objective of action and what is the result.

Whereas theoretically the police mode of action predominates inside of states, war is a tool between states. Killing is legal in warfare as long as it is within the confines of international war—war between states. Our laws of war, that is, humanitarian laws, are designed to protect from harm civilians and those who have left combat (for example, the wounded). In essence the laws of war require that soldiers, agents of the state, be clearly distinguishable from civilians, and that soldiers shoot only at other soldiers.

The Geneva Conventions also recognize that warfare occurs in situations other than between states; Geneva describes this warfare as, “Wars of a non-international nature.” Here Geneva says simply that signatories of the conventions who are involved in conflicts of a non-international nature should strive to apply the provisions of the conventions.

Yet the Bush administration declared that Geneva did not apply to the *war on terror* because the conflict with al-Qaeda was neither an international conflict nor a non-international conflict within a state, it was a *transnational conflict*, a non-international conflict occurring in more than one state, and therefore Bush’s lawyers declared that it was a conflict not covered by the Geneva Conventions! Geneva, however, does not specify the number of states in which non-international conflicts occur; it simply says that in conflicts of a non-international nature, the parties should strive to apply the conventions.

According to Geneva captured enemy soldiers can be held as long as the war endures. This is the aspect of the laws of war that interested the Bush administration—the legal sanction to detain. Those detained are simply enemy soldiers. There is no need to present evidence before any court that they violated any domestic laws; they are held because they are soldiers of an enemy state. There is a requirement to establish a prisoner’s membership in the armed forces if there is doubt about membership, but there is nothing in international law that says that you have to release enemy soldiers so they can return to the battlefield.

Geneva explicitly defines, however, that only members of the enemy state’s military can be held and it goes into a detailed definition of who are members of the military. Support personnel in the military, for example, carry cards which identify that they are members of the military for Geneva purposes. If someone captured in battle is not a member of the military—a civilian—then they do not receive the protections of prisoner of war status, but they are subject to the provisions of common article three of Geneva which stipulate their treatment. Significantly, civilians cannot be removed from the country of the conflict; consequently if an administration wants to argue that the prisoners are civilians, then the detentions are illegal by the administration’s own admissions.

Interrogations: Departures from Law

The lawyers of the Bush administration departed from Geneva (and from US domestic law) on the issue of interrogations. There were two reasons for this. First, the Bush administration did not want to be constrained by prohibitions against harsh torture techniques and secondly they wanted to combine a military interrogation and a police interrogation.

Military interrogations are meant to glean intelligence about military operations, not about violations of law. The military is not interested in the enemy soldier, but rather in what information the soldier can offer about enemy forces that could further the military effort. The police, by contrast, are interested in what violations of law a suspect might have committed. Furthermore the person being interrogated is under investigation, so that the statements that the suspect might give could result in action against the suspect. In a military interrogation nothing the soldier may say will result in action against the soldier (with one exception, see below), but rather the soldier’s information may help the war effort.

The Bush administration wanted to combine both of these modes of interrogation so that prisoners would first reveal any intelligence that they had and then they could be prosecuted based upon these statements. Furthermore, they wanted to use coercion to do this, which is prohibited both by international law (on humanitarian grounds) and by domestic criminal law (on the basis that such statements are unreliable). One of the problems with this mixed mode is that the accused in a criminal proceeding has rights that are meant to establish a reliable standard of justice. These are the right to a lawyer who can advise as to the potential legal impact of statements made to the police and the right against self-incrimination. The relationship between the interrogator and the person being interrogated is quite different in the military and the police modes.

War crimes, of course, can also seemingly be a mix of the two modes of police and military. War crimes are violations of the laws of war. If soldiers shoot civilians, prisoners, medics, or other non-combatants, then the soldiers are subject to the international laws of war. The Geneva Conventions state that war crimes committed by enemy soldiers must be prosecuted in trials with all of the privileges

and rights afforded to one's own soldiers. For example, Geneva would require that Afghani Taliban soldiers held by the United States and accused of war crimes, be tried by courts-martial in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice. This means that the soldier would have the rights of an accused, including the right to remain silent and the right to a lawyer. In a military interrogation, when the soldier begins to reveal acts that could be construed to be war crimes, the interrogator stops the interrogation and refers the matter for criminal investigation. In the courts, only those statements made by the accused after they were advised that they were now under criminal investigation would be admitted. Thus the military has a means of separating the intelligence from the criminal modes.

In the traditional mode of operation, then, crimes are violations of domestic laws that pertain to the behavior of people within the territory of the national state and war is a political act that occurs between states. The difficulty is that this division between police actions within the domestic law of sovereign states and military action between sovereign states assumes that states are capable of enforcing domestic laws. Terror is a crime and it is not a military objective in the traditional sense of an enemy state. Knocking down buildings with civilians in them is a crime. In the traditional conception of the legal divisions of labor across the world's geography, these would be criminal acts that the domestic police would investigate and the state would prosecute under domestic laws.

The territories where al-Qaeda often resides, however, do not have effective states in the sense that the state cannot control its territory. The police don't function. Domestic law cannot restrain al-Qaeda's acts of terror in these places. In the case of the Taliban's Afghanistan, the state harbored al-Qaeda. The US invasion of Afghanistan was a very traditional use of war in the sense that the objective of the war was to overturn the Afghani regime—a use of the military for a political goal. The Taliban regime did not respond effectively to requests to extradite the criminals in their territory; therefore, the US invaded and installed a new regime. A series of agreements reestablished relations between the two states at the conclusion of hostilities. But what happens when the state simply

doesn't exist or when there are regions where the state has no control? One solution is to strengthen the existing state so it can cover the regions of its territory where it has no capacity to regulate. This is in effect what US forces are doing in Afghanistan. Another proposal is to use the US military wherever the domestic state is unable to confront al-Qaeda. This was the Bush administration plan.

Al-Qaeda as a Substitute for a State

Al-Qaeda and terror are not states. A *war on terror* cannot be concluded with a treaty between two states that regularizes diplomatic relations. There is no end to the *war on terror*. In order to maintain the war paradigm, President Bush substituted the al-Qaeda organization for a traditional state as the objective of the military action. The Congress's AUMF says that the President may use force "against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001." In his Military Order No. 1, President Bush refined the target to a person who:

- (i) is or was a member of the organization known as al Qaida; (ii) has engaged in, aided or abetted, or conspired to commit, acts of international terrorism. . .

In this the president simplified matters, for he gave the military an objective: an organization to destroy, much like defeating the military of a state. But an organization is neither a state nor a signatory to the Geneva Conventions. And al-Qaeda is not tied to a particular territory. Al-Qaeda is a transnational organization; it operates across state or national boundaries without state sponsorship or control—a non-territorial organization.

President Bush substituted al-Qaeda for the enemy state. Al-Qaeda fighters would be "enemy combatants," a term not recognized by the Geneva Conventions, who when captured would be held until hostilities ceased, just like prisoners of war. On this basis people are held in Guantánamo today. Joseph Lieberman, John McCain, Dick Cheney, Lindsay Graham, and much of the Republican Party think in these terms. The nation is at war against an organization, as if it were a war against an enemy state. For them there is no question—anybody with any

connection whatsoever to al-Qaeda is an “enemy combatant” and can be held at Guantánamo indefinitely, that is, until terror is “defeated,” like a state is defeated in traditional war.

When they use the war metaphor, though, they are making some political decisions. Whereas Geneva defines who belongs to the military and who can be held as a prisoner of war and who cannot, the Bush administration created a definition for who is subject to this war—a political act. They decided that al-Qaeda and its supporters are the enemy and anyone “belonging to” al-Qaeda is an enemy. Furthermore they said that the Pentagon would determine who belonged to al-Qaeda. No other power, not Congress or the Courts or any international organization would have any say with regard to the war because the President was reserving all judgments about the prisoners and the process to define their status.

Who Makes the Rules?

The Bush administration tried hard to keep the Federal Courts out of Guantánamo, but as the courts slowly eroded his executive exclusivity in a long series of legal battles between 2002 and 2008, the administration had to build some alternative legal foundation for the detentions. By the summer of 2004, the Supreme Court had ruled that Federal Courts indeed had jurisdiction in Guantánamo Bay and as a result the prisoners had the right to petition the Courts to determine the legality of their detention. In response, the Pentagon first created a “combatant status review tribunal” (CSRT) in order to establish a process by which the status of prisoners was determined. The CSRT was also part of the war paradigm; the Geneva Conventions state that when the status of a prisoner is unknown, the prisoner is to be treated like a prisoner of war, “. . . until such time as their status has been determined by a competent tribunal.” In the CSRT, though, the question asked was not whether the person was a prisoner of war, but whether he was an “enemy combatant.” “Enemy combatant” was used by the Bush administration to impose their own newly crafted legal definitions and to avoid international law. International law has only two categories: prisoner of war and civilian. There are no other categories. President Bush tried to create a new category to legally cover anyone that they suspected

of involvement in terrorism, but it has no basis in law. President Obama dropped the term and instead is using the term “substantially supporting al-Qaeda,” which has not lead to any greater clarity, as we shall see below.

The CSRT was meant to show the US courts that there was some sort of competent review process for the prisoners and, implicitly that there was no need for further court intervention.

In the meantime, the Republican-dominated Congress also responded to the Supreme Court’s ruling that prisoners had the right to judicial review by writing the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005 (DTA). The DTA severely limited both the right of the prisoners to petition for their release and the scope of their petitions. Congress effectively legislated away the prisoners’ right to independent judicial review. Finally, in the Boumediene case decided in 2008, the Supreme Court reversed the DTA. The Court found that there was a Constitutional right to the judicial review of detention that Congress could not legislate away and that the CSRT was not a substitute for that right. The legal briefings in the Boumediene case made it clear that the CSRT was not a “competent” tribunal at all.

All of this legal fighting was simply over the right of the prisoners to a review of the basis for their detention. The question of the criteria for detention had yet to be raised. President Bush had earlier determined that anyone connected with al-Qaeda or the Taliban in any way was legitimately held by the US as “enemy combatants,” a political decision.

When the first Habeas hearings were finally held—a review of detention by the courts—there was a new president sitting in the Oval Office. President Obama’s Department of Justice sidestepped the issue of the legality of detention in Guantánamo. The new DoJ proposed a slight modification of the Bush administration’s criteria for detainment by determining that it should be “substantial” support of al-Qaeda rather than just “support” of al-Qaeda. On that basis, Federal judges rapidly began ordering the release of prisoners. Of the first thirty-one that reached the courts, some twenty-six were ordered released (Lee, 2009). This means that the court found no credible evidence that these people had any relationship with al-Qaeda. And we must recall that at this point the

majority of the prisoners at Guantánamo had already been sent home. The cases that the Federal judges are reviewing now are only the cases in which the Obama government still wants to detain the prisoners. The six Yemeni prisoners that were returned to Yemen had either been ordered released by a judge or would have been ordered released in the estimation of the Department of Justice.

The Justice Department's proposed definition is only a proposal; it is not the result of Congressional legislation or a judicial finding, and the DC Circuit Courts where the cases are being heard are left struggling to define the meaning of "membership in" or "substantially supporting" al-Qaeda. As Judge Williams remarked in his dissent, in part and in concurrence with the Brown decision in the Bihani case:

The question whether a person was a "part of" [Bush's definition] an informal, non-state military organization like the 55th Brigade [the Arab brigade that fought with the Taliban on the conventional front against the Northern Alliance] overlaps significantly with the question whether that person "supported" or indeed "substantially" or "materially" supported [Obama's definition] the organization. Both these terms are highly elastic, ranging from core membership and support to vague affiliation and cheerleading.

The judge's comments point to a central difficulty in Bush's cut and paste policy. Domestic law would define precisely what is a crime. The legislative process of the domestic state defines the laws that citizens follow. International law defines precisely who is a member of military forces. In both cases, the definition is agreed upon by a political community, either the citizens of the nation-state or the members of the international community. But here, the US courts are trying to sort out the definition of the enemy while political pundits are trying the Yemeni prisoners in the court of public opinion based upon their own political agenda. Pundits and Congressional leaders seem to have made the decision—without viewing any evidence—that all of the Yemenis are of the dangerous sort, not cheerleaders, or perhaps they concluded that cheerleaders are dangerous as well. President Obama was forced, for political reasons, to

abandon any attempt to repatriate the Yemeni prisoners of Guantánamo.

Judge's Brown's concurrence (with her own majority opinion, which is now controlling case law in the US) exemplifies the pitfalls of this approach. She writes:

Absent such action, much of what our Constitution requires for this context remains unsettled. In this case, I remain mindful that the conflict in which al-Bihani [Yemeni cook for the Taliban] was captured was only one phase of hostilities between the United States and Islamic extremists. The legal issues presented by our nation's fight with this enemy have been numerous, difficult, and to a large extent novel. What drives these issues is the unconventional nature of our enemy: they are neither soldiers nor mere criminals, claim no national affiliation, and adopt long-term strategies and asymmetric tactics that exploit the rules of open societies without respect or reciprocity.

Perhaps what is novel is Judge Brown's determination to exclude all traditional jurisdictions, rather than the nature of the enemy. Judge Brown seems to believe that the enemy is, "...neither soldier nor mere criminal" and is not a citizen of a national state. (Don't we call them Yemenis?) So, in effect, in the *new war* paradigm the US must define who these people are and since they are neither members of a military nor citizens of a nation, then the US must make up law to deal with them. And for Judge Brown the enemy is not al-Qaeda or terrorists, but rather "Islamic extremists."

Wasn't it a *war on terror*?

There is little wonder then that the Yemenis ask the US, "On what basis are they being held?"

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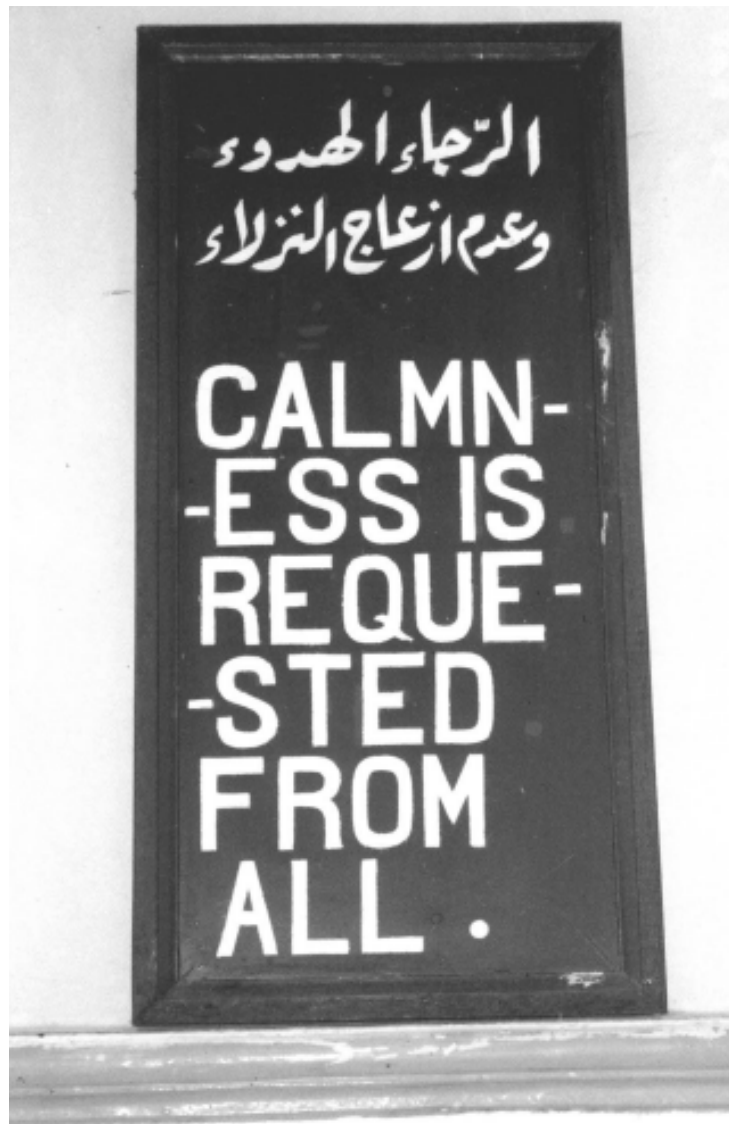
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"Calmness is Requested from All." Sign in the Hotel al-Qasr, Tarim, March 1996. Photograph by Maria deJ. Ellis.



Masna'at Maryah in Context



Recent Archaeological Research in the Dhamar Province

Krista Lewis

Introduction

Masna'at Maryah is among the largest and best-preserved of the archaeological sites in the Dhamar Province in the highlands of Yemen. It is a unique site with urban proportions and well-preserved remains; Masna'at Maryah ranks among the most important cultural heritage sites in Yemen. It is well known among scholars due to a large 14-line ancient South Arabian inscription, which is carved into the natural rock at one of the ancient town's gates. Masna'at Maryah was an important political and population center during the Himyarite period (1st c. BC-6th c. AD), but our recent research has greatly deepened and broadened our understanding of its importance. Recent seasons of survey, careful collection of material on the surface, and mapping have revealed: 1) varied ancient strategies of urban planning and regional land use, 2) evidence that the site and surrounding region were inhabited as early as the Neolithic period, and 3) disturbing patterns of contemporary destruction of important archaeological remains. In this article I briefly outline the results of the project to date, particularly the 2006 and 2008 field seasons of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Masna'at Maryah Archaeological Project, in the context of the project's ongoing aims.

Background

With a grant from AIYS, I initiated a new, ongoing phase of research concentrated on the site of Masna'at Maryah and the surrounding area in 2006. The project is founded on the results of the archaeological fieldwork that I conducted for my doctoral dissertation as well as the groundbreaking research conducted by the University of Chicago's Dhamar Survey Project (DSP) in the region since 1994. The Masna'at Maryah Project is a part of the DSP, and continues to pursue the research objectives of the larger project to investigate the relationship of agriculture, environment, and the political landscape

over time. Specifically, our current research targets a greater understanding of the important archaeological site of Masna'at Maryah, including its economy, chronology, and its relationship to the surrounding landscape and nearby archaeological sites. I currently direct the Masna'at Maryah Project from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in cooperation with the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) of Yemen.

Field Teams and Thanks

The Masna'at Maryah Project would not be possible without the joint effort of many dedicated and talented people. The archaeological team members and specialists who have joined us in the fieldwork are foremost in this list. The recent field teams have included Muslih al-Qubati (GOAM) and Salah al-Faqih (Dhamar Museum) in 2006. In 2008 William Isenberger (Digital Mapping & Graphics), Abdul Basset Noaman (GOAM), Salah al-Komany and Ahmad al-Assar (Dhamar Museum), and Elizabeth Sanders (UALR) were team members. In addition, Dr. Lamy Khalidi (University of Nice, Sophia-Antipolis, CEPAM-CNRS), Daniel Mahoney (University of Chicago), and Basel Khalil (UALR) were on both field seasons. The fieldwork was made possible by the assistance of Ali Sanabani, Director of Antiquities for Dhamar Province and of the Dhamar Museum. Special thanks are also due to the staff of GOAM in Sana'a including Dr. Abdallah Bawazir, GOAM Chairman, and Mohammed al-Asbahi, GOAM Director of Archaeology. No field project would ever be possible without dozens of others, too many to name here. I would like to thank those who drive, cook for, and generally offer hospitality and care to the team in the field, especially the Bugasha family of Maryah. The 2006 field season was funded by AIYS' and the 2008 field season was funded by the UALR Middle Eastern Studies Program.



Abdul Basset Noaman sets up the differential GPS base station used of the Masna'at Maryah map.

Masna'at Maryah Regional Survey Results

The Masna'at Maryah regional archaeological survey focused on the area surrounding the central site in order to better document the contemporary political and agricultural landscape surrounding it and to assess the possibility of survival of earlier archaeological remains in the area. We have been extremely successful in meeting both of these goals: during the 2006 field season alone we recorded 21 new significant archaeological sites and 72 landscape features. In addition, during the 2006 and 2008 seasons we selectively revisited important previously discovered sites in the area to assess their survival rates and to record their architecture and surface artifacts in greater detail. We have now comprehensively documented the ancient sites and features in an 18 square kilometer area surrounding the central site of Maryah (including the results of earlier field seasons of survey). In total we have now recorded 32 major archaeological sites and hundreds of ancient landscape features in the Masna'at Maryah area, most of them previously unknown. Highlights of the regional

survey are discussed here, but for a more thorough and technical reporting of the research results, please see the Lewis and Khalidi article in the *Proceedings for the Seminar of Arabian Studies* for 2008.²

Prehistory

During intensive archaeological walking surveys we recorded evidence of ancient remains for all periods, dating from the prehistoric Neolithic through relatively recent Islamic remains. The prehistoric materials are of particular importance because prehistoric remains are much more difficult to identify on an archaeological survey, and little prehistoric material had been recorded previously in this area. Because of the area's extensive occupation and use during the Himyarite period, many prehistoric remains may have been destroyed or obscured. Our intensive survey methods, however, have paid off and in recent seasons we have been able to locate significant prehistoric materials in the study area. We recovered excellent examples of Neolithic period lithic bifaces (a stone object that has been worked, chipped, on both sides in order to create a tool) from the site of Masna'at Maryah itself, the valley to the east of Maryah, and on the site of Ashraf (DS15); the diagnosis of this material provides proof, at last, of an extensively long period of occupation in this important area. The bifacial Neolithic arrow points that we recovered were made of obsidian. We have also documented a natural obsidian source in the survey area, which was utilized from prehistoric through early historic periods and was an important source of materials for stone tools throughout the survey area. One of the most intriguing aspects of the prehistoric manipulation of the landscape in the study area is the placement of megalithic stones and stone structures in prominent high places throughout the survey area.

Iron Age and Himyarite

In addition to Masna'at Maryah itself, there are 11 other significant Himyarite archaeological sites in the region, including two substantial village-sized sites which may have been key political, economic and population satellites of Maryah. Early historic Iron Age and Himyarite period landscape features in the Masna'at Maryah area include traces of ancient roads and paths leading to and between the Himyarite sites



Dr. Lamya Khalidi maps a megalithic structure using the GPS rover.

in the area, and a number of water cisterns that served the people using these paths and living in the area. Other features recorded in the landscape during survey, many of which may date to the Himyarite period, include isolated structures, such as multi-ring circular structures that were most likely tombs. The largest Himyarite feature in the survey area is a monumental stone built water cistern (*Birka Saadan*), roughly circular and 100 meters in diameter. The walls of this cistern were constructed of large stones cut and set in typical Himyarite architectural style.

