

Yemen Update

Bulletin of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies
Number 46 2004



Membership Information

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Paid-up members of AIYS receive *Yemen Update* and the occasional small monograph, are eligible to stay at the AIYS hostel in Sana'a and may run and vote for the delegates at-large to the Board of Directors.

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Annual renewals are due September 15 for institutions and January 15 for individual members. Membership for individuals is for the calendar year (January 1 through December 31). Checks should be made payable to AIYS. Change of address, news concerning members of AIYS, editorial correspondence, dues and queries about AIYS and its programs should be sent to:

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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 to Dr. Maria Ellis, Executive Director, or to the *Yemen Update* Production Editor, Dr. Joan Reilly at the AIYS office in Ardmore (see above). This can be in English or a major European language. Please submit articles and reviews on a PC formatted disc in Microsoft Word or Word Perfect with a printed copy. We would prefer that photographs and line drawings for articles be submitted in "hard copy" and on disc as a jpeg file.

AIYS would like to thank the editorial committee for their expert assistance: Dan Varisco (editor of Yemen Webdate), Dan Buchman (Islam), Nora Colton (Economics), Barbara Evans (Contemporary Art), Bernard Havkel (History), Joy McCarriston (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 of Ms. Connie Benedict.

AIYS maintains an office, library and hostel in Yemen. AIYS individual members may stay at the hostel at the following rates (subject to change): single occupancy (\$25/night, \$150/week, \$250/2 weeks, \$350/month), double occupancy (\$35/night, \$200/week, \$300/2 weeks, \$400/month), students (per bed rate of \$12/night, \$80/week, \$160/2 weeks, \$260/month). Chris Edens, the Resident Director, may be contacted c/o AIYS, Box 2458, Sana'a, Yemen. Phone: 967-1-278-4444, fax: 967-1-285-071. E-mail: ajysvem@y.net.ye.

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

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

Recent Contributors to AIYS

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

The list below gives the names of those who made donations during the 2003-04 fiscal year. Not included in the sections that list donors of goods or services are the AIYS officers and the scholars who serve on the fellowship, library, and publications committees although their service in those capacities is a valuable and much-appreciated contribution to AIYS' programs.

A. Donations Received in Fiscal Year 2004 (July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004)

Benefactors (\$500 and above)

Hunt Oil Co., U.S.
Edens, Christopher M.
Ellis, Maria deJ.
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Colburn, Donald G.
Day, Steven
Hanson, Brad
Hart, Jane S.

Herben, Janet
Poullada, Leila

B. Restricted Gifts for Yemen Symposium (January 1, 2003 - September 30, 2003)

1. Contributions in cash

a) Directly to AIYS:

Contrack International
Hunt Oil Company
Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation
Social Fund for Development, Sana'a
U.S. Department of State (U.S. Embassy,
Sana'a)
Government of Yemen (Yemen Embassy,
Washington D.C.)

b) Through the Foundation for the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, Sana'a:

Board members of FPACH
Consolidated Contractors International
Company SAL
The World Bank, Sana'a

2. Contributions in-kind

a) Services and venues

The Bead Museum, Washington D.C.
Center for Contemporary Arab Studies,
Georgetown University
German Archaeological Institute, Berlin
Royal Netherlands Embassy, Sana'a
Washington World Group Consultants
World Bank Info Shop, Washington D.C.

b) Mailing lists

AIYS
CCAS, Georgetown University
Council of American Overseas Research
Centers
The Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution
The Textile Museum, Washington D.C.
Yemen Embassy, Washington D.C.





Report of the Executive Director



Maria deJ. Ellis

The 2003-04 financial and program year was off to a good start with two very positive experiences. At the suggestion of the US ambassador to Yemen, Edmund Hull, the State Department entertained a request from AIYS for funding to help AIYS get its own building, and in early September 2003 Ambassador Hull was able to announce, as part of his closing remarks at the Yemen Symposium, that such funds had been granted.

The highly successful symposium "**Windows on the Cultural Heritage of Yemen,**" hosted by the Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC on Friday & Saturday, Sept. 5-6, 2003, was co-sponsored by the Embassy of Yemen in the US, the Embassy of the US in Yemen, AIYS, and the Foundation for the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (FPACH, Sana'a), and supported by the governments of Yemen and the US, the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Yemen, and various individual and corporate donors both in the US and in Yemen (for a complete list see the symposium section of the AIYS website). The program highlighted many aspects of Yemen's culture during two days of presentations, including a number of musical events provided by a group of cantorial singers and an instrumental ensemble from Sana'a. The main program was presented in the Freer Gallery's auditorium, but the interest in the symposium was so great that an additional room had to be used for overflow seating, where the presentations were viewed on TV. Festivities and events associated with the symposium occurred for nearly a full week. The opening reception on Thursday afternoon (Sept. 4, 2003) was hosted by the World Bank's *InfoShop*, where there was also an exhibit of books on Yemen, Yemeni jewelry, photographs of Yemen by Carolyn Brown (lent by Hunt Oil Company), and a variety of films on Yemen. The symposium itself took up Friday and Saturday. On Monday (Sept. 8, 2003) the program continued with a special presentation on Yemeni jewelry at the Bead Museum, followed by a reception and the opportunity to buy jewelry in the museum shop. As part of this program the Bead Museum held over Marjorie Ransom's exhibit "Silver Speaks: Traditional Jewelry of the Middle East,"

which closed after that day. A program of music by the Yemeni instrumental and vocal ensembles who performed at the symposium, originally scheduled for the Maison de France (the auditorium of the French embassy) was rescheduled. The singers and instrumentalists performed on Tuesday (Sept. 9, 2003) at a special program on Yemen held at Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies. Dr. Abd al-Karim al-Iryani also spoke at this event and attendees watched selected films on Yemen. Later in the afternoon the singers performed on the Washington DC Mall as part of the International Children's Art Festival.

The Steering Committee for the symposium consisted of Dr. Brigitte Boulad-Kiesler, working on behalf of the Dutch embassy in Sana'a and FPACH; Ms. Boushra Almutawakil, working for the Yemeni embassy, myself representing AIYS, and Ms. Amal Abulhajib Hull, the wife of the US ambassador to Yemen. Arrangements in Sana'a were handled by Mr. Abdulwahab Thabet representing FPACH, and Mr. John Balian, the public affairs officer at the US embassy, who also joined the steering committee in Washington in late August to help with the hectic final arrangements and airport logistics. In the final week and during the symposium itself many of the Yemeni embassy's staff members helped with logistics, as did a number of Yemeni volunteers living in or visiting the Washington area, and Dr. Joan Reilly, AIYS' publications and membership coordinator. The symposium itself would not have run as smoothly as it did without the impressive professionalism of Ms. Caroline Bedinger, the Freer Gallery's special events coordinator. The symposium was covered by Yemen TV, World Net, and various print media reporters, including two Yemeni newspapers. A delegation of businessmen who are board members of FPACH also attended the symposium.

The summer of 2003 was mostly taken up with work on the symposium: getting the programs and invitations designed and printed, finding a variety of mailing lists and correlating them, and arranging for the mailing. Registration was handled through a special website set up by Mr. Jamal Yacoub, then the Yemen embassy's commercial attaché. Early fears that a

program on Yemen would not attract enough people to fill the 300-seat auditorium at the Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution were laid to rest by the end of the first week after the invitations were mailed, when more than 400 people had already indicated their intention to attend. However, we did not stop taking reservations because the staff of the Freer Gallery has observed that attendance at “no charge” events usually runs to about 60-65% of those who have reserved a place. In the end we had 688 registrations for Friday for approximately 370 places (290 in the auditorium, where some seats had to be left empty to accommodate the TV crews, and 80 in a nearby conference room connected by remote TV), and 741 for Saturday. All available seats were taken both days; on Friday “hundreds” of people had to be turned away, according to the volunteer who managed the registration desk. We apologize to those who came and couldn’t stay.

The symposium organizers feel that it was a very worthwhile effort that achieved its mission of emphasizing the positive and impressive aspects of Yemeni culture. We thank the many sponsors for making it possible to put on this ambitious program. At the symposium it was also announced that the *Queen of Sheba* exhibition that has been touring Europe for the last few years will open at the Freer Gallery in June of 2005. For information on that exhibit and on the one at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, California (October 17 through March 13, 2005), see p. 66.

Donors: We are very grateful to the many members who sent in a donation with their membership payment, and to others who have made gifts that make AIYS programs possible. In addition, a number of companies made special donations to the Symposium. The list on p. 3 shows both donations received during the 2003-04 financial year for our ongoing activities and a complete list of those who contributed to the costs of the symposium, either directly to AIYS or as gifts channeled through the Foundation for the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in Yemen.

Survey on research in Yemen: AIYS is continuing its efforts to document the long-term value of its fellowships and its research support services. We therefore ask all persons who worked in Yemen under research permits facilitated by AIYS—that is permits granted by the Yemen Center for Studies and

Research, by the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums, by the archives administration, and by other agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency—to send in at least a brief report on their project and on what, if any, relationship it bears to their present work. We also remind researchers that it was a condition of all permits that two copies of all publications deriving from the permitted research are required, one for the agency and one for AIYS.

New publications: A new, annotated version of AIYS President Tom Stevenson’s *Yemen Filmography*, which until then had been available only on the AIYS website, appeared at the end of August 2003. Dr. Joan Reilly, the production editor for AIYS, continues to work on the volume of curriculum resources on Yemen produced by former Resident Director Marta Colburn, beautifully illustrated with drawings by Maha Al-Hibshi, a trained architect who formerly was the AIYS office assistant in Sana’a. Work continues on *Kitab San’a*, the translation of a volume of the poetry of Dr. Abd al-Aziz Maqalih, the president of the Yemen Center for Studies and Research. In November 2003 it was decided to include not only the English translation, but also a corrected text of the Arabic, which had originally been published in Beirut and is not widely available in Yemen. The combined text should be published in Sana’a in the fall of 2004. We have also started a new volume in the series of translations of western-language research on Yemen into Arabic. Focusing on historical and archaeological problems, it is being edited and translated by AIYS member Dr. Lucine Taminian, who also edited several of the earlier volumes.

Other news: In order to accommodate all the material destined for this issue of *Yemen Update*, I am not covering several topics usually included in my report: the AIYS-sponsored digital library project, information on the fellowship competitions, MESA panels, and outreach efforts. These topics are all covered in the “News and Notes” section of the AIYS website <<http://www.aiys.org/news.html>>. Information on continuing programs such as the fellowship competitions (deadline Dec. 31) and the MESA panels (deadline Feb. 1) can also be found on the AIYS website, as well as in previous issues of *Yemen Update*.



From the Resident Director in Sana'a



Christopher M. Edens

My previous report from Sana'a was in *Yemen Update* 44, for the year 2002, which appeared in the spring of 2003. *Yemen Update* 45 followed shortly after, in late August 2003. It did not include a report from Sana'a, so the following comments look back on the past 18 months.

In 2002 I alluded to memories of slogging through paperwork and then spoke optimistically about the coming year once we had "weathered the question of war between the US and Iraq." War did come; optimism was misplaced. During the final months of 2002 a string of events in Yemen culminated in the assassination of Jar Allah 'Umar and the deaths of three Americans in the Jiblah hospital, and US preparations for invading Iraq mounted. Public demonstrations in Yemen during the first part of 2003 protested the preparations; two days after the beginning of hostilities on March 19, a demonstration outside the US Embassy turned violent and four Yemenis died. The invasion produced in Sana'a an atmosphere of generalized hostility toward the US and its "coalition of the willing." The US Embassy closed briefly at the beginning of the invasion, but otherwise remained open. Many European embassies reduced to skeleton staffs and closed, and many cars sported large decals of the French tricolor inscribed "Fransa." On the streets of Sana'a the popular mood started to return, at least superficially, to normal by June as the war drew to a close. But resentments certainly remained: some officials made individual decisions not to perform their duties for Americans, while many Yemenis took solace in the gradually stiffening resistance to US occupation. Events following the invasion sparked considerable discussion in Yemen about US intentions and motivations, and worries about which country in the region would be next (taking it for granted that there would be a next). The revelations of prisoner abuse in the Abu Ghurayb prison, the siege of Fallujah and then of Najaf, and the kidnappings and executions of foreigners in Iraq and then Saudi Arabia excited considerable comment, as did bombings in Saudi Arabia and Spain, and the assassinations in Palestine of Shaykh Yasin and al-

Rantissi. Posters began to appear in shops and cars, such as one showing the shaykh and the words "we are all Shaykh Yasin," and picture of a child killed by gun fire carried the motto "death to America, death to Israel."

For all the turmoil outside Yemen and anti-US anger inside the country, the period following the invasion of Iraq was remarkably peaceful compared to the half year before the invasion. Yemen conducted on schedule the parliamentary elections of April 27, 2003 (see Charles Dunbar's comments in *Yemen Update* 45), in which former and current AIYS presidents Sheila Carapico, Robert Burrowes, and Thomas Stevenson acted as monitors; relatively little violence attended the campaigning and voting despite pre-election fears. In September 2003 the government stopped a group actively preparing a bombing campaign against western targets, and for a two week period in December a man attacked three Europeans in Sana'a before being arrested. The recent events in Sa'dah, sparked by the government's attempt to detain Husayn Badr al-Din al-Huthi and his group, have anti-US coloring but in fact are largely a domestic issue.