Ancient roads documented in this area include pathways bordered by stone walls and pathways constructed of stone paved steps. The recovery and mapping of the remnants of the Himyarite road system in the area is extremely important, particularly considering the text of the monumental Musnad inscription located on the Bab al-Asad al-Kamal, one of the main gates to the site of Maryah (ancient Samian). The text of this 14-line inscription (previously translated and published in 1978 by Müller³) discusses the building of roads from Samian throughout the region to the territories of neighboring

Masna'at Maryah's unique state of preservation, with buildings, streets, and other evidence for cultural activity still visible on the surface of the site—even without excavation—gives us an unparalleled opportunity to understand town planning and settlement strategies.

tribes and villages as well as pathways within the town itself. The inner city pathways mentioned in the inscription were also recorded in detail by the team as we undertook the monumental task of producing a city map of the archaeological remains of Samian itself.

Mapping Masna'at Maryah

Documentation and mapping of sites such as Maryah provide essential information about life in ancient cities and serve as the keystone for all future research at the site. The 2008 field season was primarily dedicated to the major goal of creating a detailed, three-dimensional map of Masna'at Maryah. The completed map records in fine detail the topography of the site and the precise locations of all the buildings, streets, water cisterns, activity areas, and other cultural features visible on the surface of this large 40.4 ha site.

To create the Maryah map, cartographer William Isenberger led the way using sophisticated differential GPS equipment composed of a base station and a roving data collection unit (Odyssey-E RTK GPS). This system allows sub-centimeter accuracy and an operating range of four to six miles from the base station. The RTK was used to establish a permanent site grid system, map the topography of the site, and record the site's cultural features including buildings, streets, and cisterns. The Masna'at Maryah map is far more than just a single paper representation of where things are at the site. The resulting maps are dynamic, multi-layered datasets, enabling us to manipulate and display the varied physical and cultural elements that make up the site of Masna'at Maryah. It provides the basis for all future work at the site and will grow and develop as research at Masna'at Maryah progresses.

Urban Space and Artifact Distributions at Masna'at Maryah

Masna'at Maryah's unique state of preservation, with buildings, streets, and other evidence for cultural activity still visible on the surface of the site—even without excavation—gives us an unparalleled opportunity to understand town planning and settlement strategies. Himyarite period sites throughout the Dhamar survey area illustrate a Himyarite preference for building settlements and structures on elevated locations with potential for symbolic and actual control over diverse and topographically divided territory, routes of travel, and resources. Masna'at Maryah is no exception; it is located on a high flat plateau at the western edge of the central Yemeni highlands. To the northeast, the site overlooks rugged agricultural territory, while to the southwest of the site the land drops precipitously down towards the distant Tihamah coastal plains and the Red Sea.

At around 100 acres in size, Masna'at Maryah was a very large settlement for ancient highland Yemen. This plateau top town is comprised of three major use zones partially encased in a monumental stone built town wall and accessed by at least thirteen city gates. The central part of the site is an approximately 18 ha. area complex of large stone building mounds separated by streets and courtyards. The mounds are tall heaps of stone rubble rising up to over 10 meters in height in many places, indicating a probability that many buildings were originally multi-story structures. Remnants of walls and other intact structural elements are visible, along with scattered smaller material culture. Some of the large buildings in this central “downtown” area of Maryah appear to be related to religious and elite governmental functions, although without excavation it is impossible to irrefutably verify their purpose. The buildings in this dense central part of the site are clustered around a large triangular water cistern which may have served ritual as well as the daily needs for the residents of the plateau.

The second area of the site, to the northwest of the high, central zone, is an area where the structures are less dense. The scattered structures located throughout this northern area are smaller, lower, and more highly weathered than those in the central part of the site, but they are still well within the confines of the

This section of paved, stepped road that we recorded in 2002 was the longest and finest example of ancient road technology and planning that I have seen anywhere in Yemen. Its loss is an enormous blow to the heritage register in Yemen as well as to the potential tourist appeal of the Maryah area.

Himyarite city walls. These buildings may not be older in date than the structures in “downtown” Maryah, but simply have been subject to a higher degree of post-occupation stone robbing. Regardless of the date of the structures in the northern part of Maryah, this area of the site has a large amount of open space without structures, the purpose of which could have been anything from urban gardens, stock raising areas, market space, or simply a space reserved against increased building and settlement expansion that never occurred.

The southeastern portion of the site is an appendix-like portion of the Maryah plateau, accessible from central Maryah by a relatively narrow strip of land. In this area, the structures are of a different character, composed of very large stones often of megalithic proportions, less highly mounded, and with very little associated rubble. The most striking element of this part of the site is a large street or processional way which traverses much of the length of the appendix peninsula; it is bordered on both sides by a double row of large erect stone slabs. This area of the site also contains a number of megalithic dolmen-like structures, located near the edges of the plateau. A few similar megalithic elements also exist in the other parts of Masna'at Maryah, likewise in prominent locations close to the edges of the plateau. They may have been intended either as “markers,” to be visible and identifiable from distant points or as places of observation. These megalithic structures may date to earlier, prehistoric phases of occupation at the site.

During the mapping of the site we simultaneously undertook a systematic surface collection across the entire site in order to better understand the function of various buildings, features, and spaces across the site



Remnant of an ancient Himyarite stepped stone paved road, which was almost entirely destroyed by recent modern road construction.

as well as the effects of stone robbing and erosion at Masna' at Maryah. The surface collection allowed us to assess the distribution of cultural artifacts across the site's surface. Artifacts recorded include ceramics, lithics, iron slag, shell, bone, grinding stones and decorated architectural fragments. The surface collection data was entered into a specially created database and plotted into a site GIS along with the spatial map data. We are using this data to identify places where production or consumption took place as well as to better understand the chronology of the site. For example, where earlier ceramic types or lithic technologies are concentrated in particular parts of the site it can indicate the presence of older occupation phases in those areas.

Destruction of archaeological remains in and around Masna' at Maryah

During our survey and mapping activities we have documented damage to the site of Masna' at Maryah from illicit excavations. Unfortunately, each time I visit the site there is evidence of new looting activity.

Despite the efforts of local archaeologists and the presence of two site guards, the sheer size of the site makes it close to impossible to control all access to the plateau, and especially during nighttime hours. Recent incidents include the looting of a rock-cut tomb on the northeast slopes of the Maryah plateau, and the excavation of a structure associated with the inscription gate in the southwest perimeter of the site. There needs to be an increase in the resources expended in order to provide security for this valuable and irreplaceable cultural heritage site.

In addition, other archaeological sites and features in the area have been adversely affected by illicit looting and other modern activities. The site of DS381, for example, has been almost completely destroyed since we first recorded it during the 2002 field season. The site is now heavily disturbed by field clearance and looter's holes. The Himyarite site of al-Adhla (DS20), which I excavated with a team of students from the University of Dhamar in 2001, has been largely encroached upon by construction of new agricultural terraces. Terraces have been constructed by removing the building mounds and using the stones in the new field walls. The highest point of the site was, until recently, crowned by a prominent stepped building with probable administrative or religious function, but now is completely razed to an empty field. The central area of the site, near the location of the previous excavations, is the only area still in the same condition that it was when we last saw the site. At the current rate of field building, it is unlikely that anything from this site will remain after two or three more years at best. The limited excavations conducted in 2001 show that DS20 is an important site with great potential to illuminate details of Himyarite daily life and food practices.⁴

Perhaps the most disturbing and dangerous incidence of the destruction of archaeological remains that I witnessed recently was the destruction of an ancient paved Himyarite road south of the main site of Maryah. This section of paved, stepped road that we recorded in 2002 was the longest and finest example of ancient road technology and planning that I have seen anywhere in Yemen. Its loss is an enormous blow to the heritage register in Yemen as well as to the potential tourist appeal of the Maryah area. The worst aspect of this situation is that the ancient road was

destroyed by the construction of a new modern road—not by local actions or looting that might be beyond the hand of government intervention, but rather by the government itself.

The site and its surrounding archaeological features should be protected from poorly studied and executed development projects in the region that are rapidly destroying the important archaeological landscapes of historically significant sites such as Masna'at Maryah. At the current rate of rapid development and road building in Yemen, a greater degree of communication between development planners and archaeologists is needed. In addition, steps should be taken to reduce incentives for Yemeni villagers to conduct looting activities. Educational programs and efforts to increase a local sense of stewardship over archaeological remains are more likely to have positive effects on archaeological preservation than punitive measures. The sites and landscape features that we have recorded in the Maryah area are testimony to the fact that many important archaeological remains are found through-

out the landscape of the highlands, and we must work together to record and to protect them.

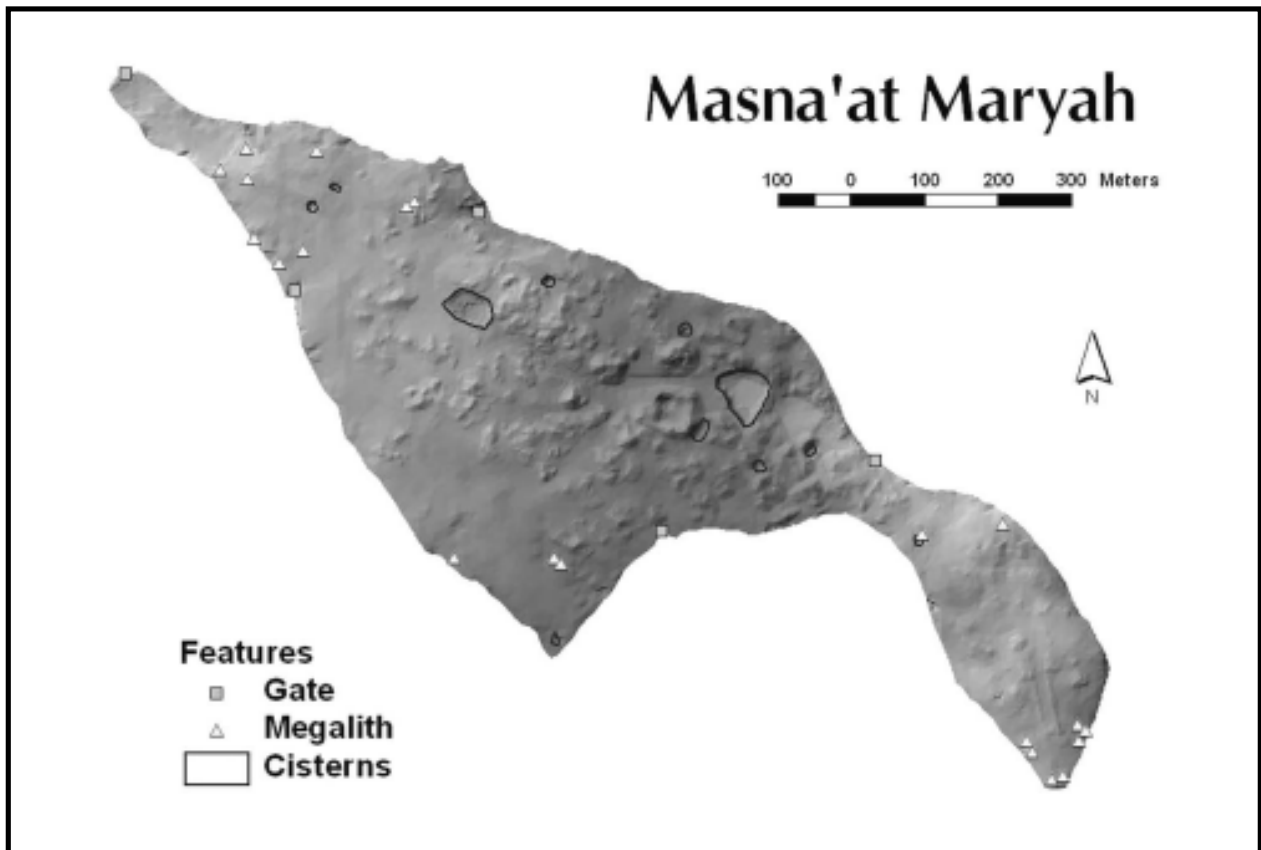
Notes

1. Krista Lewis was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 2005-2006 competition. The title of her fellowship proposal was “Himyarite Political and Agricultural Landscape Project.”

2. Krista Lewis & Lamya Khalidi, “From prehistoric landscapes to urban sprawl: the Masna'at Maryah region of highland Yemen,” *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 38 (2008) 215–30. Papers from the forty-first meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held in London, 19-21 July 2007.

3. Müller, W. W., “Die Sabäische Felsinschrift von Masna'at Mariya, in: R. Degen, W. W. Müller, and W. Röllig (eds.), *Neue Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, iii (1978) 137-48.

4. Krista Lewis, *Space and the Spice of Life: Food, Politics, and Landscape in Ancient Yemen*. PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2005.



Masna'at Maryah relief map depicting building mounds and other features of the site.



Poetry in Practice

A Literary *Majlis* in Sana'a



Matthew Saba

The only way I can explain the majlis to my colleagues here is that it was a sort of Yemeni poetry slam.

Since returning from Yemen in September 2007, I haven't been able to bring up my trip without sparking an extended conversation. Being a graduate student, it usually starts out with someone asking "Have you been to the Middle East to do research?" and ends with my raving about how they need to forget all they've heard about Yemen and be on the next flight to Sana'a. Well, the next flight to Frankfurt or Cairo via London or New York where they can *then* hop on that flight to Yemen. Those of us who have experienced Yemen are all too familiar with its "off the radar" status around here. In the minds of many Americans, Yemen is no more real than it is on that infamous *Friends* episode where one of the characters ready to be rid of his nagging girlfriend tells her he's moving to "15 Yemen Road, Yemen." That is to say, to the middle of nowhere. Even the Yemenis who own the corner grocery in my neighborhood almost choked on their coffee when I told them I had just returned from Sana'a. For me, talking about Yemen is a chance to disabuse my colleagues of a host of stereotypes that have become associated with its name, and I tend to take the opportunity whenever it arises.

There are many experiences I had in Yemen that I could share here, but one that I continually find myself retelling is about the weekly *majlis* that I started to attend in Sana'a with my Arabic instructor. *Majlis* is an Arabic word that is related to the word "to sit" (*jalasa*) and does not have a precise translation. In the medieval Islamic world, the *majlis* was a social gathering, usually in a private home, where anything from astronomy to politics to theology (actually not unrelated) could be discussed. Cutting-edge poetry

was recited, music performed and some of the greatest works of *adab* (belles-lettres) came out of the *majlis* setting. Today the *majlis* is alive in Yemen and is an important part of social life in Sana'a.

Usually, my teacher and I would meet for class and then go out for *salta*, a meat-and-vegetable stew topped with a one-of-a-kind fenugreek "froth" that would give the edgy *restaurateurs* of Chicago a run for their money. After that, we would proceed to the Foundation for Literature and Culture (*Mu'assassa lil-Adab wal-Thaqafa*), a cultural center with a library and facilities for scholars and literature lovers, to attend the weekly *majlis*. The *majlis* was usually run by one of the heads of the Foundation. There was a strict etiquette about when and how to speak that you would have never guessed from watching. People came and went, sat down and got up, talked to their neighbors and talked to the crowd.

The only way I can explain the *majlis* to my colleagues here is that it was a sort of Yemeni poetry slam. The audience was mostly younger academic types and a few older, more seasoned writers. The turn to speak would move around, not in a circle but back and forth, having more to do with one idea

In the medieval Islamic world, the majlis was a social gathering, usually in a private home, where anything from astronomy to politics to theology (actually not unrelated) could be discussed. Cutting-edge poetry was recited, music performed and some of the greatest works of adab (belles-lettres) came out of the majlis setting. Today the majlis is alive in Yemen and is an important part of social life in Sana'a.

As the novice, I was able to get away with playing dumb for a while, but eventually it was my turn to speak.

building off another than anything else. Poetry or short essays were read from memory or notebooks; criticism was offered, applause given. Admit it or not, we have a negative stereotype here of amateur poetry writers, and we don't take them too seriously. I can't stress enough how different the situation is in Yemen. Also, quoting the poetry of others is important. It isn't just rote memorization but part of any budding poet's education, and is a part of the innovation-via-imitation process that Arabic poetry thrives on. It isn't so different from our own tradition, in fact. We only need to turn to T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and Individual Talent"

(1917) to find a similar idea expressed on paper.

As the novice, I was able to get away with playing dumb for a while, but eventually it was my turn to speak. I wasn't about to try my hand at writing a real poem in Arabic, I can't even do that in English. Instead, my Arabic teacher and I translated an English poem into Arabic for presentation to the *majlis*. We chose Robert Frost's "Desert Places" (*A Further Range*, 1936) because we wanted a poem by a "classic" American writer that used imagery and vocabulary indicative of the American tradition. Plus, it's one of my all-time favorites. Needless to say, finding an idiom true to the tone in Arabic was no easy task. This was further complicated by the difference in the Arabic and English metrical systems. English meter is based on stressed syllables while the Arabic tradition employs a number of rhythms (*buhur*) that are broken down into patterns of quiescent (*sakin*)



A group of students recite poems at a poetry day at the University of Sana'a. Photograph: Matthew Saba, 2007.

and movent (*mutaharrik*) consonants. It's very difficult for non-native speakers to hear, but when you catch on, it opens up a whole new experience.

When I presented our translation to the *majlis*, I got a huge number of questions. The audience wanted to know what English meter and rhyme were like; they hadn't realized that they were important. I tried to explain that they were very important, so important that eventually people felt the need to reject them altogether in order to make a statement. I don't think it was expressed that clearly, but the group seemed to get it. I also got a question about the difference between modern and traditional poetry in the English tradition. I think I said something about Maya Angelou and T.S. Eliot and Shakespeare, that I probably wouldn't want to quote here. At any rate, the experience made a lasting impression on me, and I promptly signed up for an Arabic poetry class when I returned to Chicago.

My time at the *majlis* proved to be a huge help. I was better prepared for the metrical scansion that was

...my Arabic teacher and I translated an English poem into Arabic for presentation to the majlis. We chose Robert Frost's "Desert Places" (A Further Range, 1936) because we wanted a poem by a "classic" American writer that used imagery and vocabulary indicative of the American tradition.

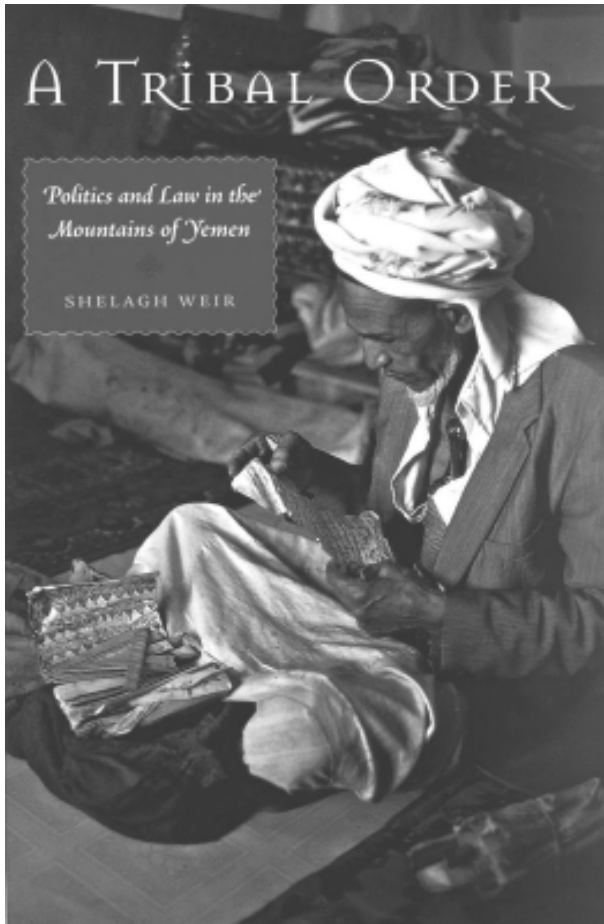
When I presented our translation to the majlis, I got a huge number of questions. The audience wanted to know what English meter and rhyme were like; they hadn't realized that they were important.

a vital part of the course, and I already had memorized one of the required poems, an ode by Abu Firas al-Hamadani (932-968). It turns out that this poem had been set to music by two of the most popular singers in Yemen; I had heard it repeatedly in restaurants, taxis, and other places. It should not come as a surprise that a poem, over 1,000 years old, was still important in Yemeni society. Poetry, both traditional and contemporary, absolutely pervades the place, and knowledge of the tradition fuels the production of new material. The *majlis* that I attended was only one example of such gatherings where these exchanges occur. For me, having experienced the way that poetry was a part of everyday life in Yemen made reading the same poems in a classroom thousands of miles away suddenly seem more substantive.

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Yemen Update Reviews



A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen, by Shelagh Weir.
British Museum Press and Texas University Press
(Austin), 2007.
ISBN 13: 9780292714236. 390 pp.

Reviewed by Charles Schmitz, Towson University,
Baltimore, Maryland.

Weir's book is not only "superb.....destined to become one of the major works of Middle Eastern ethnography," as Steve Caton proclaims on the book's jacket but *A Tribal Order* is also an important contribution to Yemeni studies in general. Thirty-plus years of fieldwork have been distilled into carefully researched and insightful arguments about tribal social

Shelagh Weir Wins a Prestigious Book Prize!

A Tribal Order was joint winner of the British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize for the best scholarly work on the Middle East published in the UK in 2007. The prize is administered by the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (see <www.brismes.ac.uk>)

A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen by Shelagh Weir (The British Museum Press). This admirably readable work of anthropology describes the politico-legal system in an area of northern Yemen. The reviewer commented: "She explores in impressive detail the tribal system, tribal governance, law and politics, and state and tribal relations, the latter crucial to our understanding of Yemen today." The book is the result not only of extensive fieldwork but the examination of some 350 Arabic documents describing for example the minutiae of land transactions on the one hand and defence pacts on the other. The judges agreed with the judgment of the reviewer that overall "the book is a remarkable achievement in adding greatly to our understanding of this complex tribal world" and, they would add, to dispelling notions of the uniformity of tribal systems.

Comment from the presentation ceremony by Sir Harold Walker.

relations, the relationship between tribes and the state, and the role of tribes in Yemeni history and modernity—intellectual quagmires that have long occupied observers of Yemen. *A Tribal Order* is a must-read for all those interested in Yemen as well as those interested in tribes, politics, and modernity in the Middle East.