Leaving aside the first month of the Iraq war, Yemenis in general continue to be amazingly tolerant of Americans in their midst despite the common perception that US foreign policy in the region is disastrously misguided. Conversations can decay into rants once the subject of regional politics is broached, but people still say "welcome to Yemen" while passing you on the street; taxi drivers, with their greater opportunity for conversation, still explicitly express a difference between the individual American and the actions of his government. Patience and tolerance have limits, of course, but for the moment most Yemenis seem not yet to have exhausted theirs.

In early 2003 the increasing likelihood of war stirred discussion within AIYS about whether and under what circumstances to close. We devised an emergency contingency procedure, in which we take US embassy and other assessments and actions under advisement, but also draw on our own under-

standing of a situation.

Despite the uncertainties of the past 18 months, AIYS maintained its fellowship programs, as did several of the Fulbright programs. However, a number of AIYS fellows did postpone their research or Arabic studies, and through much of 2003 the hostel was not fully occupied. In the summer of 2003 the first of several Fulbright scholars arrived, and before the end of 2003 the hostel was occupied by a small number of Fulbrighters, AIYS fellows, and independent researchers. Tom Stevenson (Ohio) visited during the summer of 2003, partly in his capacity as the AIYS president and partly to pursue his research on Yemeni sports.

By late autumn 2003, American scholars had regained a measure of confidence in the safety of Yemen, and individual researchers and project teams returned to Yemen in reassuringly greater numbers. The winter of 2003-04 was, in fact, the busiest for the hostel since winter 2000-01, and the return to normalcy carried through the summer of 2004. The AIYS staff in Sana'a welcomed the return to relatively normal operations during late 2003.

Robert Burrowes, recently retired from the University of Washington, was senior scholar in-residence from October 2003 through June 2004; during these nine months he advised younger researchers, worked on his study of the Famous Forty, and continued his extensive research on *qat*-chewing.

The AIYS president and executive director also made several appearances during late 2003 and 2004. Tom Stevenson was here twice, in December 2003 and in summer 2004, for consultations on our efforts to acquire a permanent facility. Maria Ellis, AIYS' executive director, spent January 2004 in Yemen on her annual inspection of the Sana'a operations; on this occasion she was accompanied by her husband Dick, here on his first visit to the country. The president, executive director, and resident director all attended the Council for American Overseas Research Centers' meeting in Delhi (India) during the first week of January 2004.

The rules for getting and renewing visas changed several times within the first half of 2004, and new security reviews of first-time applicants for residence visas added another step to the already lengthy process. The procedures for getting research equipment

through the airport have also become baroquely complicated. On the other hand, obtaining research permits mercifully remained straightforward.

Ammar al-Awdi bore the brunt of this increased workload, and he responded admirably. In early 2003 Shaqib Sadiq replaced Ahmad Mahfuz as guard, but otherwise the existing staff remained in place. Several events brought joy to us all: Ammar and Maisoon Fathi married in July 2003; Amir Abduh welcomed his first child, a son named Ammar, to the world in February 2004. Shaqib, who had previously been subjected to many jokes about when he would marry, was engaged over the same winter; the marriage took place in August 2004.

The lecture series has been suspended for over two years; a lecture scheduled for September 11, 2001 was cancelled and, immediately thereafter, we chose not to hold public events as a security measure. Later we did not hold them for lack of speakers. We resumed the series in spring 2004, first with a film about Soqatra and then with a lecture by Sam Liebhaber about contemporary poetry in al-Mahrah.

During 2003 we also renewed our basic operating agreements with the Yemen Center for Studies and Research and with the General Organization for Antiquities and Museums. In early 2003 GOAM went through another administrative shuffle, with Dr. Yusuf Abdallah returning to his position as president.

The fellowship program for Yemeni scholars continued without interruption, awarding 11 fellowships in 2003 and 12 in 2004. Among the completed 2003 studies several have considerable importance, for example, Khalid al-Ansi's study of a stratified sequence of Islamic pottery from Baraqish, and Dr. Mehdi al-Haj's analysis of chemical residues in *qat*.

Bruce Paluck and Raya Saggar's *The al-Hasan bin al-Qâsim Mosque Complex, An Architectural and Historical Overview of a Seventeenth Century Mosque in Dîrân, Yemen*, was printed in March 2003, after serious technical difficulties. This volume, in both English and Arabic, provides important architectural documentation of an historic building at risk of collapse after losing its roof during the 1982 earthquake. Later in 2003 work started on publishing Bob Holman and Sam Liebhaber's translation of Dr. Abd al-Aziz al-Maqaalih's poetry *Kitâb San'â' / The Book of Sana'a*, which will be printed to coincide with the

celebration of Sana'a as the cultural capital of the Arab world during 2004. The more-or-less simultaneous presence in Yemen of Miranda Morris and Sam Liebhaber stimulated plans for preparing and publishing books of Soqotri and Mahri poetry based on their respective research.

The restoration work on the Amiriya Madrasa in Rada' entered its final phase, as the Italian team from the Centro di Conservazione Archeologica (CCA) arrived in November 2003 to conserve the stunning paintings inside the domes of the prayer hall. By mid-year 2004 this work was half completed, and the team is expected to return in September 2004 to complete the endeavor. The CCA program includes training of six conservators from the General Organization for Antiquities and Museums, as a basis for Yemeni projects on other painted monuments in the country. The painting conservation program is being sustained by contributions from the Dutch Embassy and from the Social Fund for Development for the intervention itself. The US Embassy's Ambassador's Fund is providing money for the training component.

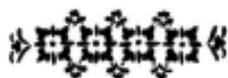
A second grant from the Ambassador's Fund is supporting emergency restoration of parts of the Ishshah Palace in Tarim that are at risk of collapse, as a follow-up to work already achieved through a direct contribution from the Social Fund for Development. The AIYS part of this intervention began in April 2004 and is expected to be completed during the coming autumn. The Ishshah Palace, which currently houses a museum open to the public, was the first of the al-Kâf palaces that Pamela Jerome's team documented (see the Columbia team's report in *Yemen Update* 45).

The most exciting, and at the same time frustrating, project during the past year has been our efforts to acquire a permanent facility. Edmund Hull, then

the US ambassador to Yemen, announced the availability of funds for this purpose at the cultural symposium in Washington in September 2003. Much of our time in Sana'a since then has been devoted to looking for a house, and then negotiating our way through the process. Despite finding a suitable place on offer, we still have not completed the deal. The experience so far has been a practicum in comparative legal and bureaucratic systems. Getting through the thickets either of Yemeni or of US practices alone would be difficult enough, but groping through both simultaneously has been almost comedic in its complexity. We all hope to have good news to report on the house next year.

Following logistical preparations the AIYS-funded Dhamar archaeological field school ran from June 14 through July 23, 2004. It was planned for GOAM staff and Dhamar university students at the Hirran cemetery (just north of Dhamar city, on the construction site of the new Dhamar regional museum). A total of nine GOAM staff members participated in the program with me and my wife Bakiye, a Turkish archaeologist: Ali al-Sanabani (the head of GOAM for the Dhamar governorate), five members of his staff (Salah Ahmad al-Kumani, Salih Ahmad al-Faqih, Ahmad Assir, Kamal Abdullah al-Dubay, and Shaddad al-Aly), and three staff members from the central GOAM office in Sana'a (Ahmad Haydarah, Abd al-Aziz Sa'id, and Jamal Thabit). Several Dhamar University students had initially expressed an intention to participate, but in the end none chose to come. The excavation uncovered eleven graves; judging by the position of the skeletons, the burials in one location are probably Islamic and the remainder pre-Islamic. A report on the excavation is in preparation.

August 2004





President's Address

Thomas B. Stevenson, AIYS President



Sana'a has been designated the Arab cultural capital of 2004. There have been many events including daily activities on Tahrir Square. The focus is on reinforcing and presenting the city's and the nation's cultural heritage and cultural wealth. As I noted during my visit in July and August of this year, in spite of this emphasis on tradition, Yemen is changing in many areas. Here are just a few examples: A new, extremely modern Movenpick Hotel will open near the Sheraton, in the area of the US Embassy. The structure dominates the skyline and will likely become a new focal point for business travelers. At the end of August Yemen will enter what is being called the third generation of mobile phone technology. Broader bandwidth will enable users of new phones to access the internet and activate a variety of new services—most beyond my limited understanding—all at cheaper rates than offered by the current providers. Those, like me, who are content to use the current system, will find it will be less expensive. Following the lead of Arab Bank, the Yemen Commercial Bank is offering ATM services. At the moment these machines are accessible only to bank customers, but plans are underway to allow users to pay for groceries and pharmaceuticals with their ATM cards.

On the academic side, the number of students in Sana'a studying Arabic has reached its highest level. The student body of the Yemen Language Center far exceeds the school's dormitory capacity. This indicates strong interest, primarily among Europeans, in Arabic or the Middle East. Likewise, the AIYS hostel has been full for the first time in several years. Perhaps this indicates that the fears that discouraged students are on the wane. With the elimination of most travel restrictions, Yemen again offers many opportunities for new and experienced researchers.

If all goes well, 2004 will mark a significant change for AIYS. After 25 years of wandering, we hope to buy a house and establish a permanent home for the institute. In 2003, we received a Middle East Partnership Initiative Grant to be used toward the cost to purchase and adapt a permanent facility. This will

end the cycle of locating and refurbishing a house only to recommence the process a few years later. In addition to cost and time savings, a fixed, recognized location will enable AIYS to have an unambiguous presence much as the French have enjoyed with their tenure in Bayt al-Ajami. A fixed location should help end the never-ending confusion of AIYS with YALI, which exists even within US security agencies.

This grant, which AIYS owes to the initiative and support of Ambassador Edmund Hull and the hard work of Maria Ellis, offers AIYS lots of opportunities. Of course, this good news is not without its headaches. Finding suitable locations, complying with the mandated US government regulations, learning the Yemeni real estate system, and completing a purchase will consume large amounts of time and energy. Before all is done, we will need to renovate the house, move in, and work out the many kinks. A great deal of work lies ahead, but in the end AIYS will have a stable, recognized presence. And we will eventually have an excellent working library with access to internet resources and online documents. This will be useful for both US and Yemeni scholars.

Despite this very positive step forward, not all is positive. New house expenses are expected to overrun the grant and our Toyota died in January. So while the future looks very bright, in the near term we may experience some shortfalls. This financial crunch points to the need for an endowment and a contingency fund to supplement our regular income sources and to prepare for fiscal emergencies and to offer new possibilities. More important, higher education funding is shifting. Already many state universities now describe themselves as state-assisted universities and this redefinition is most evident in fiscal problems facing many schools. For AIYS, this may mean fewer institutions will be able to maintain institutional memberships. At the risk of sounding like a development officer, let me suggest that members consider designating AIYS as beneficiary for a few thousand dollars of their life insurance.



Sailing Seasons in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean: The View from Rasulid (13th - 14th Centuries) Aden



Daniel Martin Varisco

[This is a lecture prepared for the Red Sea Trade and Travel Study Day, Society for Arabian Studies, British Museum, October 5, 2002.]

1

The province of Aden is governed by a king, who bears the title of soldan... The soldan of Aden possesses immense treasures, arising from the imposts he lays, as well upon the merchandise that comes from India, as upon that which is shipped in his port as the returning cargo; this being the most considerable mart in all that quarter for the exchange of commodities, and the place to which all trading vessels resort... Marco Polo, reflecting in a prison cell on information he obtained at the close of the 13th century.

The subject of my talk today is the view from a vital hub of the vibrant Red Sea and Indian Ocean trading network, the view from the Rasulid port of Aden; more specifically, a fresh re-view of what it might have been like to be an Arab merchant sailing to and from Aden at the same time as Marco Polo set out to return from his epic sojourn under the immense Oriental pleasure dome of Kublai Khan. I invite you to return with me to the year 1292 of the Christian Era – as it is commonly known – for an Arab businessman’s fleeting eye view from the deck of a trading dhow bound from Aydhab on the Egyptian Coast to Aden, the best natural harbor on the South Arabian coast. Let us call this *tajjir* (merchant) Muhammad Ibn Mujabbir, a Yemeni by birth and at the time a successful merchant employed by the Karimi syndicate out of Egypt. He is about 35 years old, young enough to marvel at the outrageous tales told by sailors and fellow travelers, old enough to know better than to believe any of them. We will join him aboard ship sailing south of Aydhab and follow his diariéd notes until he lands with his entrusted consignment of wares in Aden customs. We shall, in effect, sail through a narrow stretch of commercial

maritime history with a seasoned traveler at the helm.

A historian may hopefully be forgiven for lamenting the burden of piecing together a narrative understanding of the past from the fragments and scraps dealt by the whims of serendipitous survival and the wiles of power mongers who have the last word. All the more charity should be extended to the scholar who attempts to reconstruct, as credibly as possible, events that happened some seven centuries ago. Rather than assume the privileged role of third-person expert, I prefer today to take leave of my historiographic senses, transforming documented data from the time period in re-creating an itinerary and a slice of one man’s life. To the best of my knowledge, all of the following material is credible for the year 1292, based on two decades of studying relevant Yemeni texts and manuscripts and also inspired by my own ethnographic presence, first in the late 1970s, in a Yemeni community.

In terms of pure history, there was, in fact, no Ibn al-Mujabbir, but there might have been. And, as Professor Rex Smith would be the first to recognize, he looks a lot like the early 13th century traveling businessman, Ibn al-Mujawir, whose remarkable travel account Rex Smith has now translated into English. My approach to the egregiously eponymous Ibn al-Mujabbir has a distinct advantage over the problems faced by Rex in his truly admirable project, since, apart from my own impertinent prose, I have no obscure colloquial terms to decipher.