The book is composed in three parts. The first part covers the 'tribal system,' the social order, describing

in rich detail the environment, economy, and social relations of Razih, a region in the far northwest of Yemen, west of Sada but east of the Tihama plain. In this first section, the second chapter on social inequality is particularly insightful, offering an unusually close look at the texture of life in tribal society. It is here that Weir's incredibly rich and insightful ethnographic work offers us an opportunity to almost live within this particular tribal society. In describing gender relations, for example, Weir not only details the values and social practices that marginalize women, but she also reveals the anxieties and vulnerabilities of men and how women can sometimes exploit these. The 'social order' is the foundation for the second part of the book, which describes tribal governance, the political order. Here we find what she describes as "Malinowski's 'codes, constables and courts.'" In this second part Weir makes her arguments about internal tribal governance, which are very important for all those interested in tribes in the Middle East and in Yemen. In the third section Weir outlines the history and nature of tribal relations with central states; we could call this the 'geopolitical' order of the tribal system. While this third section is also important for those thinking about tribe-state relations in general, this section is particularly important for scholars and observers of Yemen for there may be no topic with greater conceptual confusion in Yemen than tribe-state relations. Weir offers an exceptionally well documented historical analysis of the relationships between tribe and central state in the region of Razih.

Weir's central argument is that there is a 'tribal order,' a social system of tribal relations, whose purpose is the maintenance of social order and the avoidance of violence, contrary to the recurrent theme of tribal unruliness, disorder, and impulsive violence. Weir questions the dominant paradigm of tribal order derived from Gellner's conception of segmentary society in which tribal society is built upon the mutual deterrence of multi-scaled and recombinant, but non-permanent, opposing social groupings. In this view, power and aggression are only deterred by the fear of retribution from an opposing group and tribes have no stable 'law' to which individuals are subject. Opposing blocks negotiate solutions or take action at the scale at which the issue at hand can be resolved, after which the opposing blocks dissolve. In contrast,

I understand Weir to emphasize that tribal order is built upon an ethic, a view of propriety and social good that is institutionalized in traditions so that 'law' is upheld to maintain peace and order within social groups rather than simply out of fear of retribution from an opposing tribal unit. Tribal ethics, for example, make 'ganging up'—an unfair fight—a repulsive act in tribal mores and tribesmen will use force against a fellow tribesman in order to enforce tribal order; individuals are subject to a standard.

Tribal social organization, therefore, has more permanence and less fluidity than often assumed. Weir questions Dresch's 'linguistic' approach to tribal social organization in which tribal relations are a mental 'organizing principle' that can be reproduced in various contexts, far from their local origins. She argues for an 'ecologically'—grounded view of tribal social relations that are more permanent and that retain some root in the local economy and ecology. If tribal relations are rooted in local economy and ecology, though, a change in the economy will bring the end of tribal relations, a very important point that Weir alludes to in her conclusion. Rootedness in local economy also implies that tribal social organization may vary regionally and be more geographically specific than is often assumed. Her picture of a tribal order may be quite different from tribal relations in other parts of Yemen, much less the rest of the Middle East. Weir notes, for example, that tribal leadership in Razih has not formed larger political groupings that influence national politics such as occurred with Hashid.

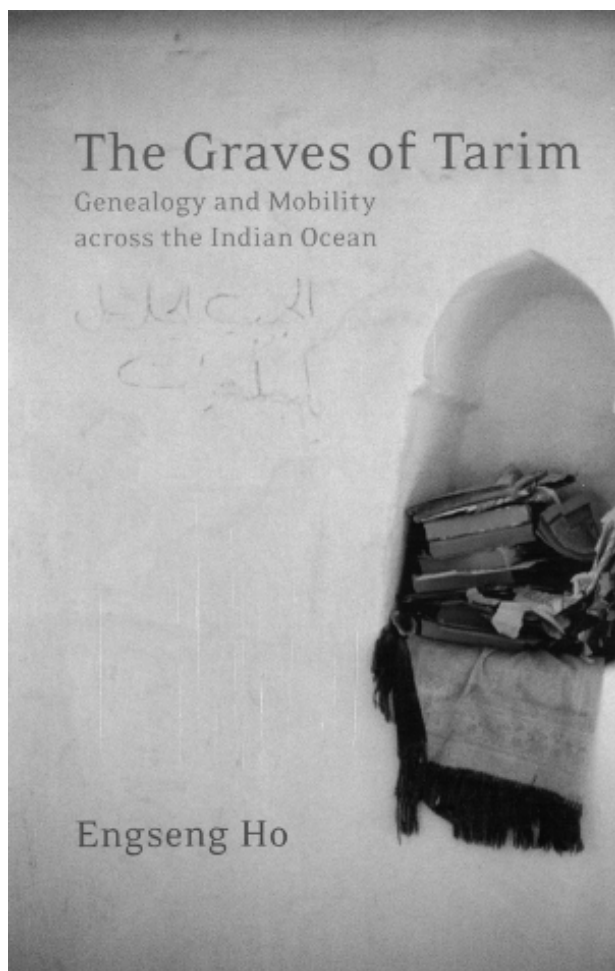
The idea of tribal order also contrasts with the state-centric view that tribes and the state are antithetical and mutually exclusive. Weir's tribes are local political units, microstates, located in definite territories. As such, relations with central states are less like the edges of a rug unraveling in tribal disorder and more like complex articulations between tribal political groups and a larger central state in which tribes seek to maintain their own sovereignty as much as possible while also working within the larger order of the state that benefits tribes. The tribes of Razih are involved in commercial relations, for example, that encourage cooperation at the larger geographic scales that central states can provide. States benefit as well from the 'order' that tribal governance brings. The

administrative divisions of the modern Yemeni state, for example, largely parallel the geographic divisions of tribal groupings in Razih. And contrary to the oft-heard equation of tribes and backwardness, tribal order, in Weir's view, is also not opposed to development, something that many academic observers of Yemen have noted, but that is ignored by those who for various reasons want to portray tribes as an impediment to modernization. Weir sees tribal order facilitating the development of infrastructure such as roads, schools and water projects.

Although at times it is not an easy read for those not accustomed to the myriad details of an ethnographic work, *A Tribal Order* is richly rewarding and highly recommended. Her arguments are important conceptual contributions that need to be considered by all those interested in Yemeni studies as well as Middle Eastern studies. Fire up the cappuccino press (or head on down to the *qat* market, if in Yemen) and dedicate the best part of your thinking day to a copy of Weir's *A Tribal Order*.



Yemeni boy at his door. Photograph: Carolyn Han 2000.



Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean, Engseng Ho.

University of California Press (Series: World History Library), 2006.

ISBN 13: 978-0-520-24454-2. 396 pp.

Reviewed by Charles Schmitz, Towson University, Baltimore, Maryland.

How the specific and the general coexist in any situation is never obvious but can at moments be perceived if one looks closely or listens carefully (p. 217).

There is no author better suited to the careful listening and careful observation than Engseng Ho. While sipping tea, “Hadrami Whiskey,” in dusty rundown hotels in the Hadramawt and listening very, very carefully, Ho was able to peer deeply into the interrelated semiotics of old dry manuscripts, gravesites, and some rather lost souls looking for

passports. Ho’s *The Graves of Tarim* is a delightful and brilliant intellectual journey replete with a steady string of insights into critical issues in the disciplines of anthropology, history, and political science viewed through the course of five hundred years of history of the Hadrami Sada and their Alawi Path in the Indian Ocean. (The Hadrami Sada are a religious elite in the Hadramawt whose members claim descent from the Prophet and whose collective doctrines came to be called the “Alawi Path.”) Ho asks how people from such a desolate and isolated region of Hadramawt, and Tarim in particular, have come to play such important roles in the modern history of the Indian Ocean; Hadrami Sada today occupy key government positions in many nations around the Indian Ocean. He argues that the Hadrami Sada were able to spread and create an empire of a different order than the European ones of the age of mercantilism and industrial capitalism, colonies and independent states by transforming Tarim’s graveyards into places of invocation of the path of the Alawi order and through the mobile genealogical texts that help maintain that tradition while geographically distant from Tarim. In the 13th century C.E., the “First Jurist,” a central figure in the historiography of the Hadrami Sada, broke his sword over his knee in a symbolic act wedding the Hadrami Sada to a tradition of pacifism and mediation. What really distinguishes the Hadrami Sada, however, is their ability to retain their cultural ties with Tarim—and their own particular identities—and at the same time become very much “locals” in the geographically disparate and varied societies, and now nation-states, to which they have emigrated—an alternative cosmopolitanism that is not celebrated in today’s “globalisms.”

Graves of Tarim is divided into three sections: (1) Burial, or the development of Tarim as the geographical heart of the Alawi order and the creation of the gravesite as a site of meaning; (2) Genealogical Travel, or the unique ways that the Hadramis as Sayyids spread into South Asia and the Malay Archipelago, inserting themselves as key local actors in society using their learned tradition as opposed to brute force or commercial power; and finally, (3) Returns, in which Ho examines the impact of the Hadrami “empire” on local society in Tarim and in particular the fate of the *muwalladin*—the creole

Sada (descendants of Sada and non-Sada marriages) from the expanses of empire that have returned to Tarim. The book is dedicated to these rootless cosmopolitans whose difficulties Ho first encountered in southern Yemen in the early 1990's.

The book opens with the attack and destruction of the tomb of the famous Adeni Sayyid Aydarus by *Salafi* activists. While most read this event as a continuation of the northern invasion of the south following the civil war in 1994, I read it slightly differently—as an attack on the northern regime itself by *Salafi* activists wanting to directly confront the Saleh regime and the opening shots in the Yemeni “war on terror” as the regime responded against these “extremists” challenging Sana'a's power. Ho asks us to look beyond immediate political or economic explanations of the attack to the significance of the graves and their destruction. After all, either way, if one is intent upon opening a war on the northern regime or intent on establishing a northern presence in southern Yemen, why attack a graveyard? It is not exactly the most potent of military targets; its deceased occupants offer little resistance. Ho answers this question by arguing that the graves are a central part of the Alawi order. They are the site at which the cosmological and genealogical order of the Hadrami Sada is continually reproduced in the present. The Hadrami Sada claim the lineage of the Prophet and by speaking the name of these dead invoke an emanation of the divine and at the same time by voicing the names of past saints reinforce the Hadrami Sada as carriers of that Prophetic tradition. So the attack in Aden was seen as a northern attack on the south because much of the leadership of the failed secessionist movement was of Hadrami Sada origin, Ali Salim al-Beidh and al-Jifry in particular. Much like the Republican regime's use of *Salafi* activists against Zaidi royalists in the north, the northern regime was seen as releasing its extremist religious mob on the south and in the context of the significance of the graves for the Hadrami Sada, an attack on the religious and social order of this historically powerful southern elite whose networks extend far into the eastern and the western shores of the Indian Ocean, and beyond.

After developing the semiotic significance of the gravesite, the first section of the book foreshadows the division of the book into three sections, documenting

the origins and establishment of the Alawi order in Tarim, the transformation of Tarim from a destination to a place of origin for emigrants and finally the development of a “fierce localism” that manages Tarim's identity in the face of the influx of Sada and their progeny from Indonesia, Malaysia, East Africa, etc. Various historic factors converge to create Tarim as the geographic epicenter of Hadrami Sada life: a lineage from the prophet Mohammed in the form of the “migrant,” a descendant of the prophet through Fatima and Ali who arrived from Basra in the 10th century C.E.; a mystical infusion of sufi lineage from Morocco; a set of genealogical texts that enable the transport of the institutional visions of the Alawi order in Tarim to other places, and finally, returning “home” to Tarim in pilgrimages to the graveyards of the Hadrami Sada. The emergence of an institutionalized Alawi order in the 15th century coincides with the development of a new Islamic order in the Indian Ocean as trade routes shifted from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. In the Muslim Indian Ocean, the Hadrami Sada inserted themselves into local societies as prized possessors of learned knowledge. Finally, the first section returns to the issue of the maintenance of Tarim's identity as the epicenter of Hadrami Sada existence, while at the same time balancing the cosmopolitan, non-local aspect of a diaspora of half a millennium.

The second section examines the Hadrami diaspora in the Indian Ocean and beyond. Genealogical texts carry the names of the Hadrami Sada, but in the institutionalization of the Alawi order these genealogies also carry the aura of a learned, sacred Islamic tradition attached to the names. In the context of the Muslim Indian Ocean, then, the Hadrami Sada became an important, powerful, and integrated part of local society, while at the same time maintaining their unique Hadrami identity. Ho presents examples from two cases in particular, Gujarat in the 16th century and the Malacca Straits in the 18th century. In Gujarat, religious adepts, as Ho calls them, provided important services to powerful administrators educating those that serve the state in religion such as the *mamluk* administrators and military. Religious adepts were thus highly regarded for their skills and received the patronage of the powerful, enabling them to play an influential role in local society. In the Malacca Straits various local circumstances allowed

Hadrami Sada to become powerful local actors. In one case, local tradition held that an invading power be given the throne and the former indigenous ruler become chief advisor to the new ruler. Thus Hadrami Sada came to rule local states in some cases. In another case, local rulers intent on “civilizing” their power—after having accumulated their riches through piracy—welcomed the learning of the Hadrami Sada and their teachings. Here the Hadrami Sada were seen as purveyors of moral good and builders of a stable society and, accordingly, were given the powerful role of guardians of social mores. In these many different ways, Hadrami Sada with their learned wisdom emerged in local societies as important and often powerful members of local society.

Not only did the Hadrami Sada integrate into local society, they themselves became local. Hadrami Sada took local wives and their offspring became Sada, i.e. Hadrami Sada. Females of the lineage were not allowed to marry out of the family lines, but males did marry outside taking local wives. The descendants of such marriages were Alawi Sada, and although they retained a descent line to the Hadramawt and, critically, maintained the social tradition of the Hadrami Sada, they also became thoroughly local in language, custom, and even phenotype—a very unique cosmopolitanism indeed. When these Hadrami creoles appear again in Tarim, however, the textual tradition of the Alawi order cannot encompass the entirety of Hadrami experience and the tensions with reality sit awkwardly under an austere surface.

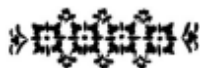
In the final section called Returns, Ho documents the emergence in the Alawi tradition of a pilgrimage to Tarim, the geographic origins of the order. With the return of “Hadramis” to Yemen from the diaspora, however, some uneasiness arises; modern conceptions of citizenship in the nation-state rest uneasily with the Hadrami Sada’s cosmopolitanism. At the same time, their very cosmopolitanism seems to bother the locals in the hometown as the *muwallids*—those creoles of Hadrami lineage but varied origins, such as Malay, Indian, Indonesian, or Ethiopian—find the fountain of their exalted lineage to be a dusty, hot town in the middle of the desert with rather restrictive

cultural mores that chafe with their sense of what life should be.

The genealogies were written with an eye to blending the Hadrami Sada lineage with Islam itself, giving the lineage of the Sada mobility beyond the Hadramawt. On the other hand, another tradition of written manuals for the art of visitation to Tarim’s graves strives to anchor the diaspora in the geographic origins of the Alawi order in Tarim.

In the third section Ho narrates not only the creation of a textual tradition of the return, but also the modern history of the lived experience of Tarim and the Hadramawt. Here he reveals the awkward and sometimes difficult accommodation of Hadrami Sada’s cosmopolitanism, which is at odds with the concepts of modern nation-states, with its rootedness in fixed territories. The local lived experience of the *muwallads* in Tarim also reveals these cosmopolitans’ difficulties with the place of their “origins” in Tarim. Young locals of Sada lineage raised in Malaysia, and recently evicted from Kuwait by the Iraqi invasion, debate the relative advantages of Yemeni or Malaysian passports, as they have no passports at the moment—and thus no national identity. As Ho suggests, they may more often see the remote and austere ethics of Tarim as an inconvenient stopover rather than the final pilgrimage envisioned in the texts of the Alawi order. Tarim itself appears somewhat awkward with the cosmopolitan sons and daughters its Alawi Path has spawned far from Tarim’s desert oasis. In his careful consideration of these issues, Ho presents a much more nuanced narrative of the construction of colonialism than the usual narrative of powerful empire and transformed and oppressed locals.

The *Graves of Tarim* is an ethnographic delight that skillfully transgresses many of the conceptual boundaries accepted as truth in our histories of the emergence of modern nation-states and their categories of identity. It is a must read for those interested in Yemen and its relation to the Indian Ocean as well as those interested in modern concepts of identity, nationalism, and globalism.





Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen, Lisa Wedeen.

University of Chicago Press (Series: Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning), 2008.

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-87791-4 (paper); 978-0-226-87790-7 (cloth). 320 pp., 6 halftones, 4 maps.

Review by Charles Schmitz, Towson University, Baltimore, Maryland.

Peripheral Visions is a short set of particularly poignant questions about Yemeni politics that captures some of the most salient characteristics of the country. Wedeen asks: what does it mean to be a Yemeni, how does the meaning of Yemeni nationalism relate to the state's practice of power, what exactly is democracy and how do we recognize it, how do we conceptualize social differences such as ethnicity and religious divisions, and what is the relationship between economic reforms and pious politics? She addresses these questions by asking how certain prominent schools of thought in the literature of

political science might answer them. She then artfully employs the literature and empirical case material in a technique that she describes as "tacking between" theory and evidence, theory and case study—a technique she uses here with eloquent flourish to enrich both our understanding of Yemen and the literature of political science.

Each of the five chapters addresses a major issue relevant to both Yemeni studies and political science alike. The first chapter takes a journey through modern Yemeni history and the achievement of Yemeni unity, particularly the development of the idea of a greater Yemen, that is, a Yemen greater than either the Mutawakkilite Kingdom in the north or British Southern Arabia in the south; all the while she asks how this history relates to Anderson's idea of an imagined national community.¹ Anderson and his followers seem to assume a historical succession, an assumption that "states" move from a theological identity to a secular one, eventually becoming the modern nation-state. In the Yemeni case, however, people employ the modality of nationalism along with other master narratives, such as religion or Arab nationalism. More broadly, Wedeen takes issue with the material focus of a political economy approach to politics²; she wants to redirect our attention to the nature of the relationship between discourses and material practice, between ideas of nationhood and the institutions of state in order, "... to be sensitive to the ways in which they are reciprocally determining." Wedeen argues that the common perspective that nationalism flows from the desire of state leadership to secure the loyalty of citizens ignores the ways in which national discourses constrain those who govern, and ignores the fact that the "interests" of the powerful are historically constructed. So to argue that nationalist discourses are crafted to serve elite interests ignores the historical construction of those interests in the first place. Wedeen points out that the determining power of discourse in Yemen is particularly interesting because the Yemeni state, with its few and weak institutions, has not established sovereignty over its territory, yet the institution-less chaos of the regime's rule seems somehow to perpetuate the regime's power. A sense of Yemeni nationhood persists and retains its force in spite of the lack of cohesive institution building that appears to be a deliberate part of regime strategy.³ At a moment when Yemen observers are debating whether the southern

A sense of Yemeni nationhood persists and retains its force in spite of the lack of cohesive institution building that appears to be a deliberate part of regime strategy. At a moment when Yemen observers are debating whether the southern nationalists or a rejuvenated Zaidism will pull the nation apart, the power of a Yemeni nationalism is indeed a very interesting question.

nationalists or a rejuvenated Zaidism will pull the nation apart, the power of a Yemeni nationalism is indeed a very interesting question.

The second chapter relates Yemeni nationalism to actual state practice in three events: the presidential election of 1999, the celebration of the tenth anniversary of unity in 2000, and the case of a serial killer at the medical school in Sana'a. Here Wedeen questions why the regime would rig an election that it certainly would win handily, why it would spend tremendous resources for the anniversary celebration when economic conditions are so dire (similar considerations apply to the construction of the Saleh mosque, I would think), and how a particularly heinous crime—sensationalized in the newspaper—spurred a sense of nationalism precisely around the shared experience of the state's *inability* to provide security. Wedeen highlights the ambiguities of the regime's power in the engineering of elections it was sure to win in any case. The electoral performance—with an opponent selected from the regime's own party to run against the president—demonstrated the regime's ability to create the spectacle of elections that everyone knew were a sham; yet people participated, thereby demonstrating the power of the state to make people comply, at least temporarily. The celebrations of the tenth anniversary of Yemen's unification in 2000 were also a spectacle that seemed to be both a demonstration of the state's power and its vulnerabilities at the same time. Wedeen argues at one point that the clean streets of Sana'a—prepared for the influx of heads of state who were invited to the celebrations—contrasted markedly with the normal state of garbage strewn, dusty streets to which residents were accustomed, highlighting the state's incapacity rather than its capacities. Finally, the case of the famous serial murderer at the Sana'a university

medical facility seemed to draw people's attention to the state's inability to provide security and, Wedeen argues, creates a common sense of political community around precisely the incapacities of the state. So, the usual formulation of nationalism being promoted by state institutions for elite interests turns into its reverse: institutional incoherence spurring a common nationalism against the state elite.

In the third chapter Wedeen uses the *qat* chew to exemplify that odd juxtaposition in Yemen of a seemingly autocratic regime borne of military coups and corruption, with the lively critical and quite free debates that one finds in *qat* chews and in the press. Yemen is the rebel republican regime amongst the royalty of the Arabian Peninsula that wants to flaunt its homegrown democracy as the light of Arab progress in the new liberal world order. At the same time the desire for the regime to retain power has it looking like an awkward, incompetent version of Baathist Iraq's iron state. Against this background, Wedeen argues that the *qat* chew is a kind of democratic practice foreshadowed in the coffee houses of Europe, which in Anderson's version of the development of modern nationalism was where rationalist debate helped form the individual subject of the new state. Wedeen argues with the critical difference, however, that liberal values are not necessary for such rational debate. Here she questions whether some of the characteristics Anderson identifies in the European case may be particular to Europe and not necessary for the development of nationalism in general. The chew is also a place where democratic practice takes place outside of democratic institutions, which challenges our common conceptions of democracy. Wedeen argues that much of the focus on free and fair elections as the criteria for democracy misses democratic practices outside of formal institutions of democracy: "Democrats can exist without procedural democracy." And while the values of the participants in Yemeni *qat* chews may not be at all liberal, the

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practice of democratic deliberation that takes place all over Yemen in the *qat* chew frames expectations that constrain the regime. In combination with the facts, which Wedeen repeats often, that the population is well armed and that the Yemeni state does not have a monopoly on violence, the democratic practice of the *qat* chew sets discursive limits on the regime—yielding a kind of soft authoritarianism in democratic clothes with a weak parliament and a loyal opposition within the parameters of the democratic game, but not able to really challenge the regime.

In the fourth chapter Wedeen's thesis of the importance of discourse in framing material practices is put to the test by the al-Huthi rebellion, because it seems to represent an exception to the softness of the regime's authoritarianism. She points out that the regime has suddenly asserted "absolute sovereignty" through a pitched military battle in contrast to its usual game of divide and conquer or using a chaos-to-confuse strategy. Wedeen begins the chapter by exploring the meanings of common scholarly discourse, that is, the way we (*non-Yemenis*) think about social categories such as Sunni and Shia, and how scholars themselves may contribute to the reification of categories that are socially and historically quite contingent. Wedeen's intervention is particularly appropriate in the case of the al-Huthi rebellion because there are so many cross-cutting social categories in the region. The man standing on the side of the mountain in Sadah with a gun could be alternately or at the same time: a local tribesman, a member of the military, a Shia revivalist, a Yemeni nationalist, a human rights activist, and/or an activist in a national political party campaigning for elections, and each may have salience at various times or in various places and contexts. The unfolding of the conflict itself has reflected the multiple tensions and the various ways that social categories can come to have meaning in a particular circumstance as the battle shifts back and forth from military action against al-Huthi activists, to tribal conflicts embedded in the region, to tensions in the state's relations with tribes, and finally, the regime's relation to the United States and its "war on terror." Categories, Wedeen argues, are always relational, and as the al-Huthi conflict evolves and develops at various geographic scales, the meanings of categories change. The al-Huthi chant of "Death to America, Death to Israel" can only really be understood in the context of the Yemeni regime's

The al-Huthi chant of "Death to America, Death to Israel" can only really be understood in the context of the Yemeni regime's alliance with the United States. The al-Huthi do not intend to take on the United States or Israel, but they do want to irritate the regime and show its weakness, its dependence upon the superpower.

alliance with the United States. The al-Huthi do not intend to take on the United States or Israel, but they do want to irritate the regime and show its weakness, its dependence upon the superpower. Lately it appears that the al-Huthi leadership and the regime have reached some sort of *modus vivendi* where each benefits from the continuation of hostilities, but the level of conflict is somewhat contained, perhaps shifting from the strategy Wedeen saw in the initial conflict in 2004.

Finally, in a somewhat hurried fashion, Wedeen addresses the assumption that "pious" politics (her term) in the Middle East and in the world are related to the rise of "neo-liberalism," that is, the deregulation that took place under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after the developmental failure under Arab Nationalism. It is often argued that part of the attraction of "pious" politics is that Islamist parties intervene to take up the state's welfare roles as the state withers under IMF requirements for fiscal conservatism. Wedeen argues that the resort to religious discourse in the Middle East cannot be reduced simply to an economic response to the retreat of the state, nor that the retreat of the state actually occurs the way that it is often portrayed. In some aspects states are far more capable in the current reform period than in the previous era; furthermore the strength of the state in the Arab Nationalist period may also be overstated. So the experience of state retreat may not be uniform at all, and in many cases people may experience greater state support under the reforms. Wedeen argues that "pious" politics have many roots other than the economic changes in the state, such as the encouragement of religious politics by those opposed to communists during the cold war, the inheritance of the Third Worldist mantle⁴ of defenders of the weak in the world order previously championed by the Arab Nationalists, and most

importantly, in the particular discursive content of the origins of the Yemeni state itself. While the reduction of subsidies by the state—encouraged by the IMF—has been the particular focus of protest in Yemen, the framing of that protest in terms of religious moral community⁵ draws upon notions of self that predate neo-liberal reforms. Likewise, transnational Islamic political currents do not preclude, eclipse, or even challenge national political identity. In fact, Wedeen points out that, in contrast to claims of erosion of the national state by globalization, the moral community⁶ makes its claims at the scale of the national state. It is against the state that the claims of violating the moral community are made and therefore at the scale of the state that political community is most powerfully constituted.

Peripheral Visions is a particularly sophisticated contribution to Yemeni studies whose lessons need to be studied carefully by scholars and observers of the country and of the region more broadly.

Notes

1. Benedict Anderson is an extremely important scholar in political science. His seminal work is: Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (2006, revised edition). London, New York: Verso. The original was published in 1983.

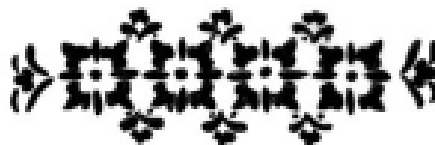
2. The material focus in political science is the idea that politics is about the control of resources and in order to understand politics, you have to understand how wealth is produced and distributed in society. It is the political relationships of the “material” practices of production and reproduction that are the most important relations to understand.

3. I call it the “politics of chaos.”

4. Promoters of “Third World” interests as opposed to those of the American-led Free World or the Soviet-led Socialist Bloc. The non-aligned movement was probably the purest expression of this movement in the 1950’s.

5. By religious moral community I mean not so much terminology as discourse, or a common language and a common understanding about what is good and what is evil.

6. Moral community is a concept from Anderson that refers to the social boundaries of who is “us,” who “we” are, as a group of people, and his argument is that nationalism is a form of community in which people recognize themselves through print media at the scale of the nation-state. You will never know or even meet most Americans, yet you share a lot with every one of them because we share the same education, media, cultures, etc. In the past, the moral community, those we identify with, was geographically much more restricted because it depended upon much more face to face contact.



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, submit a narrative report. We present here a small selection of narratives from past fellows of AIYS, selected from the years 2000 to 2007: D. Hirsch, I. Walker, N. M. Peutz, and L. Strikwerda.

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

David Hirsch (University of California, Los Angeles, Library Collections)

AIYS Fellow: 2000-2001 Competition

Fellowship: "Bibliographic Access to Official Publications from the Yemen Republic"

*In 2002 David Hirsch reported the following useful information and humorous advice for future fellows and travelers. **

Narrative report submitted:

August 2002

Through the generosity of an AIYS grant I was able to spend nearly two months in Sana'a during Spring 2002. During this period I visited a wide variety of Yemeni government ministries, universities, research centers, political parties, non-governmental organizations (including those concerned with educational, environmental, human rights, women's, literary, Islamic, family planning, anti-Qat, AIDS prevention, land-mine awareness, etc.).

The majority of my time was spent in Sana'a, but I was able to visit a large number of institutions in Aden, Mukalla, and surrounding areas (Ghayl Ba Wazir and Shihir), and the Hadramaut cities of Shibam, Seiyun, Tarim, al-Qatn, etc., where I documented more material than expected.

Unfortunately there is really no central organization or commercial entity involved in the distribution of all Yemeni publications. I was able to document and obtain copies of hundreds of monographic and serial publications, all of which are presently cataloged and added to my bibliography of Yemeni publications which is hosted at the UCLA website: <<http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/yrl/colls/mideast/pages/yemenbib.htm>>.

Internet access is quite easy in Sana'a. There are internet cafes in many parts of town. Access generally costs 2-3 riyals per minute in the capital, 3-5 riyals in Aden, Mukalla, and the Hadramaut. Some internet cafes have satellite connections with acceptable speed. There are two good ones just off Tahrir Square. Connections in cities other than Sana'a are much slower. Internet cafes exist in other cities, but they are not as numerous.

Telephones. Trying to make calls to set appointments is always an adventure. The most common messages are that the number is: not yet in service, disconnected for lack of payment, and in the case of cell/mobile phones—out of range or switched off. Numbers seem to change often as well. Cell phones can be useful, because addresses and directions are often not clear and traffic is often difficult. There are three major wireless providers at present in Yemen: Teleyemen, Sabafon, and Spacetel. With the exception of a few GSM "tri-band" phones, mobile phones purchased in the US will generally not work in Yemen. If you are going to be in Yemen for 1 to 3 months, I would recommend a prepaid cell phone plan. One can purchase a SIM card for 9000 riyals, which, when installed in your phone, will enable you to receive calls from anywhere in the world at no additional charge. In order to make calls you need to purchase top-up cards. These were not widely available, but I could find them at Tahrir Square. Calls cost 10 riyals per minute if you are calling another network or a land line anywhere in the country.

There were of course a few problems. The most notable of these that will probably affect anyone doing research in Yemen are:

1. *Appointments.* Never EXPECT to finish more than one thing in one day. You can PLAN, but don't expect to finish. If you try to schedule several things in one day, you will be disappointed. Whoever needs to make a decision will probably not be there the first time that you visit the organization/institution.

2. *Keys.* Whoever has the keys to the drawer, closet, room, etc. that you need will invariably:

- a) be having breakfast;
- b) not have arrived;
- c) be out sick;
- d) be on vacation;
- e) have gone out to buy *Qat*;
- f) have gone to take a relative to the hospital;
- g) be observing a death in the family;
- h) have died himself and the keys were buried with him.

The trip, however, was extremely successful. I shipped over 550 kilos of materials back to the U.S. Nearly half of the titles obtained are not held by any other U.S. institution, providing a repository for researchers who need Yemeni publications. Despite some sentiment against the American government in Yemen, most individuals were quite happy to meet with me and they were very generous with publications and information.

**Editorial Note*

The prices and conditions reported by D. Hirsch are, of course, for 2002 and they have probably changed considerably since this time.



Mukalla, looking out to the Indian Ocean. Photograph: Richard Ellis, 2004.

Dr. Iain Walker

AIYS Fellow: 2004-2005 Competition

Fellowship: “Arabian Africans of African Arabs? The Dynamics of Islamic African Identity in the Arabian Peninsula”

Narrative report submitted:

June 29, 2006

In 2005 I was granted an AIYS fellowship in support of my ongoing postdoctoral research project “Arabian Africans or African Arabs? The Dynamics of Islamic African Identity in the Arabian Peninsula.” The fellowship was originally sought in support both of Arabic language learning and field research in Wadi Hadramawt; unfortunately the difficulties encountered meant that the formal Arabic learning component of the project was dropped.

My fieldwork in Yemen was scheduled for November and December, 2005, but difficulties with my permit delayed my plans for an immediate departure for the field and I waited in Sana’a for ten days. I received advice that I could proceed to Seiyun, where I began informal Arabic-language learning by engaging the services of a private tutor; in addition I visited acquaintances from earlier trips to the wadi and friends and family of friends from East Africa. It rapidly became clear that for the purposes of my research a fluent command of Arabic was unnecessary. All but a small handful of my informants spoke Swahili; some even spoke English and a few admitted to a rather meagre command of Arabic (opening a space for some mutual good-natured grumbling about how Hadramis failed to understand our well-intentioned forays into their vernacular). Formal research, however, would have to wait until the arrival of my permit.

After four weeks in Seiyun—still without permit and with my time in Yemen drawing to a close—I returned to Sana’a with a view to pursuing the application and, if necessary, cutting short my visit to Yemen and returning in the New Year. I remained in Sana’a and studied in the hostel. I finally received my permit the day before my departure from Yemen, so I scheduled a return visit to Hadramawt for February 2006.

My second visit to Yemen took place in February and March 2006 and my permit gave me the

necessary authorization to carry out fieldwork. My project is concerned with identity among transnational migrants of Arab-African background, specifically Hadramis in and from the Swahili cultural zone of East Africa. My interest in the issues of the Hadrami migrant or diaspora communities (I use both terms with reservations) in East Africa arose from my fortuitous residence in a Hadrami “suburb” in the Comoros while researching my doctorate in the late 1990s. My Hadrami friends in the Comoros maintained strong links with their families in the Hadramawt, often returning for family visits, to seek employment, or on business. The enduring nature of these links, and the constant renewal of them, intrigued me, particularly since many of these families had been on the island for several generations and were now very much Comorian. Nevertheless, returns to the Hadramawt (for family, business, or religious reasons) maintained the social and cultural connections. Indeed, on my first visit to Hadramawt in 1999 (travelling directly from the Comoros) I arrived in Seiyun laden with letters and shopping bags full of gifts for sons, sisters, and uncles.

Hadramis in East Africa actively cultivate their identity. The persistence of their identity reflects the roles and status that Hadramis generally hold in East Africa. Their social status benefits by association with the religious authority of the Hadrami clerics of East Africa (the Swahilis, like Hadramis, follow the Shafi’i School, and Tarim is a center for learning among East Africans). Many of these scholars were Ba Alawi, and were particularly influential throughout East Africa. Itsandra, my town of residence in the Comoros, was the home of descendants of the Shibam branch of the Bin Sumayt family, one of whose members, Said Ahmed ibn Abdallah Bin Sumayt, was for many years chief qadi in Zanzibar; his son, Said Omar, also held the post before becoming grand mufti of the Comoros. My current project involves an investigation of the links between the Comoros and Hadramawt, and links between these places to Zanzibar and other areas of the East African coast.

In Zanzibar as in the Comoros, links with the Hadramawt are maintained. Despite, indeed, almost because of the Zanzibar Revolution (January 12, 1964) and the accompanying anti-Arab sentiment on the island (the massacre of thousands of Zanzibaris of

Arab descent also followed the toppling of Sultan Jamshid in 1964), Hadramis in Zanzibar maintain attachments, some real, some tenuous, some almost imaginary, with the Hadramawt. Travel to and from was a constant feature of the colonial period (easily done on the monsoon winds), and in the immediate post-colonial period significant numbers of Hadramis returned to Hadramawt. Today ties with the Hadramawt are being renewed as families call upon their links in strategies that have religious and economic ends as well as more personal ones.

My fieldwork in Hadramawt in 2006 followed a remarkably simple plan: armed with a list of names provided by friends in the Comoros and in Zanzibar, I travelled the villages of Hadramawt for Hadramis from East Africa. My immediate observation was that finding returned Hadramis was surprisingly simple. Every village (I believe without exception) that I visited was home to at least one Hadrami returnee, delighted to be able to speak a little Swahili again. While most had returned in the 1960s, many maintained some ties with the Swahili coast; many of those I was specifically seeking either arrived recently, or they continued to travel, or they even maintained two households, one in each place.

I flew from Sana'a to Al Ghaydah (in the governorate of al-Mahra), then followed the coastal route back towards Mukalla. My first stops were in al-Mahra, from which emigrants also travelled to East Africa (although al-Mahra emigrants went to East Africa in smaller numbers, they are to be found as cloth sellers in Zanzibar and the Comoros). Then in Hswayn I met the retired father of an acquaintance from Zanzibar who had left the running of his businesses in Zanzibar and Dar es-Salaam to his sons, although he himself returned regularly. In Sayhut I failed to find the family of a friend from the Comoros, but I met a young man from Nairobi who was delighted to be able to speak English for the first time since his arrival there six months earlier. Of al-Mahra parentage (and, like many people from al-Mahra and Hadramawt, discriminated against in the employment market in East Africa), he dreamed of a highly paid job in Saudi Arabia. "This is my father's village," he explained. "I've come here to stay with my family and learn Arabic. When I speak Arabic I'll go and get a job in Saudi Arabia. We have family there too, they can help

me." This pragmatic strategy was firmly anchored in his al-Mahra identity: his "Yemeni-ness" in Kenya prompted him to leave Nairobi, allowed him to live in al-Mahra, and would frame his eventual move to Saudi Arabia.

In both Mukalla and Seiyun, I met others who claim their Hadrami identity, with limited success. In Mukalla they are young men who have come to find work in the oil or fishing industries while in the wadi they tend to be older men who have returned to their family homes (perhaps even their childhood homes) to live out their days. In East Africa they are very much Hadrami, an identity that is both sought and attributed to them, yet in Yemen they are *muwalladin*, the overseas-born, and as such not fully Hadrami. Again, this is the result of mutually-reinforcing processes of identity construction. Returnees, hoping to be welcomed into the extended family, find that their father's brother prefers to look out for his own children rather than the children of a brother who sailed to Mombassa in 1943. This was made explicit on a number of occasions: "They love us when we arrive," said one young man. "Then, when we run out of money they throw us out. Or when we get jobs, they get jealous. They don't want us to be better than their children."

The *muwalladin* then turn to each other. In the wadi, in the evenings, they gather to drink tea and chat in Swahili in the courtyards; they speak of Africa, and when asked they will, at least in private, admit as much: "We want to go home to die. To Kenya." At the same time, in the Sharij district of Mukalla the young men pass on news of job openings, helping each other out when there is no work to be had. Work, for the *muwalladin*, however, is not hard to find, although patience is required. They are regarded as ideal employees because they have received a good education in Tanzania or Kenya, have a command of English (essential for employment in the oil industry), and a reputation for being reliable workers. This earns them resentment from their Hadrami uncles and cousins. These young men also retain ties with East Africa; they return when they have saved enough money, marry, and then come back to Mukalla to find more work. "In December I went back to Dar es-Salaam and married," said one young man. "I'm hoping to save enough money to start a business there."

It will take me a long time, though.”

While there is a clear understanding that there is a difference between *muwalladin* and Africans of non-Yemeni backgrounds (in Hadramawt these are generally Somalis), *muwalladin* identity remains somewhat fluid. “Pure” Hadramis, those who have never left the wadi, find themselves interacting with Africans, *muwalladin*, *abid* and *shamalis* (northerners). Africans are foreigners speaking Somali and maintaining their own cultural practices; *shamalis* are (increasingly) resented but certainly not Hadrami; *abid* (descendents of slaves of African origin), if of African origin and low status, are nevertheless Hadramis and are discriminated against on the basis of status rather than origin. *Muwalladin* identity, however, is ambiguous. They are neither as Hadrami as the *abid*, nor as foreign as the Somalis, nor as resented as the *shamalis*. The *muwalladin* contest Hadrami identity by presenting themselves as a mirror; they are the Other that resembles, if imperfectly. *Muwalladin* are necessary to Hadrami prosperity, even survival (one thinks of the economic and intellectual contributions of *muwalladin*, particularly those of Indonesia in times past, but also in the present), yet they are also seen as a threat culturally (through the influence of their Swahili mothers and upbringing) and economically (by “taking” the best jobs). This identity, coupled with their ability and their desire to leave Hadramawt when necessary, establishes them as liminal; they belong and they don’t belong. It is sometimes problematic to establish exactly where they belong (or don’t belong).

In Seiyun one morning a friend took me to see some *muwalladin* from Uganda. After much house-to-house searching we finally located them, but in the end they refused to talk to me. Incensed that they had insulted such an important individual (myself, it would seem), my friend searched for reasons. “They chew qat,” he said. “They’re no good.” He paused for a moment and then added: “And they drink alcohol, too. And they go with prostitutes, and I bet they smoke marijuana.” Apparently this was still insufficient and after much musing, he finally said, “You know what? Their fathers probably weren’t Hadramis, it was probably their grandfathers who went to Africa, and married African women, and then their fathers married African women, too. They’re not Hadramis at all,

they’re African.” Finally he had succeeded in Othering them, providing an explanation for their un-Hadrami behavior. He denied their claim to being Hadrami and *muwalladin*; they didn’t even belong partially. Indeed, partiality seems to be the clue to the *muwalladin* belonging to Hadramawt; they belong, partially, to both Africa and to Hadramawt, yet they are not “in-between,” for they belong fully to the *muwalladin* culture that straddles and overlaps both regions and both cultures.

Older men have less of a problem, particularly if they were themselves born in Hadramawt and migrated as children. Technically they are not *muwalladin*, because they are locally born. Nevertheless they assumed the cultural practices of their adopted home, which is unsurprising if they sailed to Africa at the age of six, as many did. A return to their home, the place of their birth, may be a desire constantly expressed in Africa (many Hadramis in Zanzibar evoke a desire to “go home”), but it is often an unrealizable desire. After arriving in the Hadramawt they find that the sought-after home is illusory, a nostalgia for a future that exists only in the interstices of their memories, the conjuncture of past and future in a fleeting present. Unfortunately many of those who come “home” are unable to leave again. An elderly Hadrami-born man, whom I met in the wadi, had arrived ten years earlier with a wife and six children, all *muwalladin*. He talks of his desire to return to Africa, but the costs are prohibitive and, after a ten-year absence, he tells me the Kenyan embassy refuses to issue him a new passport. Similarly, four sisters from Kenya, daughters of a Hadrami father, arrived eight years earlier after their father’s death to visit their father’s family (in response to years of exhortations). While in the wadi their mother died and their visas expired. Unable to leave, and claiming permanent homesickness, they spent the intervening period applying for Yemeni papers. Now they have been granted, but the costs of returning to Kenya are, again, prohibitive; in addition three of the sisters are married and their Hadrami husbands will also influence their ability to return to Kenya. Movement, apparently so easy in the contemporary world, often proves fraught with obstacles.

The questions raised by my research visit to Hadramawt—of belonging, home, identity—frame

the remainder of the project, now in its second of three years. The second part of the project involves a return to Zanzibar and the Comoros, armed again with a list of names and addresses, but also with a deeper understanding of the issues from the perspective of the “Arabs.” This will set the scene for a final visit to Hadramawt in 2007.



Nathalie Mae Peutz (Princeton University)
AIYS Fellow: 2005 - 2006 Competition
“Mapping Soqotri Migrations: Economic, Social, and Cultural Links between Soqatra and the Gulf”

Narrative report submitted:
 August 21, 2007

Excerpts from: Report on Fieldwork Conducted in June and July 2007

Research Objectives

During the summer of 2007 (building on my dissertation fieldwork in 2004-2006) I aimed to further my investigation of the economic, social, and cultural links between the Soqotri emigrant community in the Gulf (Oman and the United Arab Emirates) and their relatives on the island. Recently, I argued that the construction of Soqotri identity and heritage was shaped and continues to be shaped by these transnational interactions (Peutz, 2008). While I still intend to conduct research in the United Arab Emirates in the future, my plan for this period was to return to Soqatra to examine these connections through open-ended interviews, surveys, and participant-observation.

For the past half century, Soqatra has been bound to the Gulf region through the circulation of goods, people, and remittances. From the 1950s Soqotran men traveled to the then-underdeveloped Arab Gulf States for work and trade, some of them settling there and eventually gaining citizenship. During the same



Workers in Shibam maintain the facade. Photograph: Maria deJ. Ellis 1998.

period, women accused of witchcraft were banished from Soqatra by way of merchant *dhow*s trading between Arabia and East Africa. It is well-recognized today as fortuitous, if not ironic, that these women—who then settled in the Gulf prior to the exploitation of oil—are able today to generously support their relatives on the island from which they were expelled. Indeed, many Soqotrans benefit from the remittances of relatives working in mainland Yemen or in the Gulf—the Soqotran emigrant community—from the monthly shipment of goods (food supplies, household items, building materials, and vehicles) and from the connections forged by the marriage of island women into the community abroad.