Before beginning our journey, it is useful to set the stage. The port of Aden on the southern coast of Yemen was a major stopping point and safe haven for ships sailing from the Red Sea and along the African coast to the Arabian Gulf, India, and beyond. Formed from the crater of a volcano, here was a harbor without treacherous shoals and menacing reefs, with light winds and gentle currents, a boat owner’s delight. From the first century *Periplus Maris Erythraei* to the modern day nascent free-trade zone Aden has flourished as an important entrepôt. The Rasulid dynasty, initiated

by transplanted Turkic mercenaries, came to power in southern and coastal Yemen around the middle of the 13th century, a short time before the Mongols ravaged Baghdad, the last figurative seat of the struggling Islamic caliphate. For the latter half of this century, the preeminent Rasulid sultan, Polo's "soldan", was al-Malik al-Muzaffar Yusuf. Muzaffar was indeed a wealthy man, fortunately a patron of the arts and sciences as well, and his reign may arguably have been the zenith of Yemen's political power in the pre-modern, Islamic era.

Most fortunately, for those of us who study Rasulid Yemen, an archival goldmine is now available in print for detailing the administrative and commercial operations of Muzaffar's Yemen. This *daftar* or ledger, discovered almost two decades ago by the Yemeni historian Muhammad Abd al-Rahim Jazm, is a virtual "Doomsday Book" for Yemen at the close of the 13th century. It is almost easier to list the economic activities not mentioned in this extraordinarily significant text of some 223 folios. Here you will find customs and tax data, production figures, transport costs, and scribal "intelligence" for insider and outsider trading: silk, cotton, and flax clothing, leather goods, shoes and headgear, exotic woods and rope, carpets, pottery, glass and brass, weapons, soap, candles, foods and oils, medicinal herbs, perfumes, dyes and spices, precious stones, musical instruments and, sad to say, human slaves. At the exact time Marco Polo was returning from China, Venetian robes, heavily taxed of course, were passing through Aden's customs' houses.

In the following contrived diary entries I draw heavily on the *daftar*, as well as the travelogue of Ibn al-Mujawir, several Yemeni histories, and a range of secondary sources—most notably the writings on Ibn al-Mujawir of Rex Smith, GR. Tibbetts' indispensable analysis of the nautical work of Ibn Majid, and a recent Princeton Ph.D. thesis by Roxani Margariti on the trade organization of Aden for two centuries before the Rasulids. Let the journey begin...

2

Monday, 13 *Rajab*, 691 (June 30, 1292)

Bismillah al-rahman al-rahim. I, Ibn al-Mujabbir, begin this diary full of hope, a pilgrim sure of his destination, not a lost soul adrift. Who but God

in his indescribable mercy could have provided a calmer sea and more willing wind to our sails than our good fortune holds aboard this ship, *Hut Yunis*. As Jonah was saved in God's good time, so I trust in that very God to set foot once again in my homeland. There are three ships under the protection of the Karimi assurances, traveling together for safety and among the last of the season bound south for Yemen. I humbly beg forgiveness from the One before whom I submit, who knows the danger in every unseen shoal.

In two hours time, before the evening prayer, the captain informs me we will put ashore in a safe place. We sail by day in sight of land, but at night we rest. As God is our only guide, the wisely guided do not lead themselves into temptation. There are many dangers here, for they say the devil himself is master of the sea when darkness settles and the *afarit* do his bidding. Even Solomon, wise and powerful as God made him, took precaution when traveling to see Sheba's beauty queen. Should I, a poor Yemeni born in Zabid, and now a stranger to no land where freshly minted Kamiliya dirhams are valued, do less? There are, I trust, no monsters in these depths, but the *jimm* inhabit all seven climes and more, if there be more.

Just before dawn, as I lay on deck atop my straw mat, surveying the majestic panorama of the night sky, the holy words of *surat Yunis* came back to me, the reward for having a stern father who made a wayward son memorize against his then rebellious will:

It was He that gave the sun his brightness and the moon her light, ordaining her phases that you may learn to compute the seasons and the years. He created them only to manifest the truth. He makes plain His revelations to men of understanding.

Ahmed, the captain or *mu'allim*, was also awake, preparing to ease the ship out of its anchorage, as the sea birds preceded us in their prayers to the same creator. He knew the stars of the night as well as any Bedouin tracker knew the hooves of his camel herd. To me, a businessman, there was no natural order to the heavens, just a myriad of bright lights that a vivid imagination could create into forbidden human and animal forms. The Greeks, God preserve us from their errant thinking, saw goats and winged horses where I saw nought but a calligraphy of God's inscrutability.

Ahmed chided me for my devout resistance to

pragmatism. “Understand the words you recited, oh man of the purse. God in his wisdom placed the stars there to help us, not dazzle our senses. Look directly above at that square of stars. There is your winged horse, which the Greeks call Pegasus, although I have no idea what such a fanciful animal would look like, were Greek – and all Greek sailors I know are liars – to be believed. The Bedouins call it the “well bucket,” no doubt in hopes that the late summer rains are soon to appear. Now follow along in a straight line across the top of the sky to that bright star; that is the “belly of the whale,” (*batn al-hut*), may God preserve us from the fate of his servant Jonah; in three weeks time it will be straight above us. All in all there are 28 of these asterisms, no matter how you dream about them. All arranged neatly in the circle of the sky, half visible at any given moment. This is the belt that holds the world in place. God is indeed above all of us, watching over us. Send me to a dark land with no memory of my past and I could tell the time and plot a course by these divine markers alone. Surely, God is a guide on sea and land for those willing to trust him.”

I was sufficiently humbled to ask him more about how he knew the best times to sail here in the Red Sea.

“For that,” said Ahmed, “look not to the Greeks or the Arabs, donkeys the former are by nature, donkeys the latter are when not on solid ground, but to the Persians. We sailors reckon the timing of our sailing by the New Year (*nayruz*) calendar. But this is a confusing system, my friend, since the Persian calendar does not keep pace with the cycle of seasons. When forty years pass, these seasons arrive 10 days later by this calendar, so with every new generation of sailors we need to revise the numbers, but it is still the same sailing season, and I can tell it just from the location of specific stars at specific times.”

“So why bother with such a cumbersome system?” I asked, wondering if the Prophet would have condemned it as he did the intercalary month of the pagan Arabs, who were not satisfied with the lunar calendar God had ordained for his purposes.

“Not all sailors know the stars as I do, and if you travel to different climes you will see new stars and not see some familiar ones,” responded Ahmed. “But you worry far too much about silly details. We know when to sail because each season has its winds. Thus

we sail from Aydhab in early summer because the north wind is with us at first and the winter southeast wind does not prevent us from making headway from Jeddah to Bab al-Mandab. We are at God’s mercy, trying to navigate between the calm, when we hardly move at all, and the violent monsoons, when all could be lost in a moment.”

“But what of the other ships, coming up the coast of Africa or from India and Ceylon? How do they know when to sail?” I asked.

“Not by listening to learned men or reading books, I can assure you,” answered Ahmed. “We all follow the experience of generations before, perhaps going back to Noah, or whoever God first gave the knowledge of navigation. I know a man who sails west out of Aden to Somalia when Altair and Vega are at mid-heaven. The Indian fleet, for the ships often bunch together for safety, sails home from Aden in early spring with the southwest monsoon at their backs. This is called the *dimani* or *tirmah* sailing.”

“Neither of these strange terms have I heard before,” I interrupted.

“It is no wonder, scholar of books and other useless things, since neither is an Arabic word. There is no one language on the sea. Both are Persian words, *dimani*, or some say *damani*, for the main sail sheet of a ship and *Tirmah* for a hot Persian month in summer. But we Arabs know this west wind as *dabur*, some say because it hits (*dabara*) our back as we face east in the sacred precinct of the *ka’ba*.” Ahmed lectured me, as though I was a student to be tutored by a master. And in a way, I suppose I was.

3

Thursday, 15 *Sha’ban*, 691, August 1, 1292

We are now but a day’s sail away from safe haven in Aden, if God wills and the wind does not cease to obey his commands. It has been a good journey thus far. No major storms or pirates, though we did see a shipwreck on the reefs south of the Farasan Islands. Our pilot, praise God, knows his way over the shoals, even if blindfolded, I think. In the morning we took aboard some fresh water at al-’Ara, after coursing around the tip at Bab al-Mandab and leaving Bahr al-Qulzum. After my noon prayer, when the sun beat down so mercilessly and I was sorely tempted to jump into the water with all my clothes on, I suddenly

remembered that this was the midpoint of *Sha'ban* with only two weeks left until the holy fasting month. Today is the anniversary of the day the Prophet, peace be upon him, was instructed to make Mecca the *qibla* rather than Jerusalem. God willing, I will make the pilgrimage in the coming year. Even thinking of the well of Zamzam made the warm water in the *fantash* all the sweeter.

As night fell, I remembered an earlier trip, when a tormenting monsoon tore our sail and nearly capsized the ship as we departed Zayla' for Bab al-Mandab. These were the *'awasif* winds, fouling us with the stench that only Iblis breaking wind could send. That turning point is a dangerous point. An old sailor on board, who has often traveled along the African coast from Mogadishu, told me that only ships like our *jalba* can make the passage safely; no boat with iron nails could sail past, for God, our Protector, has ordained a magnetic mountain to attract hand-wrought nails and split an intruding vessel asunder. But only the infidel-Christians defy nature with such innovations. May God protect the holy cities from the ravenous appetites of crusader cannibals.

How frail this ship must seem to the Lord of the sea and land. To me, a mere mortal, it is a marvel that the long stern and sharp bow of our dhow beckons the wind to bellow the triangular lateen sail, like a smith forging iron. Thus does God's creation assist us, when we are faithful. Framed with teak and a few planks of coconut, our vessel glides along the surface of the sea with only palm fiber daubed in fish oil as a lifeline between us and the lot of Pharaoh's army. I sat today beneath the mast, towering over me a good 30 hand cubits, a visible reminder that the works of our hands can only point to heaven, never attain it by stealth or wealth.

4

Saturday, 17 *Sha'ban*, 691 (August 3, 1292)

Praise God, the all comforting, yesterday I arrived safe and sound and am staying with 'Ali Yusuf, a local broker (*dallal*) with long ties to the Karimi syndicate. The trip here was not half so demanding as the mindless meddling of the port authorities who treated us as though we were common traders or thieves rather than respectable businessmen. First, the harbor officials (*mubashshirun*) arrived alongside in their

small *sanbaqs*, as we headed to anchorage in the lee of Sira Island. Had it been winter, with the northeast monsoon swells in full blow, our mooring would have been untenable here and we would have tacked to the southern side of Sira to unload our wares on the lighter boats. The chief official welcomed us in an officious way, speaking to our captain as though he were some mangy Mamluk to be barked at. It helped that our clerk or *karrani* was well prepared, as was usually the case on major trading ships, and handed over the list of crewmembers and passengers, as well as an account of all the merchandise in the hold. It was not until this oaf of a port official realized we bore a special gift for the sultan himself that his tone changed. Immediately he dashed off to tell the governor, since the gift was a "robe of honor," an embroidered silk shirt actually worn by the Sultan Khalil, truly a present to be protected in this port of petty thieves. The governor sent four soldiers, who took the package to the government storehouse for safekeeping. Messengers were to be sent the next day to inform the Sultan al-Muzaffar, who was in his garden villa at Tha'bat, and rumor has it that he is not in the best health. May God preserve his soul, considering the amount of money he has borrowed from my masters.

After dropping anchor, we were anxious to go ashore, but there were many formalities to endure. The inspector arrived, a fastidiously dressed man in basic white cotton, much the worse for wear and potted with sweat stains, which he strutted as though it was the finest silk *lanis*. He had doused so much rose water on his beard that I was afraid the bees would come from as far as Daw'an to draw nectar, and what tasteless honey that would be. He felt through the most intimate parts of our clothing with a probing hand of gnarled, spindly fingers as though one of us had purposefully hidden away a pearl of great price. Had he stuck his thumb into my mouth, no doubt he would have recorded my gold filling as customs due. But there was nothing to find, for we are all honest, God-fearing men, even the poorest sailor on board. To his undisguised dissatisfaction, I and two other traveling merchants were given permission to leave the ship the next morning, a light skiff to be sent expressly for that purpose. Immediately, another verse from *Surat Yumis* came to mind:

Allah replied: 'Your prayer is heard. Follow the right path and do not walk in the footsteps of ignorant men.'

As this portly fellow descended, complaining all the while, into his small boat, I felt relieved not to have to follow in his steps. After so many days at sea, I was glad to return again to solid earth, but waterless Aden is no Eden.

5

Monday, 19 *Sha'ban*, 691 (August 5, 1292)

Most travelers that I know complain of the lack of fresh water here in Aden, but I think the more serious omission is basic intelligence. Perhaps the unbearable heat drains their brains as well as their bowels. Instead of unloading our ship on the third day, we were kept waiting a full extra day before finally being allowed into customs. One would think their interest in picking our pockets would speed up rather than prolong this unpleasant process. I was under orders to take the gift directly to the sultan, and I am half tempted to write a letter immediately to the master of this land and apprise him of the inattention that seems to plague his servants in the port. After all, I represent the Karimi, not some cheap junk from Serendib!