I was interested in documenting these transnational connections and their transformations, specifically during this current period of rapid “development” on the island. Questions that I intended to address included: how are the Soqotrans’ relationships with the Gulf affected by the increasingly successful marketing of Soqatra as a tourist destination, with financial support that had traditionally come from the emigrant community in the Gulf now being partially replaced by tourist revenue? How do the Soqotrans perceive their quality of life and from where do they take their vision for the future? What are the implications of the rise in marriages between Soqotran women from the island and Soqotran emigrants

overseas? And how are conceptions of Soqotri identity and heritage being shaped by the transnational circulation of Soqotri poetry.

Research Methods and Realization

During the preparation stages of this research trip, I had planned to (re)position myself as a temporary resident in my former research site (a rural village) or in the coastal town of Suq/Shik, the historical capital of Soqatra and the contemporary monsoon-season residence for a number of coastal families. I hoped that by living in either one of these locations I would be able to conduct interviews with women as well as key male members of the community while also participating in the daily activities of the *kharif* (the date harvesting season). After I arrived in Soqatra, however, I realized that this earlier plan would be neither feasible nor productive due to the short duration of my research trip and the increased mobility (and thus daily relocations) of Soqotran men and women.

Previously, a large majority of families left their primary homes for their temporary residences in or near their date plantations. Now, however, the extensive network of newly asphalted roads and the introduction of regular and inexpensive bus services allow Soqotran men and women to move frequently between their villages, their date groves, the regional centers, and Hadiboh. When I first started my research in Soqatra in 2004, it was more likely that a person who left the countryside for Hadiboh or who left Hadiboh and returned to his or her village would remain in that location for at least a number of days. Now, even small groups of women (and without male escort) are traveling back and forth with ease between their rural villages and Hadiboh; thus, they are much more difficult to “locate” on any given day. In addition to this increased mobility within the island, it appears to have become more common for both men and women to travel outside of Soqatra. For example, due to this year’s promising fishing season in Mukalla, all flights leaving the island were booked in full through mid-August and the local council had to request additional military flights to service the large demand for travel. Again, this often resulted in the fact that a key former informant might be in his village one day and on a flight the next, without even many of his family members (let alone me) being made aware of his travel

plans. I soon learned that I would have to spend considerable time driving and locating the specific individuals whom I wanted, rather than finding them at home during the customary social visits. So, I situated myself in Hadiboh and focused primarily on conducting semi-formal interviews with key informants in and outside of the town instead of depending on the less structured daily interactions of open-ended participant-observation that had guided my earlier research. As a result, I managed to meet and speak with a significant number of key individuals within a relatively short period of fieldwork.

As a lucky coincidence, my visit to Soqatra coincided with the visits of three prominent Soqotran emigrants: Ali Saad, shaykh of the Soqotran community in the United Arab Emirates, Ahmad Saad al-Tahki, shaykh of the Soqotran community in Oman, and Ahmad Saeed al-Anbali, a Soqotran historian living in the UAE. Although I had previously visited the shaykhs of both emigrant communities in their own homes in Adjman and Salalah, respectively, this was my first opportunity to meet al-Anbali, whose works features prominently in my dissertation as well as the article mentioned above. During a delightful visit to his family village, al-Anbali gave me his personal copy of his new history of Soqatra (*Tarikh jazirat Suqutra*, 2006), which was not yet available on the island and would be difficult to find even in mainland Yemen. I would like to translate or at least encourage the translation of this work in the near future, as I am particularly interested in the recent efforts by Soqotran residents and emigrants alike to document and define Soqotran history and heritage. Another wonderful example of these efforts is the new “Soqatra Folk Museum” established in the summer of 2007 by Ahmad Saad al-Tahki (located on the northeast coast). Although the museum officially opened to the public in January 2008, my research trip in 2007 enabled me to visit and interview Ahmad Saad as he was organizing his museum and its exhibits. One of the highlights of my visit was watching Ahmad Saad guide a group of local youth through a tour of their own material “heritage,” some of which provoked gasps of amazement.

Semi-structured interviews with these individuals and others were supplemented by informal conversations with numerous Soqotrans working for

the UNDP-funded Socotra Archipelago Conservation and Development Programme (SDCP), in tourism, and in heritage preservation, as well as with Soqotrans living in one of the island's Protected Areas—a relatively new designation that draws tourists to their lands and into their lives. Three extended visits to my former fieldwork site allowed me to reestablish the contacts and connections that were so helpful in my earlier research and to gain a deeper understanding about gender relations, marriage patterns, and the financial strategies within rural Soqotran communities. These discussions were aided (and yes, sometimes hampered) by an unlikely assistant: my 6-month old son. It is not surprising that the presence of children would warm relationships in Yemen and, indeed, my former village hosts took turns slaughtering animals in our/his honor. But more than this, his presence in the field allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the choices made in forming or strengthening kinship bonds—through milk—a topic that I intend to write about at length in future publications.

The information gathered during my research trip to Soqotra in the summer of 2007 has contributed directly to at least three chapters of my dissertation. First, it helped me to revise an already drafted chapter on the circulation and production of Soqotri heritage by national, transnational, and international actors, which now includes a new section on Soqotran nostalgia. Part of my data for this chapter is derived from poetry that a Soqotran friend and I retranslated in 2007. Second, I have written a chapter on how “the state” (in all of its manifestations between the 1950s and today) has been viewed and experienced by people in the hinterlands of Soqotra through a host-guest paradigm in which the community plays the role of the host to the distant, but periodically visiting state. Third, I have drafted a chapter on “traditional” medicines and their application today as a vital form of Soqotri “heritage.” My thoughts on this chapter took form during my repeated visits in 2007 to a Soqotran herbal apothecary which, opened only a few months earlier, is the first of its kind on the island.

I am grateful to the American Institute for Yemeni Studies for generously supporting my continuing research on Soqotra and I am pleased that this recent, brief, but productive research trip helped to solidify my thoughts on how to proceed with the writing phase

of my dissertation. The Soqotra Archipelago (and specifically, the island of Soqotra) is undergoing tremendous and rapid change that will continue to affect Soqotran visions for the future as well as their visions of their past. Visits such as this one allow me to realize and remember how vast these changes are and how crucial it will be for me to continue to incorporate this awareness into my analysis.

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Nathalie Peutz finished her dissertation in 2009. Heritage and Heresy: Environment, Community, and the State at the Margins of Arabia 2009. Available at UMI Dissertation Services.



A Yemeni goat poses for the photographer, Richard Ellis, 2004.

Laurina Strikwerda (University of Chicago)
AIYS Fellow: 2006-2007 Competition
Arabic language study

Narrative report submitted:
August 29, 2007

My summer fellowship with the American Institute for Yemeni Studies provided me with a unique opportunity to strengthen my Arabic language skills while having a rich cultural experience. I arrived at Sana'a on the 19th of June and began classes at the Center for Arabic Language and Eastern Studies (CALES) on the 23rd of June. My schedule—three hours of intensive study each weekday—gave me a course of study with a great deal of variety. My teacher and I focused on grammar, reading, and speaking using the Al-Kitaab (Book One) curriculum, which was supplemented with short stories and reports from the news media. The opportunity to study the news media and to acquire a vocabulary for reading the news in Arabic was especially important to me, and I will draw on what I learned in my future research on politics in the Arab world.

In addition to my classroom work, my time in Yemen also provided me with an opportunity for cultural enrichment. My particular area of interest is women's participation in public life and women's work in organizations. Through a contact at the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, I was able to meet with women and men working at the Interaction for Development Foundation, which specializes in services to refugees. Most of the refugees with whom the program works are Somali. Yemen grants Somali

refugees, who number about 110,000 in the country, *prima facie* refugee status. Although this makes it possible to enter the country legally (often after a dangerous journey), there is a great need for social, educational, and employment services.

Many of the refugee families are headed by women, and so the IDF has tailored its programs to help women with medical care and job training. During my visits I learned about the IDF's micro-credit lending program, which currently works with about 120 women. In addition, I met with women who work in the organization's health clinic and who teach public health courses on HIV. These visits gave me greater insight into the ways that women are shaping access to medical and economic resources in Yemeni society.

During the summer I also learned a great deal about Yemeni education and family life by forming a connection with a few families in the old city of Sana'a. My visits with them provided me with valuable opportunities to practice my Arabic, to learn Yemeni dancing, and to hear stories about education, family life, and Sana'a.

Addendum, July 31, 2008

I finished my language classes at the end of August 2007 and returned to the University of Chicago where I finished my M.A. program in Middle Eastern Studies in June of 2008. The AIYS program was both a chance to enhance my Arabic language skills and to pursue future research interests; it will significantly shape my future work. I am grateful to the institute for the opportunity and I look forward to working with AIYS in the future.



Recent AIYS Fellows

Fellowships Awarded in the 2007, 2008, and 2009 Competitions Critical Language Study Fellows, Summer 2007

Competition for US Citizens 2006-2007

Adra, Najwa (Post-Doctoral, Independent Scholar and Consultant), "Research into Tribal Identity in Four Regions of Yemen"

Bitters, Susanna M. (Graduate Student, University of Chicago; Center for Middle Eastern Studies), Arabic language study

Bothwell, Beau Denny (Graduate Student, Columbia University, Department of Music), Arabic language study and dissertation feasibility research

Brown, Naima S. (Graduate Student, University of Chicago, Center for Middle Eastern Studies), Arabic language study

King, James Robin (Graduate Student, Columbia University), Arabic language study

Rogers, Amanda Elizabeth (Graduate Student, Emory University), Arabic language study

Saba, Matthew David (Graduate Student, University of Chicago Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), Arabic language study

Strikwerda, Lurna Margaret B. (Graduate Student, University of Chicago, Middle Eastern Studies), Arabic language study

Wagner, Mark Samuel (Faculty, University of Southern Mississippi, Department of Religious Studies), "A Critical Edition and Translation of al-Khafanji's *Diwan*"

Zehner, Edwin (Faculty, Central College [Pella, Iowa]), Arabic language study

Competition for US Citizens 2007-2008

*Boucek, Christopher James (Postdoctoral Research Associate, Princeton University: Princeton Environmental Institute and the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies. Lecturer in Politics), Arabic language study and "Militant Demobilization and the Rehabilitation Experience in Yemen: Legitimacy, Cooptation, and the Committee for Dialogue"

*Calderon, Georgina (Graduate Student, University of California-San Francisco, Medical Studies), Arabic language study

*DeVito, Alexandra (Graduate Student, University of Texas-Arlington, School of Urban and Public Affairs), Arabic language study and "The Feasibility of Public-Private Partnerships in the Yemeni Water Sector"

*Fahrenthold, Stacy (Graduate Student, Northeastern University, Department of History), Arabic language study

*Gardiner, Noah Daedalus (Graduate Student, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Islamic Studies, Department of Near Eastern Studies), Arabic language study

*Hooper, Jane Louise (Graduate Student, Emory University; Department of History), "Trade and Empire: The Transformation of the Indian Ocean during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries"

Reese, Scott (Faculty, Northern Arizona University, History), "Engaging the *Umma*: Muslim Discourses of Reform and the Construction of Locality in Colonial Aden" (*The research for this project was done in London, England.*)

Competition for U.S. Citizens 2008-2009

*Hayward, Emma (pre-doctoral, graduate student, University of Pennsylvania), Arabic language study

Liebhaber, Samuel and Haberl, Charles (post-doctoral, Liebhaber-Middlebury College. Haberl-Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey), "Collection, Organization and Transcription of a Mahri Digital Archive"

Pandya, Sophia (post-doctoral, assistant professor, California State University at Long Beach, Dept. of Religious Studies), "Yemeni Women in Ethiopia: Constructing Identity in Diaspora through Religion"

*Vodopyanov, Anya (pre-doctoral, graduate student, Harvard University, Department of Govern-

ment), "Competing to Serve: State and Non-State Provision of Public Services in Yemen since 1990" with Arabic language study

**The study was not implemented owing to the US State Department ban on the use of funds for study in Yemen.*

Competition for Citizens of Yemen 2008-2009

Ahmed, Sultan Naji Abdo (Sana'a University, Faculty of Agriculture), "Effect of Chemical Control and Bio-Control against Late and Early Blight on the Potato Crop"

Al-Kawry, Talal A. (Sana'a University, Faculty of Agriculture), "Antioxidant Activity of some Natural Extracts in Comparison to TBHQ"

Al-Wajih, Maher A. D., "Bronze Age Settlements in Hadhour Hamda and Bani Mater"

Al-Wosabi (Sana'a University, Faculty of Science), Mahommed A. Y., "The Distribution of Foraminiferal Species along the Southern Red Sea Coastline and their Environmental Significance"

Ghulan, Adel A. A. (Environmental Protection Authority, Aden Branch), "Preservation of the Ibex in the Wadi Hadramaut by Using Techniques of Geographic Information System"

Shaife, Abdulhakim M. (Sana'a University, Department of Archaeology), "Archaeological Survey in Al-Mafer"

Critical Language Study Program, Summer 2007

In the summer of 2007 AIYS brought 28 CAORC CLS fellows to Yemen for an immersion program in intensive intermediate and advanced Arabic. As in the initial program in the summer of 2006, AIYS subcontracted language instruction for the courses to the Yemen Language Center, but supplied supplemental cultural materials and opportunities to complement the language instruction. Three students withdrew from the program in early July, after

a terrorist attack on a group of Spanish tourists in Marib. The remaining 25 fellows successfully completed their programs (14 intermediate, 11 advanced). The program would have brought another 30 students to Yemen in the summer of 2008, but it was canceled after attacks near the U.S. embassy earlier that spring and moved to Jordan.

CLS Arabic Language Fellows in Yemen Summer 2007

Christopher Anzalone, Undiana University, Bloomington

Jonathan Argaman, University of Maryland, College Park

Sarah Atwood, New York University

Elliott Bazano, University of California, Santa Barbara

Joel Blecher, Princeton University

Patrick Boland, University of Virginia

Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud, University of Chicago

Mike Cunnington, Ohio University

Benjamin Embury, George University

Alison Fahey, Boston College

Noah Gardiner, Brown University

Joe Gardner, University of Chicago

Brian Harker, Brigham Young University

Nathan Hodson, Duke University

Kevin Jones, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Zeba Khan, Tufts University - Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy

Angelica Krut, University of Pennsylvania

Jacob Lavelle, North Dakota State University

Paul Love, Jr., Western Kentucky University

Jennifer Midberry, New York University

Emilie Minnick, Macalester College

Shahreena Shahrani, Ohio State University, Columbus

Heather Sweetser, Ohio State University, Columbus

Ailya Vajid, Swarthmore College

Janathan Walz, University of South Dakota

The fellowships are funded by the U. S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs through a sub-grant from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.

Letter from the New Resident Director, Stephen Steinbeiser J.D.

November 1, 2009

Dear Members of AIYS,

With great pleasure I am writing to you from Sana'a, where I have had the privilege of serving as AIYS's Resident Director since the beginning of this year.

My Arrival—The year 2009 began eventfully, when I accepted the position at AIYS, and moved from the West Bank town of Bethlehem to Sana'a, via Dakar, Senegal. In Dakar, I met with my new colleagues from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers and other heads of research institutes abroad. It was an enlightening introduction to my new position as Resident Director of AIYS.

A Bit about Myself—My interest in the Middle East began as a student on the other side of the region from Yemen, at an institute for ecumenical studies on the border between Jerusalem and Bethlehem (currently the *de facto* border between Israel and the nascent state of Palestine). As an undergraduate student in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, I studied the region's history, languages, archeology, and religions, and in the process became fascinated by the Middle East.

Although I returned to the U.S. for graduate study, I continued to re-visit the region for various reasons: research on ongoing land disputes in the city of Jerusalem, volunteer work at a legal aid clinic, visiting friends throughout the region, and language studies. It was the latter purpose that led me to Yemen for the first time, in late spring 2004.

My first arrival in Sana'a was far from what I expected at that time. In the wee hours of the morning, I was whisked away from the airport at breakneck speed, and then had to wend my way through the narrow streets of Old Sana'a, which were completely torn up just inside *Bab al Sha'ub*. It was pitch black, and the electricity had gone off. I was completely disoriented, exhausted, and unable to discern any shape in the thick darkness; finding my room in the building where I would live for the next three months was almost impossible. Fortunately, the old, wizened man at the gate took pity on me and helped me as much as he could. Given that I could barely understand him, that was just enough to get me to my room that night.

The bright sun of the following morning woke me up early, and I raced to the roof to catch my first glimpse

of Old Sana'a: a sprawling palm tree swaying in the breeze, intricately-cut stained glass windows, and a town full of gingerbread houses. I couldn't wait to step outside and experience this marvelous country!

That feeling has led me back to Yemen two additional times, most recently in January. A Yemeni friend from Sana'a had emailed me in spring 2008 to let me know that the position of Resident Director was open. I contacted the Executive Director, Dr. Ria Ellis, and she and I, along with Dr. Mary Ellen Lane from CAORC, met in the U.S. the following summer. I was delighted to accept the position of Resident Director, though professional obligations kept me in Bethlehem and Jerusalem until the very beginning of 2009.

In the time between studying Arabic in Yemen and returning to lead AIYS in Sana'a, I had practiced law in Pennsylvania, continued to research my areas of interest in the Middle East, and administered two study abroad programs for the University of Notre Dame. I also played a central role in the establishment of a summer study abroad program in Jerusalem for the university.

I am fortunate to be in Yemen with my wife, Katherine Hennessey (Ph.D.) who researches comparative literature, specializing in Irish and Italian theater. During our time in Bethlehem prior to our move to Sana'a, she served as an assistant professor at Bethlehem University and taught Italian at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, while I worked for an international NGO, facilitating projects, leading visiting delegations, and writing accounts of life in and around Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.

We are both pleased to be back in Yemen and eager to help AIYS capitalize on its considerable potential.

Library Acquisitions—The Sana'a Book Fair was a wonderful opportunity for us this year. It was the first time that I visited the annual fair, and I was delighted to be able to wander its narrow corridors crammed with book vendors from all over the Middle East, and even happier that I could buy some unique, new, and important materials for AIYS's library.

Some of our more interesting purchases include two sets of encyclopedias. The larger of the two is an encyclopedia of Yemeni family names. Already, Faraj and a host of Yemeni researchers have used these

volumes to trace their lineage from the root letters of their family names, often with intriguing and unexpected results. The second encyclopedia is a new set of volumes about Yemeni musical traditions.

We also made a number of purchases from a table sponsored by the Omani Embassy. Included in these purchases are the complete set of the *Journal of Omani Studies*, a yearly publication beginning in 1976, as well as books on the history of medicine, marine science, and archeology in Oman.

Certain books dealing with history and political subjects also caught our attention. Specifically, we bought several books about the various Yemeni revolutions, including a six-volume set on the topic from a Yemeni publishing company. From an Egyptian publishing house, we purchased a book entitled (in translation) *Gamal Abdul Nasser and the Yemeni Revolution*. Other purchases in this area treat American policy in the Middle East after the war in Iraq, as well as human rights in the region.

The library's section on the Hadramout also continues to expand, with several interesting acquisitions from the Tarim Bookstore. Several of our new books on the history of that area of the country focus on the heritage and culture of its people; one in particular discusses Hadrami emigration to Andalusia. These books balance out a few other purchases we made which have a more regional focus, specifically on Arab-African relations and Islam in East Africa.

One of my personal goals is to expand the Arabic literature section of the library, which is currently one of the smallest sections. We have already added a few new books to that section: for instance, a satire on corruption in the Middle East by a Palestinian author, and an ancient Yemeni legend entitled *Muhalhil Al Zeer Salim*, a pre-Islamic story about the origins of the Arab people.

We welcome donations of books on any and all of these topics.

New Construction—Owing to the luxurious expanse of ground that the Institute now owns, and a stone foundation that was laid before I arrived, plans are now underway to construct an additional AIYS building behind the current, recently-renovated two-storey house.

The new building will be constructed in the traditional style of the historic Jewish quarter of the Al Qaa' neighborhood. The style is unlike that of Old Sana'a, and utilizes mud brick with mud plaster coating. Although current construction techniques allow

buildings made of concrete columns and cement to rise faster in Sana'a, we have decided to take a slower, more historical approach and construct the new two-storey building in traditional materials. The Al Qaa' neighborhood does not have any recent mud brick construction, so our building will be a unique tribute to the neighborhood's historic architecture.

Scholarly Activity and Lectures—We have added numerous members to our ranks this past year. Some have joined with the goal of pursuing research in Yemen, while others have come to the country as consultants, writers, and independent scholars.

During the past year, we have reinstated a public lecture series in the library. It is my aim for these lectures, discussions, and meetings to bring both Yemeni and foreign scholars to the Institute, to further its mission as a place for honest intellectual exchange. Dr. Sophia Pandya of Santa Clara University began the series with a timely lecture about her investigation into Yemeni women's religious practices, and specifically the charismatic attraction of moderate Egyptian preacher Amr Khaled.

Subsequent lectures have included a presentation in Arabic about our library services for foreign language students in Sana'a, and an overview of the history of the archeological project in Dhamar. Upcoming lecture topics will treat the biodiversity of Soqatra and examine visual images of Sana'a from decades ago.

Our services for foreign scholars remain the same for all of our members: assistance with obtaining research permission, use of residence facilities, facilitation of academic networking, and other types of services necessary for proper research in the country.

Safety and Security in Yemen—Daily life continues more or less normally for foreigners; at least so it feels to me. People are almost uniformly friendly and unfailingly hospitable. President Obama's election has engendered a new sense of hope that peace will reign throughout the region and tensions will cool on all sides. American visitors and scholars benefit from this effect, as most Yemenis consider President Obama as sweet and important as "honey," the moniker that often follows his name in conversation.

Welcome to all!—Please come and visit us! Now that the scholars' residence and library are arranged and comfortable for visitors, I would be very happy to meet each of you in Sana'a. Please let us know well in advance if you would like to reserve space. See page 2 for our contact information.