Ours is a large ship with a rich load of wares bound for Gujerat. When I arrived soon after the dawn prayer at the *furda* or customs house, I found everything unpacked and ready to be weighed or sorted. Only a small portion of our wares is bound for Aden itself. What a filth hole is the customs house. Have they no brooms in this accursed town, or were they all blown out to sea with the wind that destroyed the tribe of 'Ad for their callousness? Surely when they measure the flax seed bound for Aden's market, it will weigh twice the amount just from the flies and gnats crawling over piles of wind-blown sand on the scales. And when my bundles of Dabiqi robes are undone, what manner of vermin will take up residence for the next leg of the voyage to Dhofar! Such clever thieves they are here. For a Dabiqi robe of average quality the custom duty per *mamm* bundle is $1/3 + 1/4 + 1/8$ *dinar* + 2 *filis* plus 6 *filis* to the broker. If mediocre the duty is $1/3 + 1/8$ *dinar* + 2 *filis* and only a *qirat* to the broker. Then there is the galley tax, allegedly for the few galleys that occasionally put out

to sea to put the fear of the sultan into would-be pirates.

At the customs house I met a merchant from Qalhat, a port at the entrance to the Persian Gulf; he knew much about the trade to Serendib (Ceylon), a land of such mystery that even Sinbad would be hard put to exaggerate its marvels. His ship was scheduled to leave Aden during the Last of the Season in another month's time. He explained to me that ships sailing east stopped there for coconut palms, both the fiber for rope and the wood for planks. There were large pearls in Ceylon, precious stones of every color and cinnamon as plentiful as the sand. And, he swears, that it was this island to which Adam and Eve fell when kicked out of Eden. Imagine, if God had so punished his first creation to start up the human family in this hellhole.

As we were talking, I noticed a man with long black hair and an indigo-stained shirt staring intently at us. "You almost seem like a Yemeni, he said as he neared our spot in the shade of the customs' house.

"I am originally from Zabid," I said.

"Ah, a scholar in our midst," he responded, showing the gaps in his front teeth as he laughed.

"No, a cloth merchant," said I.

"But you can read and write," he asked?

"Of course, for it is necessary for my trade and for pleasure. But I know little of my native land."

"Then you need a teacher, someone who knows the trader's craft in Yemen. I myself am a merchant from Hays, specializing in pottery. Have you come back to settle?" he asked.

"Not yet, although I can think of nowhere else I would want to be buried," I assured him.

"Then bury yourself in what I can teach you," he insisted.

I laughed at his arrogance. "And what knowledge would you mete out for me, master of broken shards?"

"We can start with weights, if you like," he said with a sudden serious tone. "I assume you know the amount of an Egyptian *ratl* (let us assume this is equal to a 16 ounce "pound" here)."

"I could measure even the sand to the nearest grain," I asserted in a mocking tone.

"OK, so how many *qafla* units are in an Egyptian *ratl*?" he quizzed.

"That would be 144 *qafla* or 12 *wiqiya*, or 100

mithqal according to the *muhtasib* of Cairo,” I took no time in responding.

“And how many *qafla* in a Baghdad *ratl*?” There was a glint of expectation that I must know such a simple question.

“125 *qafla*, as any decent merchant knows. And a Damascus *ratl* is equal to 576 Egyptian *qafla*. And the Laythi *ratl* of Upper Egypt is 200 *qafla*; that is the measure we Karimi prefer. Do I pass?” I managed a wry smile.

“So you carry weight outside Yemen, that I can readily see, but what is the equivalent weight in Egypt for the *zabadi* weight?”

He had me here. I had heard of these Yemeni terms, but had no idea how they were measured. Sensing my ignorance, he proceeded to lecture me, at the same time making a case for the necessity of his expertise if I was ever to set up shop in my native land.

“In al-Dumluwa, where our sultan counts his dinars, 1 *zabadi* weighs 10 Egyptian *ratl*. This is equal to $1 + 1/8$ Ta’izz *zabadi*. Now the *zabadi* of Jibla

increases to $1 + 1/4 + 1/3 + 1/16$ Ta’izz *zabadi* but the *zabadi* of Janad is only $1 + 1/3$ Ta’izz *zabadi*. And, for good measure, the *zabadi* of Aden is only $1/2$ the Janad *zabadi*. Then there is *zabadi* of Dhamar, only slightly less than $1/2$ of a San’ani *zabadi*. And in al-Mahjam...”

“Peace, peace,” I cried, interrupting his accursed accountant’s monologue. “Enough, I get your point. This is a land where nothing matches and each one is out to take advantage. Why do you not count the crop grain by grain?”

“An interesting idea, have you been waiting that long in customs?” We both laughed at the absurdity. I could only think that it was far easier to read and write than keep track of the shifting scales from one Yemeni market to another. What fools we are, turning what God created into an incessant game of greedy exploitation for the sake of silver coins and silk underwear. Surely after another seven centuries all of mankind will have submitted to the will of our Maker, so that even this Aden will seem an Eden. But, *Allahu A’lama*, God alone knows.



Mukalla, Yemen. (From a watercolor by H.E. Sheridan)

✦ Picnicking in Soqotra: An Apprentice Anthropologist's Ethnographic Account of an Excursion ✦

Serge Elie

Preparation

My research assistant came into my office to ask if I would be interested in going to Da'arho, an area located in the upland plateau of the region of Diksam in the central part of the island. The picnic invitation came from a policeman in the tourist and environment police force to all of his colleagues. Da'arho is well endowed with water because the rains are more frequent in the higher elevations, which allows for bountiful grazing grounds and healthy and productive livestock. It is also endowed with a scenic landscape. My response was affirmative.

The next day the phone rang and my assistant told me that I would be picked up at 2:00 pm. OK, I said nonchalantly, expecting to return later in the evening. I put aside my green cotton shirt purchased in Syria, my most comfortable ten-year old multi-pocket cotton pants from Miami, my red-checked *mashadda* from Jordan, my camera from Japan by way of New York, and my new sandals from Syria bought in Sana'a. I tried to nap, trusting that they would be late. My ride finally arrived, late as expected.

Departure

When we reached the pick-up spot, I noticed over a dozen people waiting, while sitting next to bundles of comforters and pillows neatly tied up. "Who are all of these people?" I inquired. They are colleagues of our host in Da'arho, and we will spend one night there. "Nobody told me about this," I said aimlessly, as I thought of my unprepared state. It was too late to pick up stuff. I resorted to making up my own comforting rationale. It is only for one night, I have chewing gum as toothpaste, and some bottled water, I can survive. Moreover, this impromptu excursion into the Soqotra hinterland was part of my apprenticeship as an ethnographer-anthropologist. I became reconciled to the idea and welcomed the opportunity. We had to take another car, as we were about seventeen in total. We finally left Hadiboh at about three in a humble two-car convoy.

We stopped at Haffa, a makeshift town of dwellings built of recycled oil drums, for the *'asr*

prayer. After prayer we began our ascent of the mountainous road to Diksam before 4 pm. I was sitting in front and in full view of the terrain. In spite of the minor inconvenience of a dirty windshield, as well as a rapidly setting sun, I could take it all in. Diksam is the gateway to the island's most scenic landscapes as well as the habitat of the most authentic Bedouins and their traditional life ways. While conversing with the driver, my head was bobbing left and right, looking intermittently at him and then the landscape. As we bounced around in our Toyota land cruiser in relative comfort – our main worries being to hold on tightly to the handgrips for safety and the possibility of a punctured tire – I wondered about the experience of the early European travelers who came in the absence of roads, with camels and donkeys as the best means of transport available. Pretty determined bunch, I thought.

Reaching the top of the mountain brought a momentary closure to our conversation. We stopped by a *lim*, a natural formation in which water from the rains accumulate, to see the water level and get an approximate reading on weather activity. The water level was about two feet high. Not much, but enough, perhaps, to last a week or so. We continued on our way and by sunset we reached the wadi that demarcates the entrance into the Schebhen area, just in time for the *maghrib* prayer. As everyone was performing the ablution ritual prior to prayer, one of our group mounted an elevated area and to his colleagues' surprise, gave a good rendition of the *adhan*, the Muslim call to prayer. This was the first time he had done it. The occasion seemed most appropriate to make an impression on the others. I think he succeeded. Although he shared the physical features of the legendary Bilal, the outstanding performer of the call to prayer during the Prophet's time, his performance could not be said to equal that of his famous precursor.

Overnight

Our stop for the night was a small village of no more than four houses in Schebhen, not very far from

where we stopped for prayer. It was a tenebrous darkness, a moonless sky dimly lit by a few scattered stars. This was welcome, for when nature calls under the current circumstance, darkness was one's last resort for a sense of privacy. I instinctively knew that to ask for a bathroom would be a kind of cultural *faux pas*, either you would look stupid in their eyes, or you would embarrass them. I borrowed a flashlight, took my water bottle and went on a search for a suitable place in pitch darkness. Against the sky I saw the shadowy outline of a lonely Dragon's Blood tree, in sufficient distance from the house where we were staying, but I felt as if I would be committing a sacrilegious act against the island's flagship symbol; I chose instead a nearby lonely, humble, meter high croton tree.

Sharing the six by four rectangular, flat roofed "traditional" Soqotri stone house, which only recently replaced the mountain cave dwellings, with nine other people, made me understand that the figures for the population of small villages quoted to me in my previous trips around the island were not exaggerations, but very reasonable estimations. The room was lit barely by a kerosene lamp seated in the middle of the floor. The relative darkness inside the room did not permit close inspection, and my imagination did not go beyond what I could see. In such cases ignorance is truly blissful. There were two coverings thrown over the earth floor: one in plastic on the elevated part of the room, and the other a cloth fabric. I gravitated toward the plastic one. It turned out to be a wise choice because ticks do not find plastic carpet to be a very suitable abode. We all sat around on the floor forming a semi-circle around the lamp. There was a momentary indecision as to the best placement of the lamp to enhance the reach of its flickering light. After much fumbling it was hung from a beam in the ceiling's center. There was much bantering among these males. One could sense a deep social bond. A feeling of inclusive camaraderie reigned, although these were policemen with their two superior officers. The conversation ranged over a number of topics and was in Arabic for the benefit of the non-Soqotrans present.

A simmering impatience underlay the conversation, and it was about the tea that was taking too long to prepare. For it was over four hours since anyone had tea, and this extended abstention was

becoming unbearable. The conversation was repeatedly interrupted with shouts toward the makeshift outdoor kitchen, "*Fein al shy, yoh?*"

Tea was finally ready, as two thermoses (*thallaja*) were brought into the room, one with red tea and one with milk. The sight energized everyone, as people sat up from their recumbent positions and came closer to the teapots. As is customary the guests, that is the three foreigners, were served first, while the others waited with straining patience, as there were not enough cups. This energizing pause made everyone talkative again.

Soon, the newly discovered Soqotri Bilal was calling for the *isha* prayer. All dutifully got up to prepare to pray. Outside, I heard the leader of the prayer group reciting surahs from the Quran in a notable manner. And I thought of how in a religion-led society, the societal rhythm – indeed, its metabolic function one is tempted to say – is dictated by the observance of religious obligations.

The last communal act was dinner, which was served soon after prayer. Chicken in a soupy sauce with potatoes was eaten with bread, and followed by sliced oranges and apples for desert, bought in the Hadiboh *souk*. Not long after, blankets were being untied and sleeping spaces allocated. I stayed where I was seated. A blanket was given to me as well as an armrest cushion to be used as a pillow. Given my unprepared state, I was doing well. I arranged blanket and pillow neatly in my corner and wrapped myself in the blanket, wearing all my clothes, like everyone else. I lay down, but my knees remained bent, as there was not enough space to stretch my legs. Nevertheless, I felt comfortable and I faded into sleep. Later, I don't remember how much later, I overheard someone say "*As sallam alekum.*" Perhaps, a curious neighbor passing by and seeing the cars and the dim flicker of the lamp inside wanted to inquire who was visiting the neighborhood. One among us managed a weak response. The night was relatively quiet, except for the hissing sound of the breeze entering the ventilating spaces in the walls of our compound, keeping the room aerated and comfortable.

Picnic Day

There was no need for alarm bell or crowing chicken, as "Bilal" was on the job belting out the *adhan* exactly at dawn for the *fajr* prayer. By five a.m. we

were all up and already in the cars on our way to Da'arho. My toilet consisted of water thrown on my face to remove the traces of sleep and a chewing gum in lieu of tooth brushing. The wind was relatively strong, blowing a cold air, which felt invigorating. It was day but the sun had not yet broken into the horizon; the landscape was still asleep under a misty veil. We were traveling slowly, almost at walking speed, so one could take in the landscape. On our left there was a canyon like precipice and you could see the scars and sinews of the mountain on the other side. I was told that an eco-lodge would be built in this area. Properly managed it would be a boon to all concerned: the landscape gazing tourist and the Bedouin turned eco-lodger. The road to Da'arho was carved out of the sides of a steep mountain. It was built through a collective endeavor between the government, supplying the heavy equipment, and the people, providing the labor. The result, while not an engineering masterpiece, is a testament to what can be achieved with basic equipment and community commitment.

Our picnic area was located in Wadi Dirhur, where the water flows throughout the year. We camped next to a natural pool two meters deep, situated right at the base of two mountains, the sides of which could serve as diving boards from various heights. There was a village of about five houses in the midst of a date palm grove, but the people had migrated elsewhere as part of the transhumant cycle; they would return for the date harvesting season. It was an idyllic spot by any standard and would be attractive to nature-gazing tourists. The first priority was to set up a kitchen and prepare the tea as we had yet to have breakfast. A kitchen spot was identified and a three-man team was dispatched to collect firewood. As these preparations were underway, our host arrived with two healthy looking, medium size sheep. By the shine of their woolen coat, which is used to make the Soqotri rug (*hadh'hiI*), it was evident that they were not scavengers like the ones in Hadiboh. Of course, they were both males, as females are much more valued and are kept alive until they could no longer fulfill their reproductive function. Our group had brought rice, macaroni, spices, etc., to complement the meat that was to be provided by the host.