AIYS Publications

AIYS publications are distributed by MESA (*Middle East Studies Association of North America*) at <www.mesa.arizona.edu/mesa-atore.html>, the "MESA Store." Credit cards are accepted for members of MESA; alternately, you can print an order form (in PDF format). The address for orders is:

MESA Secretariat
1219 N. Santa Rita Avenue
University of Arizona
Tucson AZ 85721
520-621-5850, fax: 520-626-9095

Only back issues of *Yemen Update* should be ordered from the AIYS office in Ardmore (see page 2 for address and email information; we regret that AIYS can not accept credit cards.).

*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. ISBN 1-882557-01-8. US \$15.

2. *Visions of Yemen: A Filmography*, by Thomas B. Stevenson, 2003. ISBN 1-882557-11-5. US \$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. US \$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 on Yemen 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.

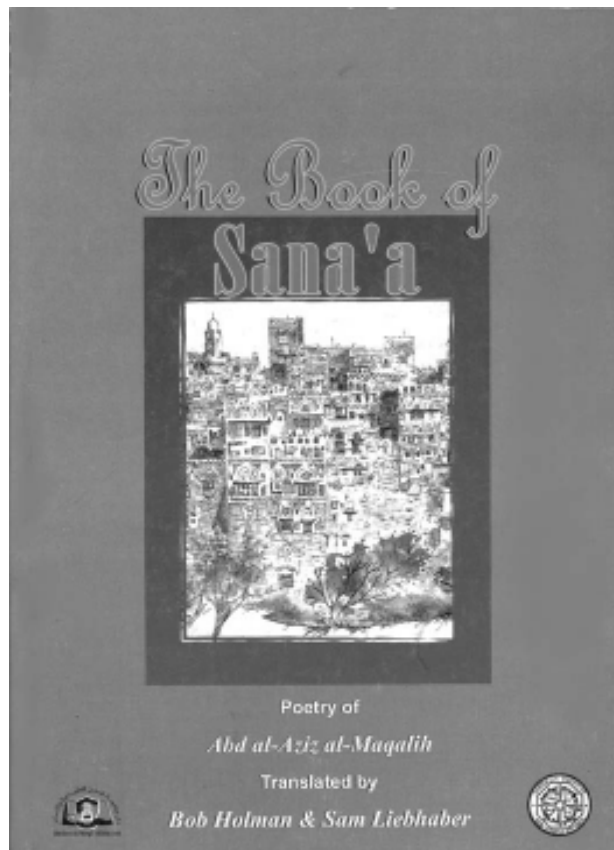
2. *Studies on the Ethnology of Yemen* (edited by Lucine Taminian with the assistance of Abdul Karim Al-Aug), 1997. ISBN 1-882557-04-2. US \$15.

3. *Studies on Women in Yemen* (edited by Lucine Taminian), 1997. ISBN 1-882557-05-0. US \$15.

4. *Studies in the Archaeology of Yemen (Results of American and Canadian Expeditions)*, edited by Noha Sadek, translated by Yasin M. Alkalesi. 2001. ISBN 1-882557-08-5. US \$15.

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

6. *Challenging the Familiar: Anthropological and Historical Studies of Yemen*, edited and translated by Lucine Taminian, 2007. ISBN: 1-882557-14-X. US \$20



Yemen Translation Series 4: The Book of Sana'a: Poetry of Abd al-Aziz al-Maqalih. (Kitab San'a, translated by Bob Holman & Sam Liebhaber)

Yemen Translation Series: Translations of Arabic Works into English

1. *My Journey through Arhab and Hashid*, by Eduard Glaser (translated by David Warburton), 1993 (xi+31 pp.). ISBN 1-882557-02-6 US \$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. US \$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. US \$10.

4. *The Book of Sana’a: Poetry of Abd al-Aziz al-Maqalih*. (Kitab San’a), by Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Maqali (revised Arabic version of the edition published in 2000 by Riad el-Rayyes Books; translated into English by Bob Holman and Samuel Liebhaber; introductions by S. Liebhaber, B. Holman, and Muhammad Abd al-Sallam Mansur, and annotations by Christopher Edens). 2004. ISBN: 1-882-557-12-3. US \$20

5. *An Introduction to Hijrahs and Other Refuges of Learning in Yemen*, by al-Qadi Isamil ibn Ali al-Akwa. Published as a special edition of the AIYS bulletin, *Yemen Update* 49/50 (2007-08). Translated, annotated, and introduced by Tim Mackintosh-Smith from the Arabic text of *Hijra al-ilm wa ma aqiluh fi l-yaman*. 2009. ISBN: 1-882557-15-8. ISBN 13: 978-1-882557-15-8. US \$30 to new members; \$40 to non-members.

Miscellaneous Research and Documentation Publications

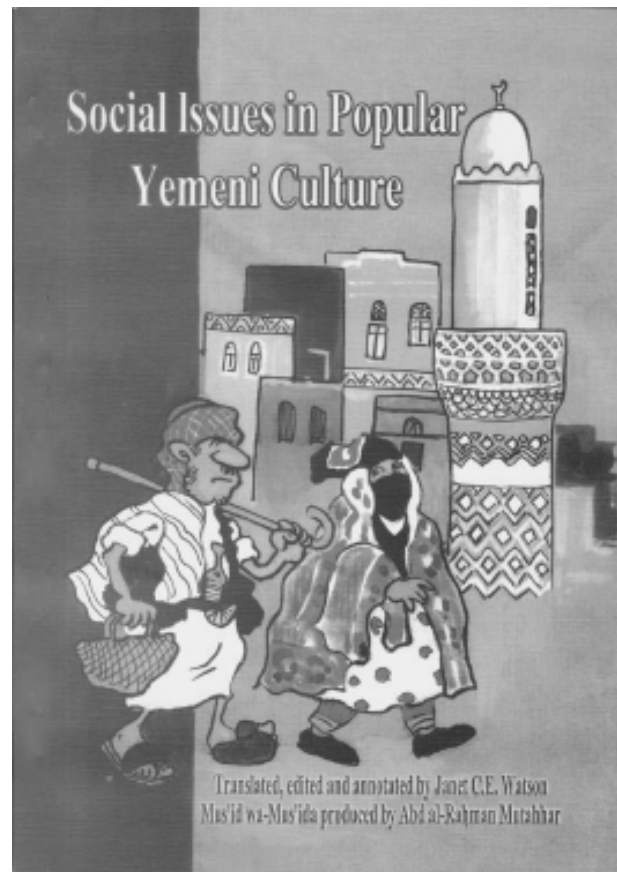
1. *Ma’alim al-zira’a fi-l’Yaman (Agricultural Knowledge in Yemen)*, the book is in Arabic by Yahya Al-Ansi. Sana’a: Published jointly by the Centre Français d’Études Yéménites (CFEY) and the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. Volume 1: 1998. Volume 2: 2003. Vol. 1 distributed by CEFAS (POBox 2660, Sana’a, Yemen; www.univ-aix.fr/

cfey/). Vol. 2 is available through MESA (US \$15) 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. US \$20.

3. *Social Issues in Popular Yemeni Culture*, translated, edited and annotated by Janet C.E. Watson, Sana’a Social Fund for Development, 2002 (based on the radio program, *Mus’id wa-Musida*, written by Abd al-Rahman Mutahhar, iv + 217 pp.). US \$18.

4. *From the Queen of Sheba to the Republic of Yemen. K-12 Resource Guide and Classroom*



Miscellaneous Research and Documentation Publications
3: *Social Issues in Popular Yemeni Culture*, translated, edited and annotated by Janet C.E. Watson, Sana’a: Social Fund for Development, 2002.

Ideas, by Marta Colburn, illustrated by Maha al-Hibshi and Bruce Paluck, 2006. ISBN: 1-882557-13-1. US \$20. This volume provides extensive resources for teaching about Yemen, including classroom activities, handouts, and illustrations for classroom use.

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

Issues 1-27 (=AIYS Newsletter) \$3.50 per issue

Yemen Update: vols. 28/29-38, \$7.50 per issue

Yemen Update: vols. 39 - 42, \$15.00 per issue

Yemen Update: vols. 43 ff., \$30.00 per issue

Plus shipping and handling: U.S. \$4.50 (for one issue, there will be an additional charge for multiple issue orders), Overseas \$8.50 and \$3.50 for each additional issue.

Non-member subscription service: \$40.00 per issue plus shipping costs as above. Issues of *Yemen Update* should be ordered through the U.S. office in Ardmore, PA (see page 2 for the address).

Videos—Now Available in DVD Format

AIYS institutional members receive a discount on the purchase price and should place their order through the AIYS office.

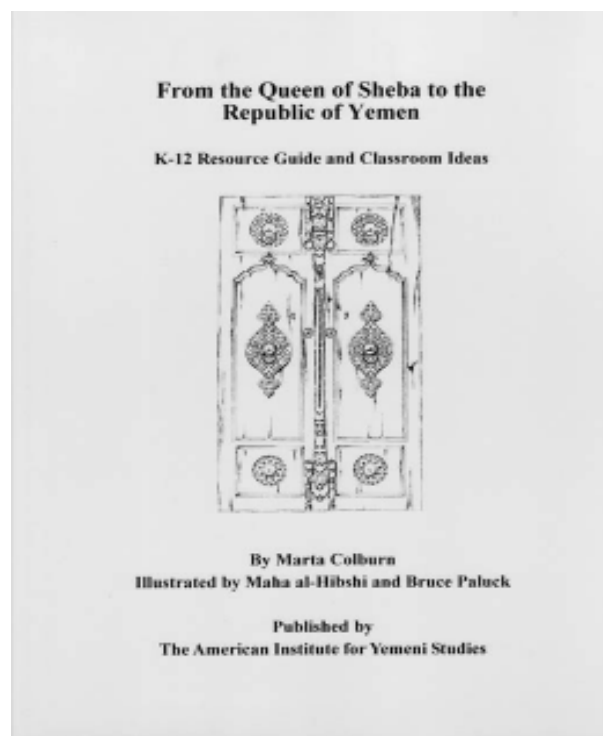
The Architecture of Mud, 1999, 52 mins., a video documentary project of Pamela Jerome and Caterina Borelli, supported by an AIYS USIA/NMERTA fellowship; produced by Caterina Borelli. DVD and VHS formats are available in English or Arabic. To order VHS or DVD format in English, contact DER Documentary Educational Resources <<http://www.der.org>>, 1-800-569-6621 (north America only) or 1-617-926-0491, consumer price, \$49.95. The Arabic version is also available in limited quantities from DER; please contact them for information. The film is also available in Arabic from Anonymous Productions; contact them for information about availability and format at 917-743-5696, fax: 212-226-3976.

Miscellaneous Research and Documentation Publications
4. From the Queen of Sheba to the Republic of Yemen. K-12 Resource Guide and Classroom Ideas, by Marta Colburn, illustrated by Maha al-Hibshi and Bruce Paluck, 2006.

Qudad: Reinventing a Tradition, 2003, 55 mins., a video documentary project by Caterina Borelli supported by an ECA-funded AIYS fellowship. DVD and VHS formats are available, in Arabic with English subtitles. To order, contact DER Documentary Educational Resources <<http://www.der.org>>, also: 617-926-0491, consumer price, \$59.95. AIYS institutional members receive a discount on the purchase price and should place their order through the AIYS office. The film is also available from Anonymous Productions; contact them for information about availability and format at 917-743-5696, fax: 212-226-3976.

Murshidat: Female Primary Health Care Workers Transforming Society in Yemen, 1999, 35 mins., a video documentary by Delores M. Walters whose work was supported by a USIA fellowship through AIYS. Now in DVD format, distributed by Penn State Multimedia Sales at: <<http://mediasales.psu.edu>>, also 1-800-770-2111. \$55.

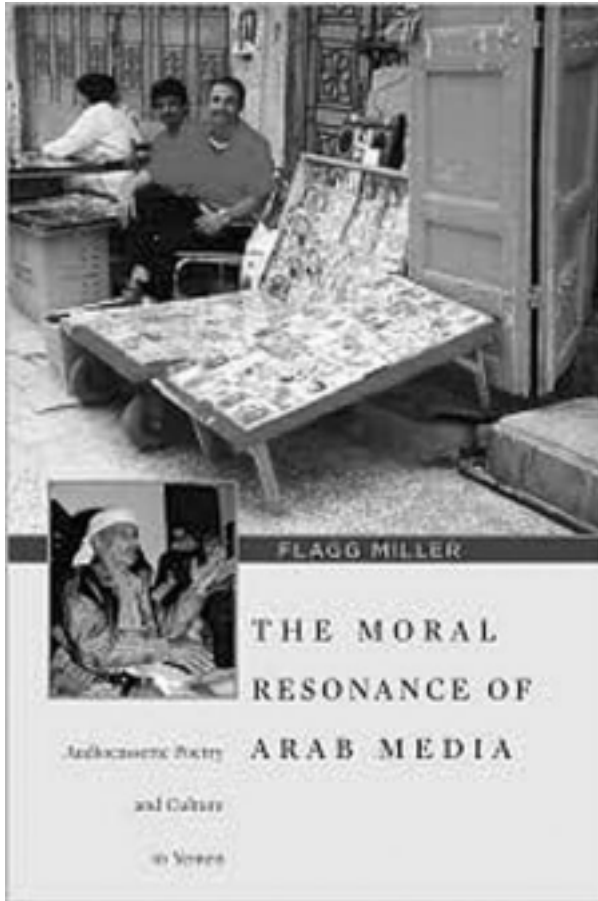
AIYS publications are produced with financial assistance from the US State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.



Yemen Update News

New Publications from Members and Fellows of AIYS

Books



The Moral Resonance of Arab Media: Audiocassette Poetry and Culture in Yemen, by Flagg Miller. Harvard University Press, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs Series #40, 2007. ISBN-13: 9780932885326

In a study of contemporary Arab political poetry, Flagg Miller provides insight into the ways that the aesthetics of modern media are shaped by language and culture. *The Moral Resonance of Arab Media* investigates a vibrant audio-recording industry in southern Yemen and shows how new forms of political activism emerge through Arabic poetry and

song. From the 1940s onward, a new cadre of political activists has used audio-recording technologies, especially the audiocassette.

Cassette producers address conflicted views about the resurgence of tribalism by showing Yemenis how to adapt traditional mores toward more progressive and pluralistic aims. Skilled bards continue to perform orally marked tribal verse, yet, as Miller demonstrates through an analysis of several centuries of changing media, oral performance is anything but static. Much of the power of the oral performance stems from its relationship to writing, print, and audio-visual media that link tribal ideals with metropolitan and national discourses. *Moral Resonance* shows how tribalism becomes a resource for critical reform when expressed in tropes of community, place, person, and history, by examining the lives and works of individual poets, singers, and audiences. The use of audiocassettes by Yemenis turns such tropes into cultural resources for a moral evaluation of political liberalism.

Flagg Miller was an AIYS fellow in 1995, 1997, and 2005.

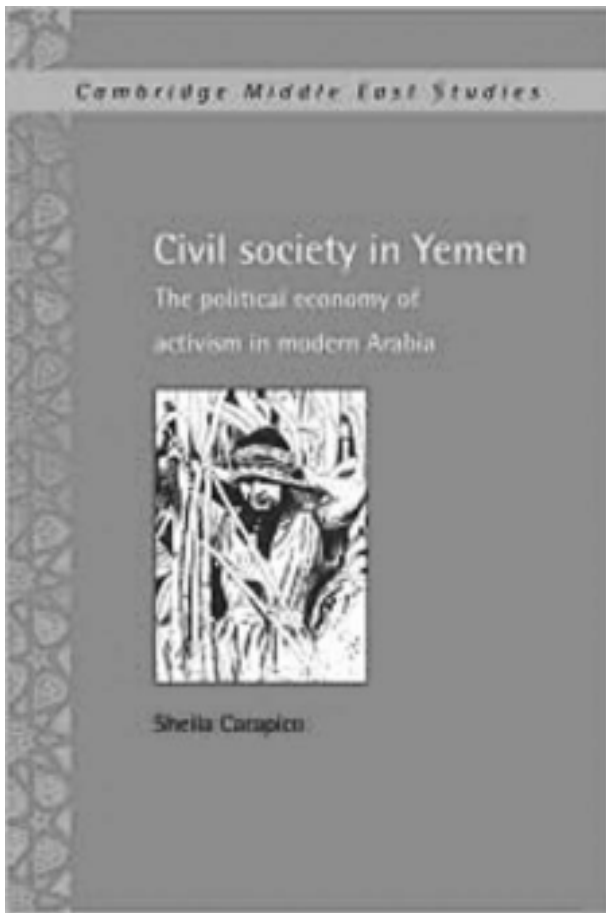


Poems from Guantánamo, Marc Falkoff (Editor), Ariel Dorfman (Afterword), and Flagg Miller (Preface)

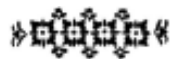
University of Iowa Press, 2007.
ISBN-13: 9781587296062

This collection gives voice to the men held at Guantánamo. Available only because of the tireless efforts of pro bono attorneys who submitted each line to Pentagon scrutiny, *Poems from Guantánamo* brings together twenty-two poems by seventeen detainees, most still at Guantánamo, in legal limbo.

Marc Falkoff is an assistant professor at the Northern Illinois University College of Law and attorney for seventeen Guantánamo prisoners. Flagg Miller is an AIYS member, a linguistic and cultural anthropologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Ariel Dorfman is a Chilean-



American poet, novelist, playwright, and human rights activist who holds the Walter Hines Page Chair of Literature and Latin American Studies at Duke University.



Civil Society in the Yemen: The Political Economy of Activism in Modern Arabia, by Sheila Carapico, Julia A. Clancy-Smith (Editor), Charles Tripp (Editor).

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Middle East Studies Series, 2007.

ISBN-13: 9780521034821 (paperback) and 9780521590983 (hardcover).

Sheila Carapico’s book on civic participation in modern Yemen makes a contribution to the study of political culture in Arabia. The author traces the complexities of Yemen’s history over the past fifty years, considering its response to the colonial encounter and to years of civil unrest. Challenging the

stereotypical view of Yemen, she demonstrates how the country is actively seeking to develop the political, economic, and social structures of the modern democratic state. This is an important book that promises to become the definitive statement on twentieth-century Yemen.

Sheila Carapico is a professor and chairperson in the Department of Political Science, the University of Richmond (VA).



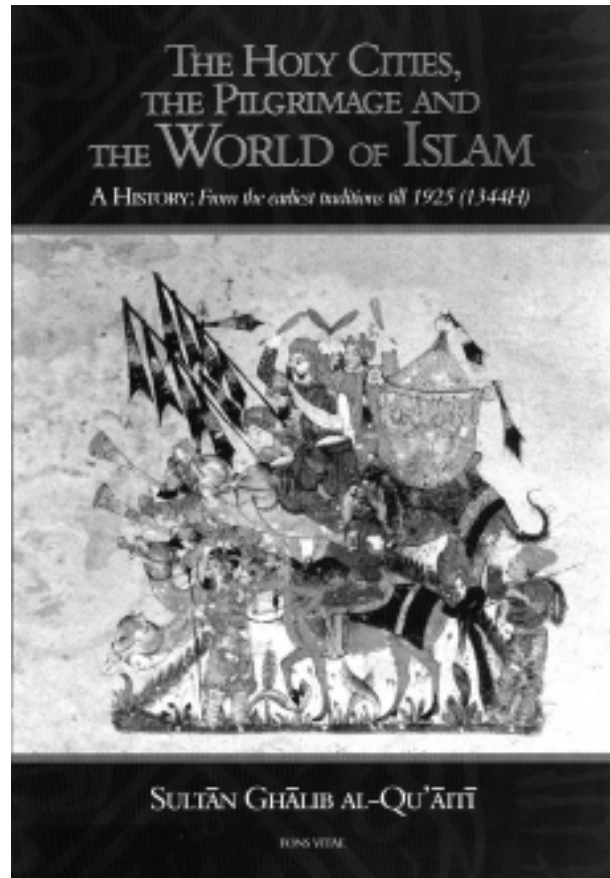
The Holy Cities, The Pilgrimage and the World of Islam. A History: From the Earliest Traditions till 1925 (1344H), by Sultan Ghalib al-Qu’aiti.

Fons Vitae, 2007.

ISBN: 1-887752-89-7 (hardcover) and 1-887752-94-7 (paperback).

700 pages, 47 illustrations, 15 maps, 5 diagrams.

This book traces the story of Islam, its holiest shrines and their ongoing interaction through the ages with the Muslim community the world over, from the



earliest traditions, until just after the abrupt abolition of the Caliphal office and the immediate efforts that ensued to address this challenge and void.

While focusing on the Holy Sites and the “Hajj,” the book is also a commentary of sorts on the evolution of Islamic history, culture, and civilization.

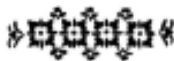
Based (as much as possible) on extant regional historical material and traditions, the author investigates from a thought-provoking perspective and interpretation—a regional and Islamic one. He reflects on important modern day issues and regional crises aggravated by the “clash of civilizations.” In this regard chapters 12 and 13 of the book ought to prove particularly relevant (Respectively: *The Hajj at the Time of the Visits of Ibrahim Rif’ at Pasha [Between 1318H/1901 and 1325/1908]* and *Ottoman Disintegration and Withdrawal from the Hejaz.*).

The rites, rituals and supplications (in translation) of the Pilgrimage, and the visit to al-Madinah are also covered.

The book’s appendices include lists of Muslim rulers and dynasties linked throughout the ages with Makkah and al-Madinah, along with the names of their governors from 630 CE until 1925, accompanied by brief information on them as available.

Sultan Ghalib bin ‘Awadh al-Qu’aiti—the last ruler of the Qu’aiti State, Hadhramaut (presently Yemen)—was born in 1948 and educated mostly in England, with an MA from Oxford in Oriental Studies (Islamic history) and another in Arabian Studies from Cambridge, both with honors. The sultan has been a Saudi resident since 1968, presently residing in Jeddah. He has working knowledge of Arabic, English, Urdu/Hindi, French, Persian, and German, allowing for a rare depth in his research of various historical periods and geographic regions.

Fons Vitae, 49 Mockingbird Valley Drive, Louisville KY 40207. Tel/Fax: 502-897-3641/893-7373. www.fonsvitae.com.



Window in Hajjarah, Yemen. Photograph: Richard Ellis, 2004

Translating Libya. The Modern Libyan Short Story, by Ethan Chorin.

Saqi Publishers, Series: SOAS Middle East Issues, 2008.

ISBN-13: 978-0-86356-647-9 (paperback). 224 pp.

Part anthology and part travelogue, *Translating Libya* presents the country through the eyes of sixteen Libyan short story writers. American diplomat Ethan Chorin tells us about his travels to the cities and regions in these stories, and explains how the works collectively reflect contemporary Libyan society.