At last, tea was ready. In spite of its weak consistency and too much sugar, it was welcome to dissipate the last cobweb from our early rising. As I

was sipping my tea, it occurred to me that I had not seen the "execution" of sheep since my days in Mauritania. I got up quickly and grabbed my camera to record the grisly event, but both had been put under the knife already by the host. He seemed to have done so without performing the ceremony of the *Muhar*, which was a kind of invocation of God's blessing for the occasion. Othman, a local Bedouin, was already removing the woolen coat of one animal to carve it, but there was no one from our group to help. They seemed not to know how, as they were from Hadiboh or some coastal villages. Their element was water and their thing fish. They could cook the meat but not kill or carve it. Finally, a knife was handed to someone else outside of our group whose element was not the sea but the hinterland (*al badiya*). One sheep was to be prepared the Soqotri way, that is, the meat was to be separated completely from the bones, and the latter would be boiled and served separately as a pre-lunch appetizer. Whereupon they would be smashed with rocks and their marrow sucked and washed down with soup (*rihota*). The other sheep was to be cooked in the *Mudhbi* style. A bed of rocks would be built on the ground and a fire would be lit to heat the rocks. Once heated, the ashes would be removed and the meat spread on top of the hot rocks. Another layer of rocks would be laid over the meat and another fire lit on top of it and left for one hour and a half. Subsequently, the ash and rocks would be discarded and the meat served. The chef was Mabrook, a rather effeminate-speaking man from Hadiboh, who resided in Musaqibhen, a place that is regarded as the "red district" of Hadiboh. So called, it seems, merely because of its inhabitants' excessive display of a certain *joie de vivre* through frequently held "disco" nights animated with local drum music.

While Othman was carving the animal, I received a lesson in the Soqotri names for each part of the animal. I squatted on a nearby rock and I had a front row seat in the operation theater, camera at the ready. There I watched the cleaning of the intestines and their weaving into decorative necklaces; the cutting out of the liver, kidneys and heart for our breakfast; the careful collection of fat, which was to be stuffed in parts of the stomach to be cooked and served later. By this time a group of Soido birds, scavengers, that are also known as Egyptian vultures (it is related to the myth of the rising Phoenix), was swarming

overhead on the look out for scraps of meat. As a few remaining pieces of the intestines were thrown away there was frantic dive and a violent pecking contest between these birds over the most fetid parts of the remains. There was something incongruous about this scene. I felt that their beautiful coat – a resplendent rainbow-like combination of gold, yellow, light brown, with a tinge of red and white colors – should not belong to a bird that feeds on feculent detritus.

At last breakfast was served: macaroni with pieces of liver, kidney, and heart. It was satisfactory, even good, except for a piece of liver that was insufficiently cooked. I ate lightly, as I wanted to leave space for lunch, which would not be very long after. I withdrew into a sedentary state for the rest of the day as I was impeded by my lack of preparedness for the occasion: no *foutah* (a wraparound garment worn by males), no swimming trunks, and wearing sandals that were unsuitable to negotiate the rocky paths carved into the steep slopes of the mountains. What was unsuitable to me, however, was for the Soqotrans the equivalent of an all terrain four-wheel drive car. For them, the sandals of the most basic type, both in material and style, seem to be the only footwear, whatever the terrain or occasion. Clearly, the problem was not with the sandals, but my inability to use them. The wearing of the *foutah* is the “national” attire. One could assert that no Soqotran wears pants unless it is part of a uniform required by his job, e.g., policeman, school etc., or he has been abroad and has adopted a “modern” style, as was the case with my office mate who spent six years in Cuba. But for me, wearing a *foutah* would simply make it more comfortable to lounge around the “pool,” rather than be a rapport-inducing display of sartorial solidarity. The swimming trunks of Soqotrans gave me an insight, perhaps, into the practice of the male version of the code of modesty. In fact, it is not a swimming trunk, but underwear. It is a pair of extremely baggy pants made of nylon material, which covers from the midsection all the way under the knees. Wearing a brief or a spandex would be the equivalent of a Soqotri woman walking in public without her veil: *mamnu 'ha* (prohibited). Indeed, when I was taking photographs some would rush to put on their *foutah* before I took the picture, as if they felt improperly attired for a public event.

As I sat engrossed with ethnographic mental notes, a delegation of four crossed our camp on its way to the village of Da'arho where a wedding was to take place the next day; they were carrying three goats and one cow to fulfill their *rufda* obligations. The *rufda* custom is the collective giving of gifts of livestock to the groom by all the neighboring tribes resident in the area. Through this custom, perhaps the Soqotri version of the potlatch, the tribes competed to show which one would be the most generous in their offerings. The offering the group was carrying was a notable display of generosity, which changing times seemed not to have adversely affected. I learned later that seven cows and over twenty goats were donated for this occasion, and all were slaughtered. This amount would exceed the demand for meat in Hadiboh for an entire week!

The Soqotri Bilal was at it again, putting an abrupt end to his colleagues' recreation and scattering my ethnographic reveries. After a brief collective consultation as to which direction was east, a marker was placed in the ground and a little crowd gathered to perform the noon prayer.

Lunch was served, finally! Our group had been expanded by half a dozen people attracted by the sight of fire, food, and non-locals. Self-invitation at lunchtime was not frowned upon, but welcomed according to the prevailing ethic of hospitality. I sat in a group with the UN international staff, the two superior police officers, and Othman, who brought our plate of rice cooked with saffron-based spices and thick chunks of meat thrown on top of it. Eating meat in the Bedouin area has a particular ritual. The first time I saw it done, our guide took it out and put it on top of a rock to cut it. My assistant assured me that this was the way it was done in Soqotri. Now Othman, who always carried a traditional, locally made knife (*Hansh 'har*), one of the markers of an authentic Bedouin, immediately started cutting the meat into small pieces, at first directly from the plate, but not for long. He removed all of the pieces, placed them directly on the ground, and threw the meat back into the plate on top of the rice as they were cut. Custom confirmed!

Return

Leave-taking between hosts and guests is rather unceremonious, as I had observed on previous occasions. There was no exchange of thanks to

express gratitude for the generous hospitality. Just a perfunctory goodbye sealed with a handshake, sometimes none, followed by an abrupt departure. This had been the behavior of my research assistant, after we self-invited ourselves to a little feast a Bedouin in the Ayhaft region offered to his neighbors who had participated in a *Gyrf*—a form of mutual aid practiced by communities to assist one member when the work to be done necessitates the collective input of all members of that community. He blandly waved to the host from a distance and did not even wait for him to reciprocate as he turned to leave as if in a hurry. It is as if hospitality was a common obligation, which did not merit any special acknowledgement. This time was not very different, as we got up to leave soon after lunch and the obligatory tea.

We started the return ride at about 12:30 pm; I thought the timing most opportune, as I would be able to see the entire landscape we would be traversing in broad daylight, unlike the day before when part of the way had been traversed under cover of darkness. As we started climbing the road, Mabrook gave a hilarious rendition of Bedouin speech patterns, in the form of a string of phrases composed of a few intelligible words interspersed mostly with guttural sounds of *yoh, yah, yeh*, accompanied by furious facial expressions, agitated tone of voice, and emphatic gestures. The point was to demonstrate the impoverished diction of the Bedouin. His favorite was the Bedouin's corruption of "*As Salam Mualekum*" to "*Sam Alekum*." He even attempted to confirm this by saluting a few people on the road in order to elicit their response and test their pronunciation. The mimicry was related to the biases inherent in the classic binary opposition between *Hadhara* (civilization or the culture of city dwellers), and *Badawa* (culture of dwellers of the desert or hinterland) that originated in the writings of Ibn Khaldun.

While the Bedouin mimicry was going on in the back of the car, the driver was sharing with me his impressions about the contours of the landscape, which suggested prior use in some distant past. We were traveling on the upper plateau of Schebhen, and indeed, the outlay of the land does resemble a place that was used for some type of agricultural production. There was a vast expanse of land with a few straggling Dragon's Blood trees, dispersed in a manner that allowed one to infer that either they served as shade

for agricultural workers or were the last few survivors of a once forested area. This would seem to confirm that this area was once organized to facilitate large-scale production. There is in fact a debate between Vitaly Naumkin, a Russian anthropologist, and Brian Doe, a British archaeologist, regarding whether or not there was large-scale agricultural production in parts of the island.

On the way back we stopped by the village of Kufuz. A UN project had installed an automatic weather station, to provide data for the predictive analysis of the Soqotra weather. This is, of course, useful. But I thought that this weather station would never be able to approximate in subtlety, if not in sophistication, the seven ways in which the people of Diksam differentiate between types of rain. This was the last stop prior to our descent out of Diksam on the only mountain access road from the northwestern plains adjacent to Hadiboh. Our group had expanded by a few more people, as picking up hitchhikers is a cultural obligation in Soqotra, and if you cannot fulfill this obligation you must yell through the window the reason why, with a genuinely apologetic demeanor. We reached Haffa in time for the '*asr* prayer. Thankfully, our Bilal's service was not necessary, as the group dismounted the cars and gravitated toward the place for ablution.

As everyone was returning from prayer to the cars to continue our journey, I noticed that an elderly Bedouin, picked up on our way back, was negotiating with someone the sale of the resin of the Dragon's Blood tree. A deal was concluded for 600 Yemeni *riyals*. I saw a satisfied smile on his face as he mounted the back of the pick-up truck. His encounter with *hadhara* was most promising. He was cleaned, he had prayed, and now he had some cash to meet some of his basic needs. His prayers were answered. I reflected upon my own encounter with his world. I felt enriched as well and better prepared for a much deeper ethnographic encounter with Soqotra's *badawa*. While hoping that I was not engaged in some premature wishful thinking, I felt an instinctive identification with Malinowski, one of the forefathers of anthropology who said of his fieldwork site that "a bond was growing up between myself and this landscape... everything was pervaded with the promise of fruitful work and unexpected success." *Al Hamdu lillah!*



Yemeni Citizenship in a Transnational State

Charles Schmitz



“International pressure is turning Arab and Muslim governments against their people,” lamented Abdalla bin Hussein al-Ahmar in October of 2001 (al-Sahwa 2001). Indeed over the last decade the Yemeni state adopted the IMF’s economic austerity program, allowed Israeli citizens to tour the country, cooperated with the American CIA assassination of al-Harithi in Marib, and allowed the Americans to open an office of the FBI in their embassy in Sana’a. Cooperation with the Americans has its benefits, of course, especially for the state leadership, but others, including Sheikh al-Ahmar, are less sure whether the Yemeni people are served by their state.

Al-Ahmar is not alone in doubting the benefits of his nation-state. According to Jurgen Habermas, “... the growing interdependencies of a world society challenge the basic premise that national politics, circumscribed within a determinate national territory, is still adequate to address the actual fates of individual nation-states” (Habermas 2001, p. 70). For Habermas neither the neo-liberal celebration of the market’s erosion of politics nor the closing of political borders against “foreign” influences, as al-Ahmar suggests, suffices as a solution to the nation-state’s decline. The way forward, he proposes, is in “self-steering” political structures that are de-territorialized, shifting the criteria of political inclusion away from the geographically assigned political rights of nation-states. The extension of the rights of citizenship to wider, non-territorial political groupings would extend the political community—those recognized with rights—to a wider circle of people whose fates are truly intertwined by political and economic relationships. But if new, de-territorialized democratic institutions are to be legitimate and provide the basis of real political solidarities, then “... the status of citizenship has to maintain a use-value” (Habermas 2001, p. 77). In countries such as Yemen, the combination of a paucity of tangible benefits from Habermas’ emergent “world society” and its long list of harsh demands make the value of world citizenship questionable, at best.

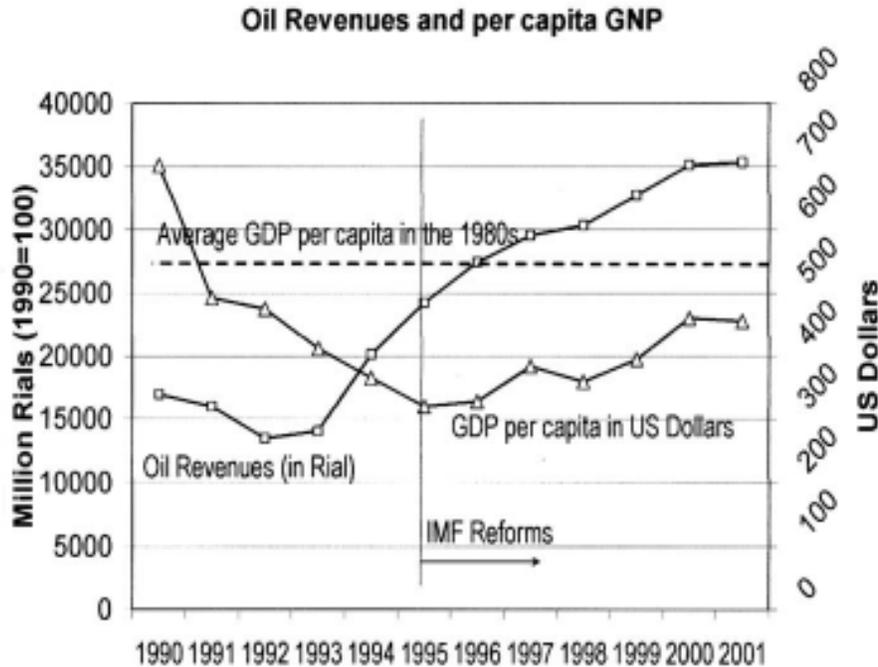
Sovereignty in Yemen never achieved the Westphalian ideal of political exclusiveness; indeed, this ideal was hardly realized even in the most powerful of states. The small amount of sovereignty achieved in the period following the establishment of the republics, however, diminished in the 1990’s. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the American superpower’s attention shifted from threatening states to the threatening chaos of the absence of a state (Helman and Ratner 1993). As a result, authority over economic, political, and military functions of the nation-state in places like Yemen began to migrate upward in geographically wider political hierarchies composed of the international financial institutions, UN agencies, and the most powerful states of the world (Hardt and Negri 2000). Economists at the IMF and the World Bank, for example, design economic policy in the Republic of Yemen. They have managed to gain significant influence on political and administrative policy as well by linking these to economic performance. Yemen is implementing IMF monitored reforms of the civil service, a World Bank program for local governance, and reforms of the judiciary. In this sense, then, state leadership in Yemen has fewer policy options today, even though, ironically, state institutions in Yemen may have greater capacity. Most policies now come in templates of “good governance” and “economic adjustment,” and foreign experts oversee and evaluate policy implementation.

In Yemen, this “shared” governance is not questioned as long as it is perceived as serving Yemeni interests. When policies do not appear in the national interest, though, “shared” governance becomes a “violation of national sovereignty.” In Habermas’ terms, citizenship in world society ceases to “pay.” American and Yemeni cooperation in security and law enforcement has produced highly charged clashes between the government and the political opposition over the meaning of sovereignty and national interest. In the late 1990s the American military and the Yemeni government cautiously cultivated a security alliance

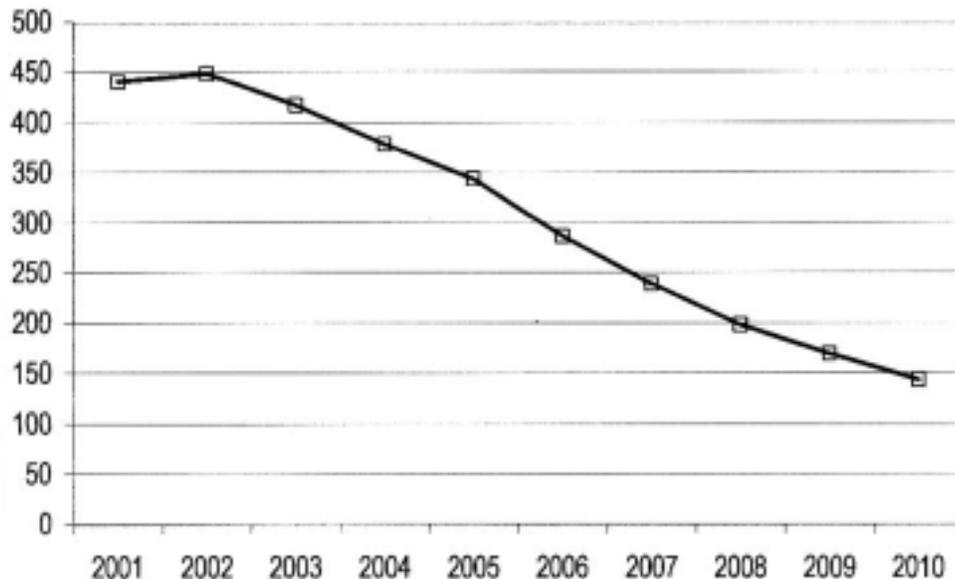
that gave the Yemeni state greater capacity to police its borders and maintain security. American military aid was welcome and sought out by the Yemeni state in order to guarantee its military advantage within the country. When it appeared that the Yemeni government was implementing American rather than Yemeni policy, though, this military alliance came under suspicion. In April 2000 when the president of Yemen visited the Clinton White House, Israeli tourists suddenly appeared in Sana'a, and the White House praised the extension of human rights clauses of the Yemeni constitution to Israelis (White House 2000). Admitting Israelis clearly contradicted Yemeni and Arab League policy of withholding diplomatic ties until a full and just peace was achieved and the Yemeni opposition let loose a barrage of criticism. Then, in the investigation by the American FBI of the bombing of the *USS Cole*, the Yemeni government was repeatedly asked to subordinate Yemeni law to American intelligence efforts. Things became tense when the FBI team wanted not only to conduct their own interrogations but to interrogate top Yemeni officials as well. American marines, stationed at the Adeni hotel where the team resided, symbolized American distrust of Yemeni security and Yemen's violated sovereignty. When the Americans

assassinated al-Harithi in Marib, the government characterized the attack as strengthening Yemeni sovereignty against foreign terrorism, but the opposition charged that the government had surrendered Yemeni sovereignty. The killing of Yemeni protesters against the American war in Iraq, by Yemeni security guarding the American embassy, only reinforced the impression that American interests dominated the Yemeni government. Even military officials began to complain about imperious American behavior: "I was very optimistic when the US first said they would help Yemen build its security forces and coast guard," said Yemeni Brig. Gen. Yahya al-Mutawakel. But "the result is not satisfactory. We have not yet made the Americans understand that they are here to help us fight for ourselves" (Bowers and Smucker 2002).

Ordinary Yemenis may forgive the government for relinquishing sovereignty to the Americans because the Americans are strong and the Yemeni state is weak—a level headed realist recognition of stark differences in global power—but people's daily experience is a powerful register of truth and reality. Eight years of IMF economic supervision has brought macroeconomic stability but precious little improvement in the lives of most Yemenis. In the



Average Barrels per Day (1000's) from existing wells



words of economists at the World Bank, “GDP growth in Yemen was, however, driven mainly by factor accumulation (labor and capital) in the 1990s. Productivity growth was negative for most of the decade with only modest improvements after the implementation of economic reforms” (World Bank 2002, p. 1). This means that Yemeni income has grown very little and poverty has increased: Yemen’s GDP per capita has yet to recover to levels achieved in the 1980’s and some 40% of Yemenis are living under the World Bank’s poverty line (World Bank 2002, p. ii). The modest improvements that have been achieved under IMF supervision are clearly contingent upon oil revenues, not improvements in the capabilities of the economy. Oil provides half to three quarters of the state’s budget, enabling the state to reduce deficits, but oil production is expected to decline significantly over the next ten years. Unless current trends reverse, Yemen’s macroeconomic stability will quickly unravel. Thus Yemen’s fate is still tied to oil prices and to annual rainfall, which determines the fortune of the half of the labor force that still works in agriculture.

The solution, according to most economists, those at the IMF included, is to increase private investment

in the non-oil sector where rising employment and hopefully increased productivity would have the greatest impact on average income. Investment in the non-oil sector in Yemen, however, has stagnated and the IMF charges that poor governance is the main obstacle to improved economic performance in the non-oil sector. This may be only part of the problem. Certainly the lack of rule of law and weak institutional capacity in Yemen hinders private investment outside of oil, but the IMF’s bias towards macrostability and external openness may share some of the blame as well.

The primary goal of IMF/World Bank reforms is to provide a stable investment environment for capital, both domestic and foreign. In the IMF’s view, the primary tasks of the state are to improve physical infrastructure and “human” capital, liberalize trade, and let the global “invisible” hand—or the boardroom of multinational corporations—determine the fate of nations (World Bank 2002, p. 83). But recent research argues that openness is not the key correlate to economic growth. In cases of sustained economic growth and development the state fosters and guides investment—overcomes problems of “coordination” in the terms of economists—in order to give the

national economy the capacity to take advantage of global opportunities (Rodrik 1999). It is not a matter of closing the national economy, but of improving the terms through a coherent national investment strategy, upon which the national economy is integrated into global markets. The IMF tends to prefer a passive role for the state and to allow dynamism to arise from the private sector, rather than fostering a state-business partnership of the sort that drove Korean development, and of the sort that Rodrik argues is necessary for real economic improvement.

If this is indeed IMF policy, it is short sighted and reduces the likelihood that citizenship in Habermas' "world society" pays for most Yemenis. The predictable result in Yemen will be suspicion of the global order, its American leaders, and their Yemeni counterparts.

Notes

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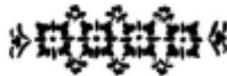
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✧ Progressive Change in Yemen's Medical Education: ✧ A Tour of the University of Science and Technology, Sana'a

Rashid A. Abdu, M.D.

In 1999 the University of Science and Technology (UST) in Sana'a, Yemen, a private, non-profit institution funded mostly by various charitable organizations and foundations, was six years old. The university was still in its early stages of development with student enrollment at about 4,000. UST is actually divided into two major educational facilities: one for men and one for women. The women's school is the newest and the most modern in the university. The segregated system is inefficient and involves duplication and extra use of resources, but religion and custom dictate it. The university offers matriculation in numerous graduate and undergraduate fields. In addition to the Bachelor of Arts degree, it offers degrees in medicine, dentistry, computer science, and engineering.

In the summer of 1999 I received a telephone call from Dr. Dawood Al-Hidabi, President of UST; he asked me to come to Yemen as a Visiting Professor.

At the same time my old friend, H.E. Mohammed Abdul Azeez Sallam, called me and made me promise that I would stay at his house in Sana'a. Mohammed Sallam was an American graduate, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador to the United Nations, and then to Jakarta, Indonesia.

November 1999

On November 11, 1999, I arrived at the Sana'a Airport. Mohammed Sallam and some of my brothers and nephews were waiting for my arrival. They led me into the V.I.P. red-carpeted room while others took care of my luggage, passport, and entry into my motherland. On November 13, 1999, after two days of relaxation at Mohammed's beautiful home, I had my first meeting with Dr. Al-Hidabi, or as Yemeni custom dictates, Dr. Dawood.

Dr. Dawood, in his early 40s, is quick, intelligent, perceptive, and one of the most dedicated men I have



Dr. Abdullah A. W. Nasher, Minister of Public Health, speaking at the opening ceremony for the first Intra-Uterine Fertilization Center, Women's Hospital, Sana'a. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, January 2001)

ever met. He does not smoke or chew *qat*. He starts work early and leaves late—a phenomenon that is rare in Yemen. His educational background consists of a degree in physics from the University of Sana'a, followed by a Master's degree and Ph.D. in research methodology and education from the United Kingdom.

At the same time, I met Dr. Tariq Senan Abu Luhoom, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at UST, and the engine behind all projects. Dr. Tariq received his medical education in France, where he specialized in pediatrics. He practiced his specialty in Sana'a for many years. I learned that the children and their parents loved him. Like Dr. Dawood, he is highly intelligent and hard working, with a disarming personality. Like his father, Sheikh Senan Abu Luhoom, a well-known philanthropist and former governor of Hudeidah, he is a generous man, and he can see through a problem, or an individual, with penetrating insight.

Both Dr. Tariq and Dr. Dawood are committed to excellence. Their mission is to develop UST and its schools into a first-class institution. Their other mission is to serve the poor and the orphans, not only in Sana'a, but throughout the Republic. I would later see evidence of this firsthand. During the month of Ramadan they feed literally thousands of poor people in the various cities of Yemen everyday; in Sana'a

alone, they feed about 10,000 daily during the Holy month. Sheikh Senan Abu Luhoom, in addition to building mosques, built a large dormitory where students from poor families live free of charge. He also built a shelter for homeless women. During the Eid of Sacrifice, which coincides with the pilgrimage to Mecca, they butchered 300 sheep and about 20 cattle in one day in Sana'a, and distributed all the meat to the poor. I inspected the slaughter facility that day, and I was impressed by its cleanliness and the professional way in which the butchers conducted the process.

The UST organization also sponsors the only women's hospital (*Mustashfa Al-Um*) in Sana'a, built in 1994 and staffed totally by women. Its Chief Executive Officer, a knowledgeable and articulate woman, showed us her institution with pride and enthusiasm. The hospital was well-furnished and well-equipped for modern surgery, including endoscopic and laproscopic surgery. Their doctors perform 3,500 deliveries a year; the caesarian section rate is 9%. A normal delivery costs \$217, and a caesarian section costs \$300, but no woman is turned away for financial reasons. Women who have normal deliveries are discharged from the hospital within 24 hours. The nurses seemed happy; they worked 10–12 hour shifts,



Slaughtered sheep being prepared. UST donated and distributed the meat to the poor for the Eid al-Adha. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2000)



The author (with his back to the camera) shakes hands with President Saleh. On the President's right – Dr. Dawood and Sheikh Al-Ahmar, and on his left – Dr. Tariq and Dr. Husni Al-Goshae, Dean of the Medical School. (Photograph, Dr. R.A.Abdu)

six days a week, for \$167 per month. On January 21, 2001, I was privileged to attend at this hospital the opening of the first intra-uterine fertilization center in Yemen. Of the half-dozen major healthcare facilities that I visited in both the north and south of Yemen, this was the cleanest and best managed hospital. I recommend that Yemen use this hospital as a model.

Dr. Dawood took me to visit the first psychiatric hospital for women, staffed by three full-time psychiatrists. Prior to the establishment of this hospital, mentally ill women went to jail. We saw several women with a variety of mental conditions, ranging from mild depression to severe schizophrenia. They were treated, gradually rehabilitated, and eventually sent back to their homes to take care of their families. Construction of a psychiatric hospital for men, near the one for women, is in the planning stage.