The author opens a window on today’s Libya—a rapidly urbanising country with rich oil reserves and a nascent tourist industry—while also tracing the influence of the ancient Romans, the later Italian occupation, and the current influx of foreign workers from Africa and further afield. It includes works by authors such as Sadiq Nayhoum, Maryam Salama, Ibrahim al-Fagih, and Ziad ‘Ali. Ethan Chorin served from 2004 - 2006 as a US Commercial/Economic Attaché stationed in Libya.

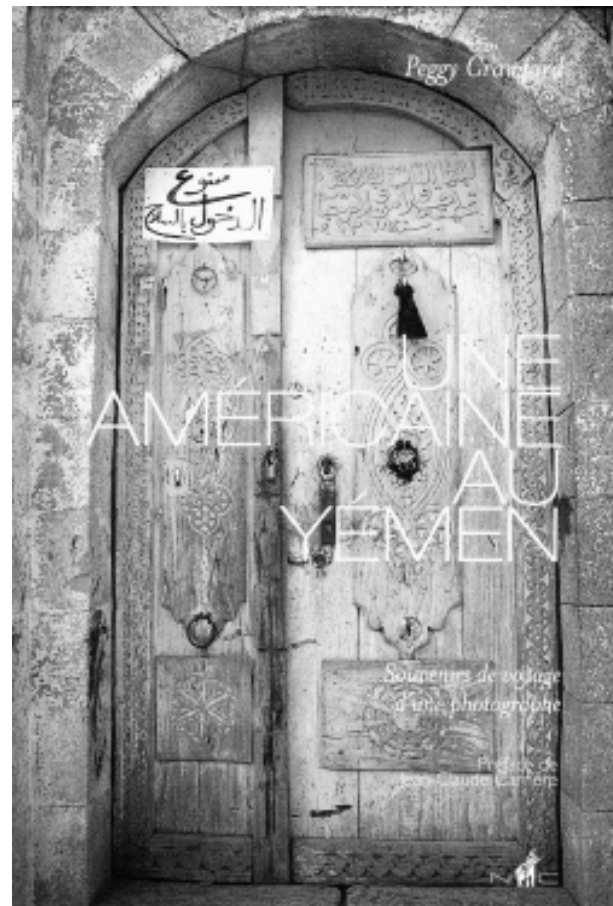
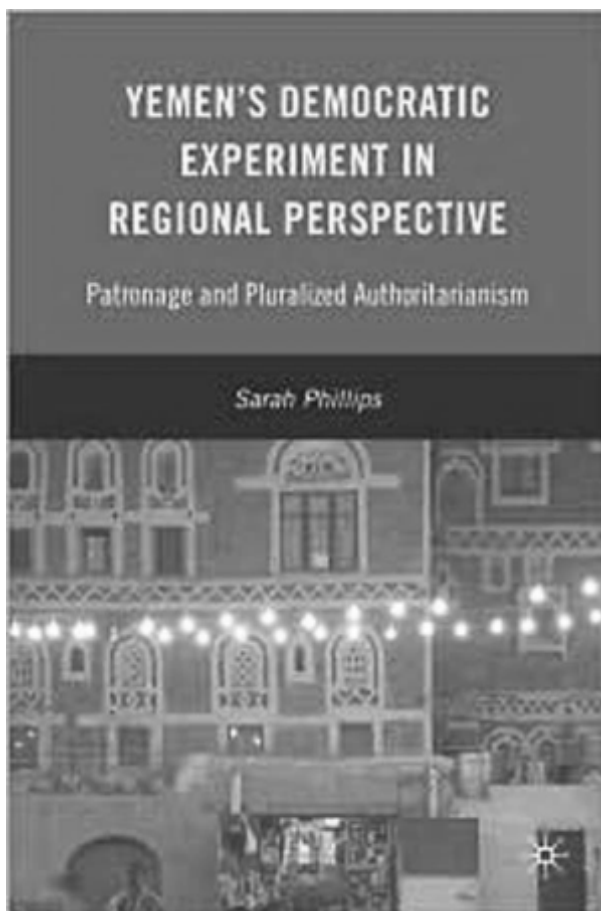
Ethan Chorin was an AIYS fellow in Yemen in 1997.



Yemen's Democratic Experiment in Regional Perspective: Patronage and Pluralized Authoritarianism, by Sarah Phillips. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0-23060-900-6 (hardcover) 288 pages

Shortly after the Gulf War of 1990-91, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh met with the Iraqi Vice President and his envoy. President Saleh told President Saddam Hussein to democratize Iraq to recover from the damage to himself caused by the war. President Saleh came to power thirteen years before offering this advice, presided over the creation of a new constitution that declared Yemen a democracy that same year, and fifteen years later was elected to rule for a further seven years. This study examines the nature of changes to Yemen's power structures, political dynamics and institutions since the intention to democratize was announced in 1990.

Sarah Phillips was an AIYS fellow in the 2004-2005 competition.

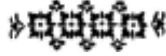


Une Américaine au Yémen: Souvenirs de voyage d'une photographe, by Peggy Crawford. Traduit de l'anglais par Pauline Baggio. Préface de Jean-Claude Carrière. Éditions Nicolas Chaudun, 2005. ISBN: 2-35039-004-7

Peggy Crawford's work in English—*An American in Yemen: Travel Notes of a Photographer*—has now been translated into French.

“This book is exactly what the subtitle 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.” (The quotation is from the review of the English publication published in *Yemen Update*, p. 45. See Richard Ellis, *Yemen Update* 47, 2005, pp. 45-46.)



Like Joseph in Beauty: Yemeni Vernacular Poetry and Arab-Jewish Symbiosis, by Mark S. Wagner. Brill Academic Publishers, Inc., 2008. ISBN 13: 9789004168404

This book traces the evolution of an Arabic poetic form called “Humayni poetry.” The book addresses the connections between the Humayni poetry of Yemen and the sacred poetry of Jews from Yemen, until now a neglected chapter in the history of Arabic and Jewish literatures.

Mark S. Wagner was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 1999-2000 competition and, more recently, in the 2006-2007 competition.



Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen, by Lisa Wedeen. University of Chicago Press (Series: Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning), 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0-226-87791-4 (paper); 978-0-226-87790-7 (cloth). 320 pp. 6 halftones, 4 maps.

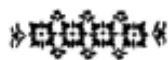
The government of Yemen, unified since 1990, remains largely incapable of controlling violence or providing goods and services to its population, but the regime continues to endure despite its fragility and peripheral location in the global political and economic order. Revealing what holds Yemen together in such tenuous circumstances, *Peripheral Visions* shows how citizens form national attachments even in the absence of strong state institutions.

Lisa Wedeen, who spent a year and a half in Yemen, argues that national solidarity in such weak states arises, not from attachments to institutions, but through extraordinary events and the ordinary activities of everyday life. Yemenis, for example, regularly gather to chew qat, a leaf with effects similar

to caffeine, as they engage in wide-ranging and sometimes influential public discussions of even the most divisive political and social issues. These lively debates exemplify Wedeen's contention that democratic, national, and pious solidarities work as performative practices that enact and reproduce a citizenry's shared points of reference. Ultimately, her skillful evocations of such practices shift attention away from a narrow focus on government institutions and electoral competition and toward the substantive experience of participatory politics.

(See the review of the book in this issue 29-32.)

Lisa Wedeen is professor in and chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago and the author of Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria. She has twice been awarded an AIYS fellowship, in the 1998-1999 and 2000-2001 competitions.



Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean, Engseng Ho.

University of California Press (Series: World History Library), 2006.

ISBN 13: 978-0-520-24454-2. 396pp

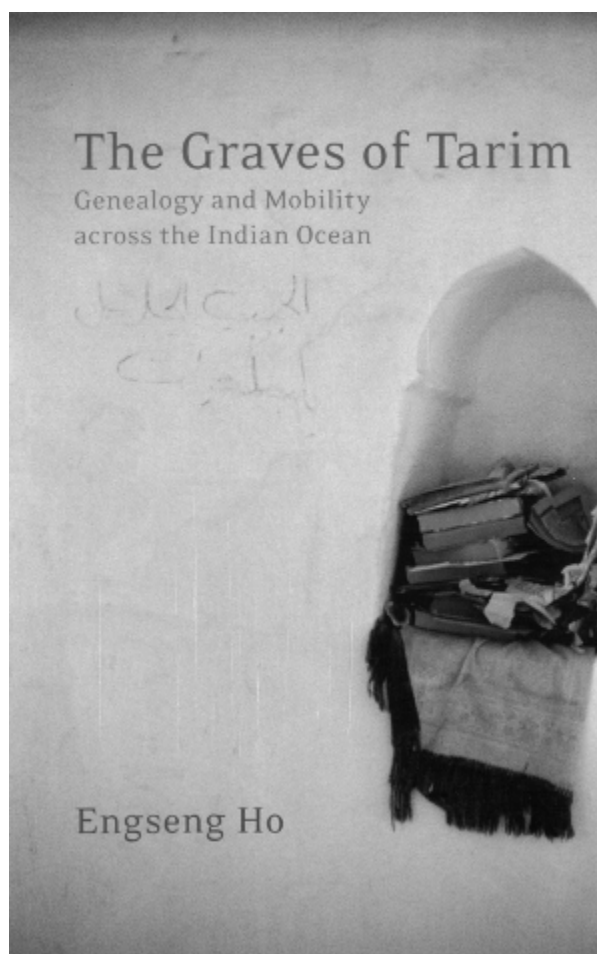
The *Graves of Tarim* narrates the movement of an old diaspora across the Indian Ocean over the past five hundred years. Ranging from Arabia to India and Southeast Asia, Engseng Ho explores the transcultural exchanges—in kinship and writing—that enabled Hadrami Yemeni descendants of the Muslim prophet Muhammad to become locals in each of the three regions yet remain cosmopolitans with vital connections across the ocean. Throughout the Indian Ocean, diasporic Hadramis engaged European empires in surprising ways across its breadth, beyond the usual territorial confines of colonizer and colonized. A work of both anthropology and history, this book demonstrates how the emerging fields of world history and transcultural studies are coming together to provide groundbreaking ways of studying religion, diaspora, and empire.

Ho interprets biographies, family histories,

chronicles, pilgrimage manuals, and religious law as the unified literary output of a diaspora that hybridizes both texts and persons within a genealogy of Prophetic descent. By using anthropological concepts to read Islamic texts in Arabic and Malay, he demonstrates the existence of a previously unidentified canon of diasporic literature. His conceptual framework and innovative use of documentary and field evidence are combined to present a vision of this vital world region beyond the histories of trade and European empire.

(See the review of the book in this issue 26-28.)

Engseng Ho is a Professor of Cultural Anthropology, History, Duke Islamic Studies Center, Duke University, Durham NC. Dr. Ho was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 1991-1992 competition.



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

Honors: An Aga Khan Award for Architecture for the Amiriya Restoration Project (2007)

Maria deJ. Ellis

The Amiriya Madrasa in Rada' is one of the most important architectural monuments in Yemen, a country well-known for its extremely rich monumental heritage. The construction of the Amiriya was commissioned in 1504 by the Sultan Amir bin Abd al-Wahhab of the Tahirid Dynasty. The building has the form of a monumental rectangle 40 m. long and 23 m. wide. The first floor has a prayer room with six domes, entirely decorated by stucco friezes and by 600 m² of tempera paintings. The paintings represent a unique example of Islamic decorative motifs and provide a virtual synthesis of 500 years of wall-painting tradition in Yemen. But by the 1980 the building was in an advanced state of decay. Its restoration became the focus of a multi-decade multi-national project that was successfully concluded in 2005..

The project to restore the Amiriya was jointly funded by the government of Yemen through the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums and by other sponsors, initially and primarily the

government of The Netherlands. Each funding source fed a component of the overall restoration project that was supervised by one of the two co-directors. Implementation of the work-plan covered by the Dutch funding was, from the start, supervised by Dr. Selma Al-Radi, while the work funded by the Yemeni government through GOAM was the task of Mr. Yahya Al-Nasiri from 1985. Dutch funding for the project covered three stages of work, of which the first two were the initial stabilization of the building's structure, while the second completed the restoration of the building and its components, upgraded its infrastructure, and covered the installation of a site museum. The third phase of the work, the conservation of the painted domes of the prayer hall, was carried out with funds from the Dutch government and the Social Fund for Development (Sana'a), with additional contributions from the government of Italy and the U.S. embassy in Sana'a.

The reconstruction of the building itself was



Dr. Selma Al-Radi, the Iraqi-American project director who restored the Amiriya complex in Rada, Yemen, over a 26 year period, receiving her 2007 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The winners are being congratulated by Malaysian Prime Minister Badawi and His Highness the Aga Khan. - Photograph: AKDN/Gary Otte

carried out under the supervision of the co-directors by local master craftsmen and laborers using traditional building techniques. The Dutch firm Architektenbureau Jowa was charged with the creation of the panels for the site museum and the design and installation of the exhibition lighting, under the supervision of its director, Jowa Imre Kis-Jovak. The technical painting conservation was carried out by a team from the Italian firm Centro di Conservazione Archeologica under the direction of Roberto Nardi and Chiara Zizola. Phase I of the reconstruction project (1983-88) was administered by the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (KIT, Amsterdam), while the administration for the second phase of the Dutch funding restoration as well as for the multi-sponsor painting conservation project was the responsibility of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies.

The project, concluded in 2005, was nominated for consideration for an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in the 2004-07 award cycle, and the

coveted award was actually announced in September 2007.

On-line documentation can be found at the following sites:

Aga Khan Award documentation:

Project description, with slides and video: <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project.asp?id=2701>

Project brief (2004 evaluation): http://www.akdn.org/architecture/pdf/2701_Yem.pdf

Painting conservation:

Project description and project report (published): <http://www.cca-roma.org/en/node/276> :

Abstract of the published project report: <http://...../node/252>

Video (18:41 mins): <http://...../node/227> :

General project documentation:

<http://www.aiys.org/amiriya> (general description of project and site museum; currently being revised)



Recipients of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Kuala Lumpur. Photograph: AKDN/Gary Otte.

Lucine Taminian Wins Translation Award!

Philadelphia University of Amman, Jordan presented the Translation of the Year Award to Dr. Lucine Taminian, for the best translation into Arabic of a book in the humanities and social sciences. Dr. Taminian was the translator and editor for the sixth volume in the AIYS translation series, *Challenging the Familiar*; the volume consists of 13 anthropological and historical studies of Yemen. She is currently overseas director of TAARII (The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq), based in Amman Jordan. She has edited several earlier volumes in the series, but this was the first time she herself had also contributed a work of scholarship.

Contents of the Prize Winning Volume

Isa Blumi, Chapter 4 in: *Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire: A Comparative and Political History of Albania and Yemen, 1878-1918*, Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2003.

Gabrielle vom Bruck, "Kinship and the Embodiment of History," *History and Anthropology* 10 (4) 1998: 263-98.

U. Freitag and H. Schoenig, "Wise Men Control Wasteful Women: Documents on 'Customs and Traditions' in the Kathiri State Archive, Say'un," *New Arabian Studies*, 5 (2000): 67-96.

Bernard Haykel, "Rebellion, Migration, or Consultative Democracy? The Zaydis and their Detractors in Yemen," in: R. Leveau, F. Mermier, and U. Steinbacj (eds.), *Le Yemen Contemporain*, Paris: Karthala (1999): 193-201.

Engseng Ho, "Hadramis Abroad in Hadhramaut: The Muwalladin," in: U. Ereitag and W. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750 - 1960s*. Leiden: Brill (1997): 131-46.



Senator Layla Sharaf hands the prize to Dr. Lucine Taminian. From right to left: Dr. Ibrahim Badran, vice president of Philadelphia University (Amman); Senator Layla Sharaf, the chair of Philadelphia University Board of Trustees; Dr. Marwan Kamal, President of Philadelphia University; Dr. Fayiz Khazawneh, the ex-president of Yarmuk University.

Alexander Knysh, "The Sada in History: A Critical Essay on Hadramis Historiography," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Series 3), 9, 2 (1999): 215-22.

Brinkley Messick, "Media Muftis: Radio Fatwas in Yemen," in: M.K. Masud, et. al. (eds.), *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and their Fatwas*. Harvard University Press (1996): 311-20.

Flagg Miller, "Public Words and Body Politics: Reflections on the Strategies of Women Poets in Rural Yemen," *Journal of Women's History* 14, 1 (2002): 94-122.

Philip D. Schuyler, "Heart and Minds: three Attitudestowards Performance Practice and Music Theory in the Yemen Arab Republic," *Ethnomusicology* 34, 1 (1990): 51-71.

Huda A. Seif, "Contextualizing Gender and Labor: Class, Ethnicity, and Global Politics in the Yemen Socio-Economy," in: J. Peters and A. Wolper (eds.), *Womens Right, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives*, London: Rountledge (1995): 289-300.

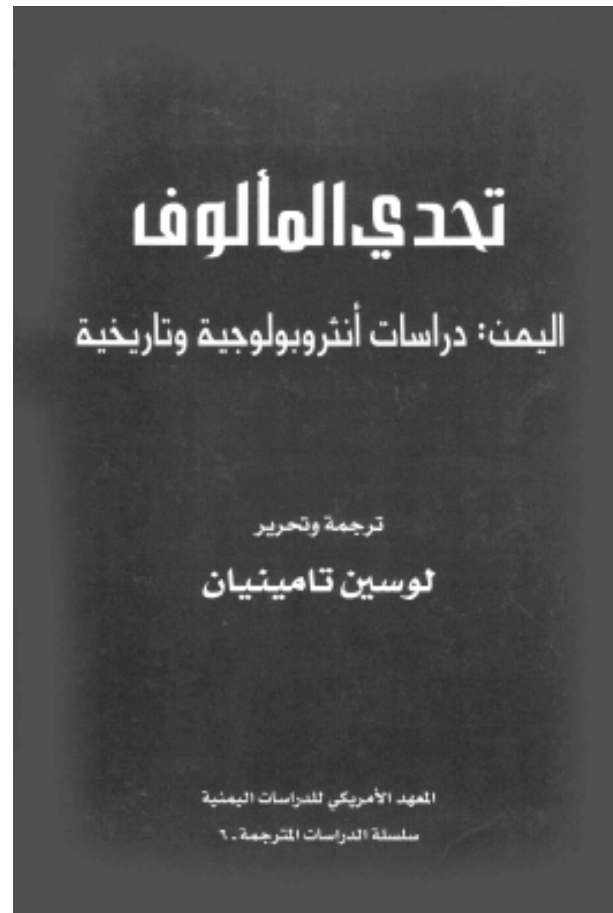
Lucine Taminian, "Rimbaud's House at Aden: Giving Voice(s) to a silent Poet," *Cultural Anthropology*, 13, 4 (1998): 464-90.

Delores Walters, "Invisible Survivors: Women and Diversity in the Transitional Economy of Yemen," in: R. Lobban (ed.), *Middle Eastern Women and the Invisible Economy*. University Press of Florida, 1998.

Anna Wurth, "Stalled Reform: Family Law in Post-Unification Yemen," *Islamic Law and Society* 10, 1 (2003): 12-34.

Since 1996 AIYS has sponsored a series of publications—translations of western-language research on Yemen into Arabic. The intent of the series is to acquaint Yemeni college students and post-collegiate researchers with up-to-date results of research on Yemen and with the academic research and interpretation that underlies that research.

Work on the initial volume was undertaken in 1994 on a special contract from the USIS post in Sana'a, but later volumes were paid for from the annual USIA/ECA programmatic grants administered through CAORC.



Challenging the Familiar: Anthropological and Historical Studies of Yemen, edited and translated by Lucine Taminian, AIYS, 2006. Dr. Taminian's translation is the sixth volume in the AIYS Yemen Research Series, Translations of Western Research into Arabic.

Each of the six topical volumes that have so far been published provides a broad overview of its chosen subject matter; much of the material included was the result of research by AIYS-affiliated scholars or actual AIYS fellows whose research was funded by AIYS grants from USIA or more recently ECA. A list of the publications appears on page X of this issue; their complete contents may be found at <<http://www.aiys.org/pubcontent.html>>.

The rewards of the translation program are great: the accessibility of sources significantly increases the research opportunities available to American scholars, broadens the disciplinary diversity of researchers, and enhance future relations between U.S. and Yemeni scholars through developing a common base of knowledge and disciplinary approaches.

Books of Interest

Coming of Age in Arabia: : A Memoir of Aden before the Terror, Tom Henighan.

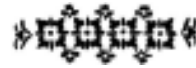
Penumbra Press, 2004

ISBN: 1-894131-64-9

233 pp., illus., map, chronology, bibliography

Coming of Age in Arabia is Tom Henighan's vivid account of his experiences in South Arabia, where he served as an American vice consul from 1957-1959. As a young American in a colonial society that was moving very rapidly from stability to chaos, Henighan witnessed the beginnings of the Arab insurgency that was to end more than one hundred years of British rule, and to turn South Arabia into a Marxist republic and a haven for Carlos the Terrorist, the Baader-Meinhof gang, and other predecessors of Osama bin Laden (whose family originated in the

Hadhramaut region in the old British Eastern Protectorate). Henighan's account powerfully conveys his awakening to the realities of colonialism, and his growing sense of suspicion and hatred with which much of the Arab world regards the west. This narrative, full of romance and adventure, and laced with ironical observation, will not only entertain, but will sharpen the reader's sense of how far western policy has to go before it can "come of age in Arabia."