I was invited to attend the graduation of UST's first dental class on November 15, 1999. Because of the President's presence, security was very tight. The commencement was held in a large auditorium; the seats were luxurious, with rows at least two feet apart. Dr. Tariq insisted that I sit in the front row; next to me

sat Fadhli Ali Abu-Ghanem, Vice Rector of Sana'a University. (During the course of our conversation about the old days, he told me that because his father was the Sheikh of Arhab, the Imam took young Fadhli as a hostage; Dr. Tariq also spent part of his youth as a hostage because his father was a prominent Sheikh.)

In addition to the 40 dentists who graduated, there were others who received Bachelor of Arts degrees. President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Sheikh Abdullah Ibn Husein Al-Ahmar, the President of Parliament, sat about three seats from where I sat. After the usual speeches, President Saleh handed the diplomas to the graduating class. Later I met and shook hands with the President of the Republic, Sheikh Al-Ahmar, and other dignitaries on stage.

The UST medical curriculum is a six-year program, similar to that of the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM), with which I am quite familiar. UST was to graduate its first medical class in two years. They expressed interest in NEOUCOM and wanted to emulate it as much as possible.

During a tour of the University facilities, I saw a



One floor of this building in Sana'a houses homeless women. (Photograph: Dr. R. A. Abdu, 2000)

model of a 200-bed teaching hospital. It was under construction on a nearby mountain; I would later visit the construction site of this new facility. As we progressed in our tour of the university's physical plants, including classrooms, libraries, clinics, and other building projects that were under construction, I met members of the faculty, students, administrative personnel, and other employees. I did not see anyone smoke or chew *qat*. From my conversation with many of those whom I met, I sensed that the mission of UST was community oriented. It seemed that the enthusiasm of Drs. Tariq and Dawood was contagious. As the saying goes, it starts at the top—good or bad.

I visited an elementary school, named "Renaissance" (*Nahdha*), also sponsored by UST. Dr. Dawood introduced me to the veiled headmistress—an intelligent, articulate, friendly woman who appeared sure of herself and of her responsibilities. All the teachers were women; all had degrees in education from the University of Sana'a. Class size ranged from 15 in the lower levels to 20 in the higher grades. The school was clean, including the bathrooms. The classes were in session. The students looked healthy, clean, and respectful. They responded to our questions in both Arabic and English. I was told that neither the students nor the teachers had advance knowledge of our visit. There was a new wing under construction, including a children's zoo.

Like all institutions and other buildings in Sana'a,

the school was enclosed by stonewalls and a heavy iron gate. When I questioned the necessity of such an expensive wall, I was told it was to keep "thieves from stealing everything in the school." I expressed surprise and asked if cutting off hands was a deterrent in use in Yemen. The answer was that there was no such thing. "Thieves don't even go to jail; only hard-core criminals are jailed."

Our next stop was a newly completed, six-story high-rise building, with a modern elevator. The basement contained an eight-month-old tailor's shop. There were different kinds of fabrics in a wide range of colors, from which they made a variety of clothing for both men and women. The two full-time tailors worked 8-12 hours a day, six days a week, for a salary of \$160 a month, with no other benefits. The finished products were sold in the shops of Sana'a. The second floor was a clinic for the poor. One floor was designated for rug and shoe making, and another floor contained a large hall that accommodates 500 people. It could be rented for weddings and other events, at \$200 per night for those who can afford it.



A young man after surgery for an hydatid cyst in his chest. The balloon serves as a spirometer to exercise his lungs. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2001)

The poor can rent the hall at a reduced rate, however, because weddings in Yemen can be very expensive and beyond the means of many. I was told that once a year the UST charitable arm holds mass weddings in this hall for the poor, free of charge.

Another floor of the building was designated as an adult vocational school for women. Adjacent to the school, on the same level, was a daycare center for those who wanted to bring their small children; the cost was \$15 per month. The top floor was designated as a guesthouse, with its own kitchen and dining hall; each room had a private bath. All proceeds from this building helped to support and educate the approximately 12,000 orphans throughout the Republic. School is a requirement for these orphans. The monthly cost for each orphan is 2,500 Yemeni riyals (\$15.50). I felt happy and proud to see my people doing so much good work.

The fly-in-the-ointment was the ubiquitous trash surrounding those beautiful buildings everywhere. I felt sad to see such neglect. During a *qat* session with about 20 men, some of whom were elected members of parliament and others who were appointed members of the Government Consultation Board, I suggested a National Cleaning Day with wide media coverage to bring about public awareness to this national embarrassment. In fact I suggested that each of us take a broom and a trash bag and start the project by setting an example. Although they agreed with the



A young woman with a large goiter, a common affliction in rural areas due to the lack of iodine in the diet and the salt that they use. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2000)

idea, there were no takers. (To my delight, I recently heard that this problem has been corrected.)

On November 29, 1999, Dr. Dawood arranged for me to visit The Republic Teaching Hospital, where they rotate their students for their surgery clerkship. It was a six-year-old, 520-bed, seven-story general hospital supported by the government, situated next to an old (but now closed) hospital that was built by Imam Yahya, probably in the mid-to-late 1930s. Both facilities were surrounded by a wall and a main gate and had tight security. The hospital had one elevator; I was told that there was a second elevator in the back, but I never saw it. Because of the dense crowd by the elevator I often just climbed the stairs to the conference room on the seventh floor.

The CEO had his office in another building adjacent to the hospital. There was always a tight crowd pushing and pulling, most of them carrying little pieces of paper in their outstretched hands, trying to see him about various problems, too trivial for a CEO to handle. But in Yemen micromanagement is the norm. I saw this phenomenon everywhere I went. I told them that they shoot rabbits with cannons! They agreed and laughed it off.

Patients and their families stay in the hospital until death or discharge. Families often do the laundry and hang it to dry on the balcony railings at various levels of the hospital. The facility looked much older than its age of only six years; maintenance does not appear to be in the Yemeni vocabulary. Private rooms on the top floor cost 2,000 Yemeni riyals (\$12) per night; x-rays and lab tests cost extra. I saw a variety of medical and surgical conditions in this hospital, some that I had never seen before, such as malaria encephalitis. I also saw patients who came from rural areas with advanced stages of their diseases. I had seen only one hydatid cyst many years ago as a medical student in the United States, but in Yemen it is a common ailment.¹

I saw a urologist remove a kidney stone from a three-year-old. I had never seen or heard of kidney stones at such a young age. I was told that in Yemen they occur as early as 6 months of age. On another occasion, I found only one surgical cap before I went into the operating room. There were no masks, so I used a handkerchief to cover my mouth and nose while I observed a surgeon remove a gall bladder. The

surgical gowns were old and many were torn in a few places. I admired the physicians, surgeons and nurses who did so much with so few resources.

During this visit Dr. Dawood took me on a tour of the new hospital under construction, sitting high on a mountain overlooking the city of Sana'a. A road had been literally carved in the mountainside leading to the hospital. The walls, made of cut stone, were already one story above ground. The building was square, with a sizeable courtyard in the middle. The view of Sana'a was spectacular, and I thought of it as a resort rather than as a hospital. As a physician I looked at it from a functional standpoint. In Yemen, the emphasis is on form more than function. I made several recommendations, all related to function. One recommendation was that the family waiting room should not be within the emergency room (ER) where doctors and nurses would be busy treating patients, but in an area adjacent to the ER. I also recommended that the x-ray and lab departments should be close to the ER. I suggested that snack bars should not be located on every level; instead a common dining room (cafeteria) should be available, separate from areas of patient care. I also recommended that the facility should have an adequate number of elevators. Most important, I suggested the development of systems and standards within the new hospital, in order to increase efficiency and to provide good quality care.



Dr. Husni al-Goshae, Dean of the UST School of Medicine. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2000)

I felt flattered, pleased, and humbled when Dr. Tariq, the power behind it all, said that they accepted the recommendations and will make the changes accordingly.

I saw other shortcomings, however, such as a lack of sufficient parking space, the need to widen and maintain the road on the mountainside for heavy traffic and ambulances, and inaccessibility to the poor who have no mode of transportation. A clinic was to be built at the foot of the mountains, but because of its distance from the hospital, duplication of equipment and personnel would be required. Dr. Dawood did not brush me off, but listened, as he always does, and agreed that all these factors should be considered, and that we should discuss the matter with Dr. Tariq. After all, this was Dr. Tariq's baby! Meanwhile I was thinking that it would be ideal if the teaching hospital and the clinic could be in one building at the foot of the mountain.

The following day a prominent businessman, a major investor in a 200-bed, five-story hospital in the final stages of construction, asked me to visit the facility and render an opinion. Patient's rooms consisted of one, two, and three beds; each room had its own toilet and a very small shower. There were four large operating rooms, each with its own sink outside the door; two sinks would have been more than adequate, especially in a city where water is at a premium. Also, I did not see a recovery room, except for a large hall by the operating rooms, which conceivably could be used as a recovery room. The nursing station of the intensive care unit (ICU) was out in the hall, far from the ICU patients.

They showed me a heliport on the roof for emergency helicopters. Because of the extremely heavy and sometimes chaotic traffic in Sana'a, helicopter transport was an excellent idea, provided that electricity would always be available to operate the elevator. The emergency room had four examining/treatment rooms on either side of its entrance—one side for women, the other for men. Each room had a solid, heavy door, which can get in the way during a hectic situation. The basement held two open-heart surgery rooms, one heart catheterization room and a large hall between the two rooms, similar to the hall on the fifth floor by the general surgery operating rooms. There were no nursing stations inside the

perimeters of the cardiac ICU. Major changes, in a building that was completed, were not foreseeable.

If I may use Mr. Ross Perot's words, folks in Yemen usually measure once and cut two or three times. I cannot condemn them. I think that it is in the genes, because sometimes I find myself doing the same thing!

On one occasion I gave a talk on the Modern Hospital, based solely on my experience in the United States; I realized that some aspects of my presentation could not be duplicated in Yemen, at least not in 1999. The feedback from the audience was good.

Drs. Tariq, Dawood and Husni al-Goshae (the Dean of the medical school) and I reviewed the floor plans of the proposed outpatient clinic, to be built at the foot of the mountain near the school of medicine for men. Looking at the plan from a functional aspect, we found many problems. After much discussion we agreed to make a list of what we wanted in this facility in terms of rooms, laboratories, furniture and other equipment. We agreed that I would take this list to Hanahan and Strollo in Youngstown, Ohio, the hospital architects who have designed and supervised the construction of our health facilities.

Return to Ohio

Immediately after my arrival in Youngstown I took the clinic plans to Mr. Hanahan, who, together with his partners, reviewed them and made the necessary changes. Although they spent many hours working on the plan, they did not charge me one cent. Mr. Hanahan said that they were happy to help. I immediately sent the revised plans to Yemen—via DHS for three-day delivery.

After my 1999 trip I had meetings with NEOUCOM's clinical and basic science deans and expressed UST's interest in using NEOUCOM as a model. They were more than helpful. On 18 computer discs they provided information that encompassed all their school programs, as well as printed copies on a variety of subjects, such as problem-solving teaching methods, evaluations, governing structure, standards, and faculty by-laws.

March–April 2000

In March 2000 I returned to Yemen, as promised. In addition to the documents from NEOUCOM, I brought 1,700 slides and several overhead transparencies for the 27 lectures in basic and clinical sciences. Dr. Dawood, Dr. Tariq, and the faculty were



UST medical students on their surgical rotation, Gamhoria Teaching Hospital. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2000)



The UST medical school building for men. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2000)

very appreciative.

The dean told me that a lecturer gives a talk in one school and then he gives the same lecture in the other school, because of gender segregation. I told him that was not in my plan. Besides, I added, if I give the same lecture twice close together, I get bored. The dean and the associate dean looked at each other. The dean shrugged his shoulders. I told them that settled it! I promised them that I would have the girls sit on one side of the aisle and the boys on the other. I also promised, “I will make sure they don’t get into any mischief!” I was impressed with both male and female students who sat in the new auditorium at the women’s school. They were intelligent, enthusiastic, and able to exchange ideas and knowledge with ease.

At a special faculty meeting chaired by Dr. Husni, Dean of the medical school, I made a presentation on medical education. I was impressed by the attendance, enthusiasm and attention. They asked me many questions. Again I tried to sell my “pet” project, the mortality and morbidity conference, simply referred to as M & M in the U.S. It is a weekly conference attended by faculty, residents, and medical students; the attendees and the physicians of the patients in question discuss deaths and complications. It is a conference that helps us to learn from our mistakes

and from each other—an excellent learning tool. If implemented, it will be the first in Yemen.

Overall I found that medical education in Yemen lacked organization, standards, and interaction between teachers and students. The student is treated as an incidental rather than as the most important focus of education. Poor communication, poor utilization of resources, and shortage of faculty compound the problem. The leadership of UST was trying hard to overcome these problems and to promote excellence; UST, however, cannot exist in a vacuum. It is subject to the environment and the culture.

One day I received a formal, written invitation to attend a meeting with the University Council, comprised of all the deans of the various schools and heads of departments, chaired by Dr. Dawood. The free exchange of ideas on how to improve the university in all areas was refreshing and reassuring. I presented my views and observations, and made recommendations to the leadership. They were attentive; some were taking notes. At the end they felt that my recommendations should be implemented; they also recommended to Dr. Dawood that I should be invited again.