Warriors of Arabia: Memoirs of a Medical Officer in Aden and Beyond, Franco Grima

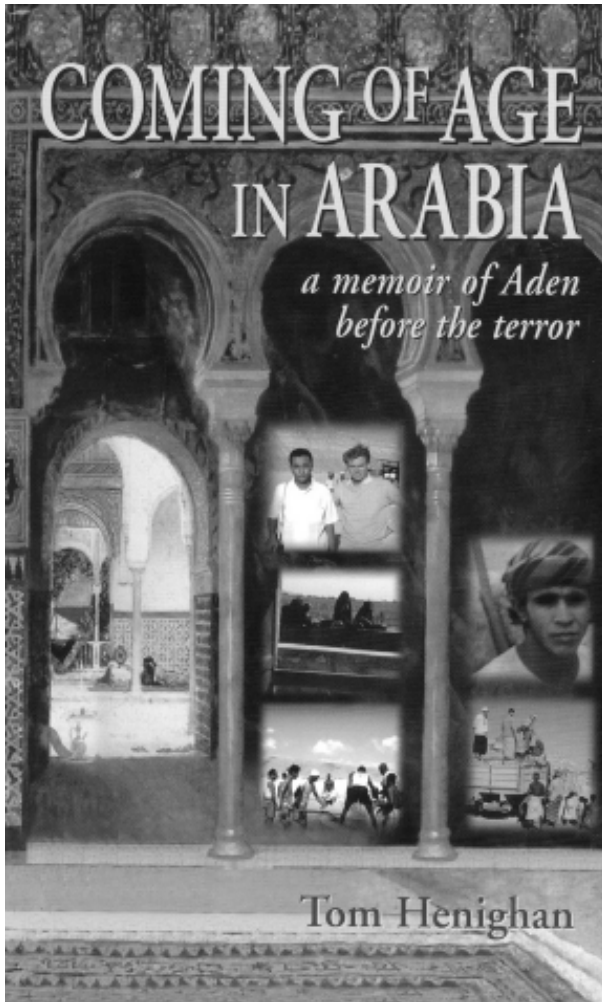
Franco Grima, 2009

ISBN: 978-99932-0-683-5 (hardback); 978-99932-0-684-2 (paperback)

In the sixties south-west Arabia went through one of its periodic upheavals. In Sanaa, a thousand years of oppressive rule by the Zaydi imam-kings came to an end in 1962 and, after a bloody civil war, northern Yemen emerged a Republic; in Aden 128 years of British rule ended in 1967 with a bloodbath and with the birth of the Republic of South Yemen.

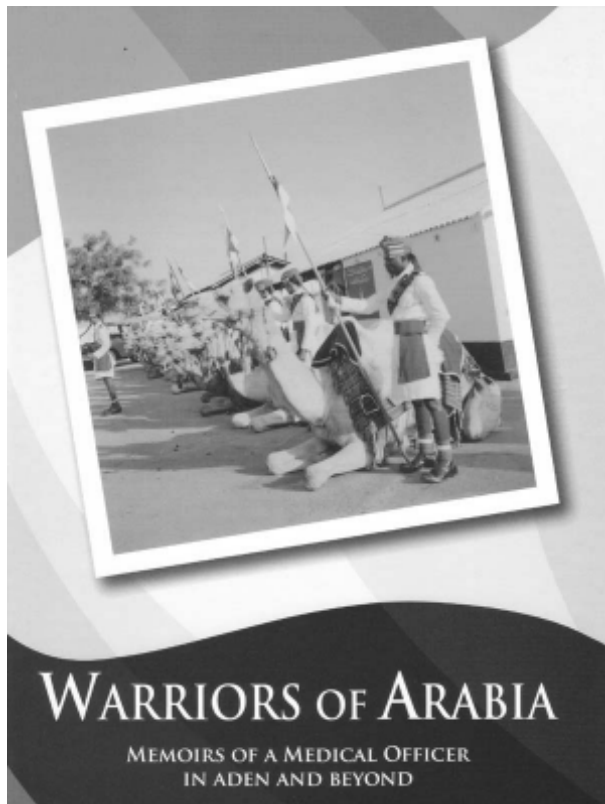
Franco Grima was seconded from the Royal Air force to the Arab army of the fragile Federation of South Arabia which was then engaged in guarding the ill-defined and lawless borders with northern Yemen. In the remote mountains and deserts, medical services were non-existent, tropical diseases and malnutrition were rife and child mortality tragically high. The author worked unceasingly to relieve suffering and control the spread of disease in a harsh land where standards of hygiene were low, and the native treatment for all illnesses consisted of disfiguring cautery and little else. He witnessed the privations brought about by the chronic shortage of water and arable land, compounded by endless tribal feuds. He joined his battalion on operations against dissident groups as well as against incursions from across the border.

The creation of the National Liberation Front led to several uprisings aimed at wresting control from the feudal sultans and bringing an end to colonial rule; one that took place in the Radfan mountains where a



military campaign was launched to defeat the well armed rebels. Franco Grima shared the hardships and dangers faced by the Anglo-Arab force in the struggle to recapture the inhospitable terrain, treating many battle casualties in the field.

Life under canvas with Arab troops in a strife-torn land was never dull. The author traveled extensively and got to know the tribes with their ancient customs, and several of the rulers of the impoverished petty States. He also found time to visit many pre-Islamic ruin sites and to journey east to the fabled Hadhramawt. As a medical officer he saw at first hand how the army turned wild young tribesmen into disciplined soldiers despite conflicting loyalties. This is a vivid eye-witness of south-west Arabia at a historic crossroads.



We would like to thank Tom Henighan and Franco Grima here in *Yemen Update* for the generous gift of their books. The books have been forwarded to the AIYS library in Sana'a, Yemen where they are a welcome addition to the collection.

2008 Election AIYS Delegates-at-Large

In late July of 2008 nominating ballots were sent to individual members for the Fall election of Delegates-at-Large.

The Delegates-at-Large who served from November 2005 to November 2008 were:

Dr. Linda Boxberger, TX
 Dr. Robert Burrowes (University of Washington, WA)
 Dr. Sumaiya Hamdani (George Mason University, VA)
 Dr. Thomas Stevenson (Ohio University-Zanesville)
 Dr. Shelagh Weir, UK

Twelve people were nominated for Delegate-at-Large in the 2008 election; the following 5 people received the most votes:

Dr. Linda Boxberger, TX
 Dr. Robert Burrowes (University of Washington, WA)
 Dr. Samuel Liebhaber (Middlebury College, VT)
 Dr. Thomas Stevenson (Ohio University-Zanesville)
 Delores M. Walters (National Council for Research on Women)

They will serve from November 2008 to November 2011.

The AIYS officers who will serve until November 2011, are:

Dr. Charles Schmitz, President
 Dr. Katherine H. Lang, Vice-President
 Ms. Elizabeth Vermey, Treasurer
 Dr. David Buchman, Secretary

Also serving on the board are the following senior staff members:

Dr. Maria deJ. Ellis, Executive Director
 Dr. Steven Steinbeiser, Resident Director, Sana'a

Correction

Yemen Update 48 (2006). The photographs on pages 7 and 63 should have been credited as follows: Photograph: Carolyn Han.

Dissertations by AIYS Fellows

Corstange, Daniel M. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Lebanon and Yemen*. Degree Date: 2008. UMI Number: 3304954.

Dr. Corstange was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 2003-2004 competition.

Lewis, Krista Ann. *Space and the Spice of Life: Food, Landscape, and Politics in Ancient Yemen*. Degree Date: 2005. UMI Number: 3195035
Dr. Lewis was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 1998-1999, 2000-2001, and 2005-2006 competitions.

Liebhaber, Samuel J. *Bedouins without Arabic: Language, Poetry, and the Mahra of Southeast Yemen*. Degree Date: 2007. UMI Number: 3275487

Dr. Liebhaber was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 2003-2004 and 2005-2006 competitions.

Newton, Lynne S. *A Landscape of Pilgrimage and Trade in Wadi Masila, Yemen: The Case of Al-Qisha and Qabr Hud in the Islamic Period*. Degree Date: 2007. UMI Number: 3287826

Dr. Newton was awarded an AIYS Arabic fellowship in the 1999-2000 competition.

Rose, Jeffrey I. *Arabian Sands: Defining the Paleolithic of Southern Arabia*. Degree Date: 2007. UMI Number: 3244451.

Dr. Rose was awarded an AIYS Arabic fellowship in the 1999-2000 competition.

Wagner, Mark S. *The Poetics of Humayni Verse: Language and Meaning in the Arab and Jewish Vernacular Poetry of Yemen*. Degree Date: 2004. UMI Number: 3127504

Dr. Wagner was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 1999-2000 competition and, more recently, in the 2006-2007 competition.

See also page 53 in this issue: Mark Wagner, *Like Joseph in Beauty*, Brill Academic Publishers Inc., 2008. ISBN 13: 9789004168404.

Wilhite, Vincent S. *Guerilla War, Counterinsurgency, and State Formation in*

Ottoman Yemen. Degree Date: 2003. UMI Number: 3119266.

Dr. Wilhite was awarded an AIYS Arabic fellowship in the 1997-1998 competition.

Willis, John M. *Unmaking North and South: Spatial Histories of Modern Yemen*. Degree Date 2007. UMI Number: 3283369

Dr. Willis was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 1998-1999 and 2001-2002 competitions.

Zimmerman, Paul C. *The Middle Hadramut Archaeological Survey: Settlement Patterns in South Arabia*. Degree Date 2008. UMI Number 3328690.

Dr Zimmerman was awarded an AIYS fellowship in the 1996-1997 and 1998-1999 competitions.

For ProQuest-UMI Dissertation Publishing go to:
<<http://www.proquest.com/en-US/products/dissertations/>>.

Articles by Fellows and Members of AIYS

Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Hostage Crisis: Kidnappings, Mass Media and the Iraqi Insurgency," *MERIA (The Middle East Review of International Affairs)* 8, no. 4, article 1 (December 2004). *AIYS fellow in 1997*.

Dorothea Bedigian, "History and Lore of Sesame in Southwest Asia," *Economic Botany* 58, no. 3 (2004): pp. 329-353. *AIYS fellow in 1998*.

Stephen Day, "Barriers to Federal Democracy in Iraq: Lessons from Yemen," *Middle East Policy* XIII, no. 3 (Fall 2006): pp. 121-139. *AIYS fellow in 1997, 1998, and 2001*.

Erik Gilbert, "The Mtepe Regional Trade and the Late Survival of Sewn Ships in East African Waters," *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 27, no. 1 (1998): pp. 43-50. *AIYS fellow in 1996*.

Pamela Jerome, "The Use of Lime Plasters for Waterproofing and Decoration of Mudbrick Build-

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

ings in Yemen,” *Terra 2000. 8th International Conference on the Study and Conservation of Earthen Architecture*. Torquay, Devon, UK May 2000. pp. 144-149. *AIYS fellow in 1997 and 2002*.

Gregory D. Johnsen, “Yemen: Trying to Restore Reform Credentials,” *Arab Reform Bulletin*, May 2006, vol. 4, issue 4 (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace). *AIYS fellow in 2005 and 2006*.

James Robin King, “Zaydis in a Post-Zaydi Yemen: ‘Ulama Reactions to Zaydism’s Marginalization in the Republic of Yemen,” *Shi’a Af-*

airs Journal, International Dialogue Series, vol. 1 (Winter 2008): pp. 53-84. *AIYS fellow in 2007*.

Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, “Muslim Society as an Alternative: Jews Converting to Islam,” *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* n.s. 14, no. 1 (Fall 2007): pp. 89-118. *Member of AIYS*.

Derek J. Wildman, Cliffird J. Jolly, et. al., “Mitochondrial Evidence for the Origin of Hamadryas Baboons,” *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 32 (2004): pp. 287-296. (Available online at <www.sciencedirect.com>) *AIYS fellows in 1997*.



Wadi Dhahr January 2004. Photograph: Maria deJ. Ellis

Do you have a new book coming out and would like to have it reviewed or announced? An article that you have recently published? Send a copy of the book for review to the Ardmore office or send us the information about your forthcoming publication (see the information on page 2). Would you like to announce something in the Yemen Update News section? Please send the information to the AIYS office by email or regular mail.

Obituary
George Hedges
Lawyer, Classicist, Archaeologist
(1952-2009)

George Hedges—Lawyer, Archaeologist, and Supporter of AIYS

George Reynolds Hedges was a lawyer to celebrities and a knowledgeable “amateur” archaeologist who discovered the ancient city of Ubar and the frankincense trade route in Yemen. Mr. Hedges was also the President of *The Archaeology Fund*, an institutional member of AIYS. He died at age 57 on March 10, 2009 at his home in South Pasadena, California.

He was born in Philadelphia on February 26, 1952, one of three sons of Thomas and Ann Succop Hedges. He attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a bachelor’s degree in 1974 and a master’s degree a year later, both in classical studies. After graduating in 1975, he went to Greece to attend the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. He later attended the University of Southern California Law School where he was awarded a law degree in 1978.

His legal activities for famous Hollywood clients gave him a high profile, but he also did much pro bono work; he said he was most proud of overturning the death sentence of Adam Miranda, who had been wrongly convicted of double murder. For more than 20 years, he fought to reverse the death sentence, on the grounds that the prosecution withheld another man’s confession to the second murder. In May 2008 the California Supreme Court agreed; they overturned the death sentence on the grounds that prosecutors withheld evidence in the sentencing phase. Adam Miranda was later sentenced to a life term.

Yet law and justice were not his only interests; George Hedges retained his fascination with the

ancient past. In the early 1990s he became a primary organizer of expeditions to the Middle East that traced the trail of frankincense and myrrh. He worked with a team to search for the lost city of Ubar, a major hub in the ancient trade of frankincense. The team consisted of many members, but particularly worth mentioning here are Nicholas Clapp, a filmmaker (*The Road to Ubar*, one film among many), scientists Ronald Blom and Charles Elachi, and Juris Zarins of Southwest Missouri State University (an archaeologist and for many years the delegate to the AIYS board of Directors for *The Archaeology Fund*). Blom and Elachi used NASA photographs to locate traces of trade routes used by caravans in southern Oman. The locations where these routes intersected were identified as potential sites of the legendary city of Ubar.

Starting in 1991 the expeditions discovered what was believed to be the lost city in the Dhofar region of southern Oman, near the present day settlement of Shisr. They also found another trading center near the Indian Ocean in Oman; the ruins of limestone fortresses in Yemen; and stone monuments that marked caravan routes. Satellite imagery was used to find similar sites in southern Yemen that were also found to have forts similar to the one found at Ubar.

George Hedges left a legacy for the South Arabian Peninsula, for Yemen, and for AIYS. His keen interest in the ancient past has led to the discovery of an ancient trade route that encompassed current day Yemen, Oman, and beyond. Research on this system of ancient commerce continues today and, hopefully, will continue well into the future.

With the death of George Hedges we have indeed lost a great and humane man. He is survived by his wife, Christy Shonnard Hedges, and his two sons George Shonnard Hedges (a film editor) and Duncan Fox Hedges (a USC Law student), his parents, and a brother, Thomas.



Obituary James Dell Cort Conlon

A Personal Reflection: James Conlon (1972-2009)

Pamela Jerome, AIA, LEED AP
Director, Tarimi Mansions Preservation Project
(TMPP)

James Dell Cort Conlon died after a brief illness on July 17, 2009. At the time, James was director of Columbia University's Visual Media Center and an active collaborator in the Tarimi Mansions Preservation Project (TMPP).

James was born in Binghamton, NY in 1972. He received his BA in Classics and Religion at the University of Rochester. After a year as a Fulbright Fellow in Jordan, he continued his studies at Indiana University and completed an MA in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures.

I met James at Columbia University in 1999 where he pursued post-graduate studies and earned a Certificate in the Conservation of Historic Buildings and Archaeological Sites in 2000, a program I coordinate at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP).

From the time James arrived at Columbia, it was obvious that he had great skills and competence in Near Eastern studies, and that he was seeking a practical, rather than academic, application for those skills. Fluent in Farsi, with excellent Arabic and Uzbeki, James was a rare breed. While studying, James worked part-time for the Media Center for Art History (later renamed the *Visual Media Center*) and helped me to organize a photographic exhibit of our research in Yemen, which was on display in Columbia University's Schermerhorn Hall for several months.

In the fall of 2000 I went to the Hadhramaut with Dr. Selma al-Radi to perform a feasibility study focusing on the abandoned mansions of Tarim. After this initial study we were able to develop a documentation-training program known as the Tarimi Mansions Preservation Project (TMPP). We began working on site in 2001 with funding from the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS) and

the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. Later funding sources included the Social Fund for Development, the US State Department Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, as well as Columbia University's GSAPP.

James participated in the project from the very beginning and more-or-less annually until January 2008. He was very keen about my work in Wadi Hadhramaut. It combined elements of his period of interest in the Near East, the turn of the 20th century, and included architectural conservation, migration, Sufism, and the application of new media. He was an invaluable asset to TMPP. He designed, constructed, maintained, and updated the project's website (www.learn.columbia.edu/tarim); he also helped organize logistics for the project, worked tirelessly to complete photographic documentation while on site, and co-authored or wrote several scholarly publications (refer to the appended bibliography). As a preservation architect my expertise involves the conservation of the built fabric. James brought another dimension to the project, because he viewed it through an anthropological lens, enriching our work in way that I would never have been capable of on my own.

James and I made a concerted effort to spotlight the plight of the abandoned Tarimi mansions, and of Tarim itself, by presenting our work in international venues. Together we traveled to Yazd, Iran, and Bamako, Mali, where we presented at the *Terra 2003* and *Terra 2008* conferences, respectively. We also presented our project at the *Windows on the Cultural Heritage of Yemen* symposium, which took place at the Freer Gallery, Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC in September 2003.¹

James identified with the Yemenis and made many long-term friends there, who were all greatly saddened to hear of his passing. It was for this reason that his family requested that, in lieu of flowers, donations for flood victims in Yemen should be sent to the Yemen Red Crescent Society (Head Office Bldg. 10, 26 September Street, Sana'a, Yemen).

I feel confident in saying that long after James became director of the Visual Media Center and involved with other amazing endeavors, our work together in Tarim remained James' favorite project. He is sorely missed by all those who knew him. He was not only my collaborator on the TMPP, but also a dear

friend. The project has not been the same without him.

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Conlon, James, Pamela Jerome and Selma Al-Radi, "Documentation of the Tarimi palaces, 2002-2003: Qasr al-'Ishshah," in: *Yemen Update. Bulletin of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies*, No 45, 2003, pp 9-22.

Notes

1. Editorial note: The Symposium, held September 5-6, 2003 at the Freer Gallery in Washington DC, was sponsored by the Embassy of Yemen in the U.S.; the Freer Gallery of

Art of the Smithsonian Institution; the American Institute for Yemeni Studies; the Foundation for the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (Yemen); the U.S. Embassy in Yemen; and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Yemen, with cooperation from the Bead Museum, Washington D.C.; the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University; the Council of American Overseas Research Centers; the French Embassy in the U.S.; the German Archaeological Institute (Berlin); the Textile Museum; Washington World Group International Consultants; and the World Bank InfoShop.

Financial support was provided by the Government of the Republic of Yemen, the U.S. Department of State, Board members of the Foundation for the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (Sana'a), Consolidated Contractors International Company SAL, Hunt Oil Company, Occidental Petroleum and Gas Corporation, the Social Fund for Development (Sana'a), the World Bank (Sana'a), Yemenia Yemen Airlines, and Contrack International.

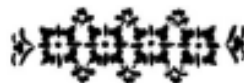
2. Editorial note: The outstanding and innovative visual resources page that James created for the Tarim project can still be found at:

<http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/tarim/>.

The Tarim project site also contains brief reports on the project's field seasons.



James Conlon in Yemen.



Obituary

Caesar Farah

**Author, Professor, AIYS Delegate
(1929 - 2009)**

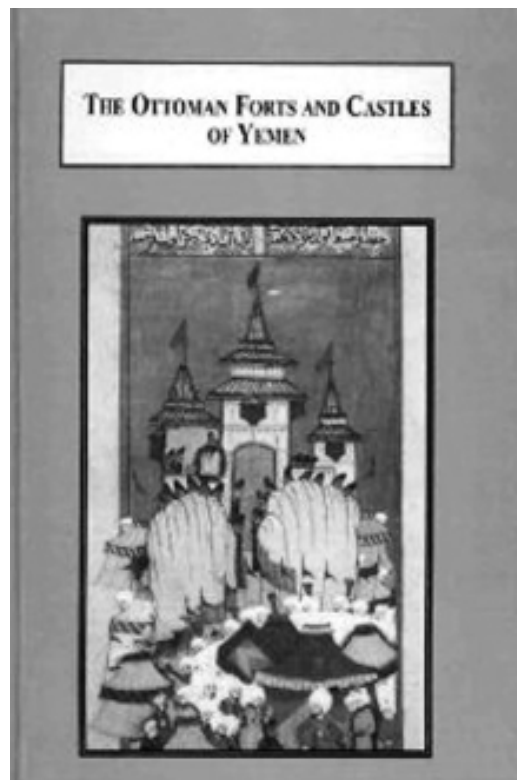
Professor Caesar Farah of Edina, Minnesota passed away on November 26, 2009; he was 80 years old. He was born in Portland, Oregon. Prof. Farah received his B.A. from Stanford University in 1952 and his M.A. (1955) and Ph.D. (1957) from Princeton University. Prof. Farah began his career with the State Department, serving in New Delhi, India, Karachi, Pakistan and Washington DC (1957 - 1959). He began his teaching career as an assistant professor of history and Semitic languages at Portland State University from 1959 - 1963, then went to California State University, Los Angeles (1963 - 1964), associate professor of Near Eastern Studies at Bloomington, Indiana (1964-1969), and professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic History at the University of Minnesota until he retired in the spring of 2008. He received many grants and awards and wrote, edited and translated numerous books and articles on the Middle East.

Prof. Farah's wide-ranging interests extended to Yemen. He won an AIYS fellowship in the 1998-

1999 competition for his project titled, *Yemeni Forts of the Late Ottoman Period*. At the last AIYS Board Meeting in 2009 he proudly showed his completed manuscript for a book that came from this study. This has now been published: *The Ottoman Forts and Castles of Yemen: A Photographic and Architectural Analysis* (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010). Another recent book on Yemen, *Sultan's Yemen: 19th Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule* (I.B. Tauris & Co. 2002), gives an account of the history of the rivalries confronting Yemen during the Ottoman restoration of direct rule, the military campaigns to regain control over Yemen, and insight into the process of pacification. .

Professor Farah was honored by his colleagues in a festschrift titled: *The Arab Lands in the Ottoman Era: Essays in Honor of Professor Caesar Farah*, Minneapolis: Center for Early Modern History, 2009.

He is survived by his loving wife Irmgard and their daughter Elizabeth as well as the children from his first marriage, Ronald, Ramsey, Christopher, Laurence, Raymond, and Alexandra; 12 grandchildren and 6 great-children as well as numerous other relatives and friends.





A Yemeni boy in the village of Dhi Bin (located northeast of Rayda, an area seldom visited [because of security problems]) shows off his handiwork—a toy (car?) constructed of a long metal shaft covered by fabric with movable wheels. Many children in Yemen make their own toys. Photograph: Carolyn Han, 2000.

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