On another occasion I was invited to attend the second monthly management meeting, also chaired

by Dr. Dawood. This group was comprised of heads of all support departments, such as maintenance and public relations. I recommended that each department head should also have a monthly meeting with those under him, one week before the main meeting with Dr. Dawood. This was well taken. Later they appointed a man to make monthly inspections of all UST buildings. This was to insure cleanliness and any signs of deterioration where repair may be needed. They also said that they would publish a monthly university bulletin, similar to the one that I brought with me from the St. Elizabeth Health Center of Ohio, to keep the university family and others informed of all UST activities, both within and outside the community.

The dean requested that I give a presentation to the faculty on "how to teach." I had learned from the students that some lectures were read to them from a textbook, after which the lecturer left. Exchange between students and teachers was rare or nonexistent. I told the dean that I would be happy to tell them "how I do it," rather than "how to teach." As much as possible I try to use a "Socratic" or problem-solving method, or a hybrid of both. I try to keep the

students engaged at all times and they seem to like it. I learned later that the instructor who read from a book was discharged.

During this stay I met an herbal "doctor." According to him, he held a Ph.D. in chemistry and in computer science. He and his assistant came from Jordan at the invitation of the government to treat a sheikh with liver "cancer." The good professor claimed that he used herbal medicine to cure liver cirrhosis, liver cancer, lung cancer, pancreatic cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, and that his cure rate was 90 – 100%. Some officials, including a physician, were very much impressed with the professor. My suspicions were aroused by the professor's claims. So, tongue in cheek, I suggested that they, with the help of the professor, start a specialty clinic in Sana'a, specifically for diseases that we, in the west, currently find incurable, such as diabetes, and cancers of the lung, pancreas, and liver. I suggested that patients with these problems would come from all over the world. Our problem would be to find hotels and places to house the crowd. The possibilities were limitless. Yemen would be the Mecca for curing the incurable. Those present, including the professor and his assistant,



Feast for the author before his departure for the U.S. Left to right: Engineer Othman, the author, Dr. Tariq, the hospital's architect, the cook - Abdul Baki, Ali Azaki (secretary to Dr. Dawood), two Iraqi doctors, and Yemen's ambassador to Saudi Arabia. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2000)

thought it was a good idea, but the professor had to leave the country soon in order to meet prior commitments. I asked why pharmaceutical companies were not developing and selling these miracle cures. He said that they would not do that because if they did, then they would be out of business.

We accompanied him to the Sheraton where his patient stayed during the treatment. The elderly, emaciated, jaundiced Sheikh was in his last days on this earth, but the professor assured us that he was already 20% cured. After he collected his sizable fee plus expenses, he left. I was told later that the government got stuck with a large, long distance telephone bill for calls made from the Sheraton, where the professor and his assistant stayed. Two days after the professor departed, Allah took away the good Sheikh.

After I made the presentation to the faculty on medical education, I met a biochemistry teacher from Iraq. He told me that before the Gulf War, an Iraqi dinar was worth \$3.50. In 1999, one US dollar equaled 2,000 dinars. In Iraq, a teacher like him made \$3.00, yes, three dollars per month. The brightest and the best were leaving the country. I asked him what would happen if Saddam left or stepped down. He

said that there were at least 100 factions/parties waiting to grab the "throne." There would surely be a bloody civil war. As bad as Saddam was, at least he kept things from exploding, he said. There were many Iraqi doctors, teachers, and a few barbers who fled Iraq; they left everything behind, and came to Yemen with their families.

On April 14, 2000 UST's Engineer, Othman, took me to the clinic construction site; the architect and builder joined us. The walls, partitions, and roof were already up. I noticed several functional problems. As I called each problem to their attention and suggested remedies, an immediate decision was made to make the changes. They had the authority and responsibility to make changes on the spot. It was refreshing to see that, at last, UST was freeing itself from micromanagement. During our inspection I asked if the foundation of this large facility could support a four or five story hospital. Their answer was an unequivocal "yes."

On April 18, 2000 Engineer Othman took me to an eye, ear, nose, throat, and dental clinic. It was also under the sponsorship of UST. The facility was clean, with modern equipment. The manager was knowledgeable, attentive, and well organized; like the



UST medical students gather data from ledgers on all surgical patients for a 12 month period. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2001)



From left to right: the author, Dr. R. Abdu, Abdulkarim Al-Iryani, Prime Minister, and H.E. Mohammed H. Shohaty. (Photograph, Dr. Abdu, 2000)

people that I met at the women's and psychiatric hospitals, he exhibited pride and enthusiasm. We then visited the School of Culture and Education, where degrees are equivalent to a Bachelor of Arts. This was the first UST building and it had 800 students. The classrooms were large and clean, and the library had adequate books and Internet access.

On April 20, 2000 I was invited to have lunch at the home of my good friend, H.E. Mohammed Shohaty, former minister of economics and presently in charge of social security and advisor to the prime minister. Dr. Abdulkarim Al-Iryani, Prime Minister, was there; I have known him since he was a student in the US. He is a fine man of sharp intellect with a good sense of humor. We talked about the old days, the new days, and the days in-between, forgetting rank, speaking just as good old friends. It was an enjoyable moment. I was pleased to learn that the government of Yemen had contracted with a Japanese firm to clean the streets. The firm would process the trash to be used as fuel. The same firm would also build a sewage plant. This was music to my ears.

April 24, 2000 was my last day in Yemen before I returned to the US. I had submitted my exit report—a straightforward, honest report with all the warts in view. It contained what I honestly believed would be in the best interest of this young and progressive

university, rather than what I thought they wanted to hear. To be dishonest with these decent and trusting people would have been a betrayal in the worst sense of the word. They appreciated it, and promised to implement whatever recommendations I made, within the limits of their material and human resources. I hated to leave them; Drs. Tariq and Dawood suggested that my family should come, and offered the guesthouse as a residence for my family and me. These people are generous to a fault.

That day they had a surprise luncheon for me. Among the guests were two Iraqi physicians, the Yemeni ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Engineer Othman, and the two architects of the clinic. Ahmad Sharaf, a journalist who had interviewed me a few days earlier for his newspaper, called and said that President Abdullah Ali Saleh wanted to see me. I told him that I was leaving that evening, but I wanted to extend to the President my congratulations and happy returns on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Union.

Earlier that day I had discussed with Dr. Tariq the feasibility of building the new hospital on the existing clinic foundation. The ground floor would house a clinic and laboratory facilities, and the top floors would be the hospital. I outlined all the advantages of this combination. Because the existing building housing the



UST Teaching Hospital, under construction. The ground floor will house the clinic; the upper stories will be the hospital facility. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2001)

medical school for men was temporary, I suggested that the building under construction on the mountain should be converted into a medical school for men. In mid-afternoon he returned with the two architects. All agreed that the new hospital could be built on top of the clinic. It would have four elevators. We went over the plans and they said that they would start working on the new hospital plans immediately. Dr. Tariq gave them one week to complete the plans and send them to me. I would then give them to Mr. Hanahan for review. I was delighted, and I marveled at the flexibility and progressive outlook of Dr. Tariq. It reinforced what I had already perceived—with Drs. Tariq and Dawood at the helm, UST would be an institution that set the standards for excellence. I returned to the United States after a six-week stay.

Return to Ohio

Later I received the plans on computer discs, together with the structural specifications. I delivered them immediately to Mr. Hanahan who took them to his firm's office and made printed copies. He and his partners spent many hours inspecting and editing. They said that the structural specifications were sound.

Finally, Mr. Hanahan brought the plans to my house. We sat at my dining room table and edited room after room and page after page, until we were both satisfied. Again the architects did all the work *gratis*. Meanwhile, I contacted a dear friend who was vice president of a large American company that manufactured hospital furniture and equipment. I told him about the new hospital project, and I asked if he and his company could donate anything for this worthy cause. He promised that he would try.

January–February 2001

On January 13, 2001 I left again for Sana'a, loaded with lecture material and more documents from NEOUCOM and the Saint Elizabeth Health Center in Youngstown. The new teaching hospital was already underway, and I was very happy to see the young structure, two stories high and growing. A new state-of-the-art engineering building was also under construction on a nearby hill. Negotiations were under way to borrow five million US dollars from a bank in Saudi Arabia for these projects.

On this trip I spent less time in meetings and more time on teaching. I enjoyed bedside teaching best.



Dr. Dawood presents a plaque to Dr. Abdu. The plaque was given in appreciation for his work in 2000. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2000)

Every morning the students and I went to the Republic Teaching Hospital and examined patients. Lectures were reserved for the afternoon at the women's school. Sometimes, medical students from the University of Sana'a attended my lectures. We also developed a "log system;" each student recorded his daily clinical experiences and I reviewed it weekly with them. This helped us to keep watch on what the students were doing and assured equivalent experiences for all. Dr. Al-Ba'adani, chairman of the hospital's department of surgery, was most helpful in facilitating the hands-on clinical experience for the students. The students liked it.

The students were also excited by another project, a medical record review of all patients who had been admitted for surgery—a review that covered a one-year period. The results looked interesting, but we did not have time to analyze the data thoroughly before I left. So, we gave all our material to Dr. Mahyub, Director of Quality Assurance, who will undertake the analysis.

H.E. Mohammed Shohaty and his lovely wife, Alia, again invited me to have lunch at their home. Prime Minister Al-Iryani and former Prime Minister Abdul-Azeez Abdul-Mughni were also invited. We discussed medical schools in Yemen. We all agreed

that in Yemen the medical schools were weak at best, and diploma-mills at worst. My recommendation to the Prime Minister was to reduce the number of government medical schools from seven sick schools to one healthy school. The new school should be located in a neutral territory within the Republic. It should have rigid standards for admission and for graduation. It should have a full-time, highly qualified dean who would have the authority and responsibility to hire competent faculty, and who will be accountable to an independent Board of Trustees composed of men and women from various universities and businesses, as well as other reputable citizens of the Republic. There should be a realistic budget for the school's operation and for research. Dr. Al-Iryani liked the idea and asked me to put my recommendations in writing, and to send them to him via H.E. Mohammed Shohaty. As soon as I got back to my room, I did just that. Although Mohammed Shohaty said that the document was excellent, I have not yet heard anything more about it.

On February 6, 2001 Drs. Tariq and Dawood took me to visit SOUL (an NGO organization), a three-year-old society for the development of women and children. The founders were two young Yemeni women, Dr. Fatima, who studied for her Ph.D. in Germany, and Arwa, who had earned a Masters in Public Health in the United States. Behind those veils I found two women who were intelligent, determined, and highly organized. They spoke English well. They told me that men initially doubted their ability to establish and maintain such an organization, but they proved them wrong. They had nine employees; three were men. They did not accept government help. Their income was derived from several organizations in Yemen and abroad. The list of their projects was impressive, and their activities dealt mainly with poor and rural women. Before I left Arwa asked me to review a plan for a new women's clinic with limited sleeping facilities. Women in Yemen are still an untapped resource for national advancement in the 21st century.

On February 25, 2001 I made my exit presentation to the administration and faculty at a special meeting chaired by Drs. Tariq and Dawood. This time it was different; I had two students with me. In the past I had advocated student representation on

committees and at faculty meetings, arguing that students should be members of the team, not outside of it. We could all learn much from these bright, young men and women whose minds were still not totally chained by old prejudices and old traditions.

At first the students were reluctant to attend the meeting. I promised them that nothing would happen to them and that Dr. Dawood had given me permission to bring them along. I asked them to elect two, from their group of 13, to represent them at this important meeting. It was refreshing to hear these students speak their minds. Most important, it was reassuring to see how well the faculty accepted the students and how they accepted this new adventure in education. It was a first.

From this meeting we went to the main auditorium for the presentation of the first Annual Best Teacher Award, in both basic and clinical sciences. The award was based on the students' written, and anonymous, evaluations of the faculty. It was a momentous occasion and a milestone in education in Sana'a, maybe in Yemen. When I made my recommendations during my previous visit, I stipulated that all visiting professors should be disqualified. I believe that such awards should be given only to those who work with the students every day and every year. I was upset and embarrassed when I heard my name for the award in surgery. I did not even bring it home with me; I felt that I did not deserve it.

Return to Ohio

On March 11, 2001 I returned to the United States. I asked Youngstown State University (YSU) to send an invitation to Dr. Dawood, who had expressed an interest in visiting YSU, NEUOCOM, and the St. Elizabeth Health Center, to see firsthand "how we do it." YSU sent the invitation to Dr. Dawood, as I expected. They said that it would be wonderful; they would have their doors and arms open for him. But then 9/11 came—it changed everything. Dr. Dawood has not yet been able to visit our facilities.

Meanwhile I kept in contact with my friend about the hospital equipment. He gathered together and sent two ship-containers to the port of Hudeidah. They were filled with varied hospital, ICU, and emergency room furniture and equipment.

I was born in Yemen. I left as a child, but I have



The author, Dr. Rashid A. Abdu, in traditional Yemeni attire. (Photograph: Dr. R.A. Abdu, 2000)

returned to visit, first in 1946, then 1956, 1971, 1981, 1996, 1999, 2000 and 2001. When I consider where the Republic started, its poverty, and the many years of upheaval during and after the revolution, I realize that I have seen Yemen take great leaps into the future. The most important was the union of the former north and south, now considered the greatest change in the history of Yemen. The people of Yemen are becoming more open-minded and receptive to new ideas. I have seen this, firsthand, with the leadership of UST. I was also encouraged by the people's attitude toward women. I have observed that in Yemen's schools about half of the students are women. There is also a spirit in Yemen to help and to uplift women, personally and professionally, as exemplified at UST and SOUL.

There are still many problems in Yemen, in all areas, because the poverty is so crippling. There is also a rich heritage and great natural beauty with plateaus, mountains and valleys that meet the Red and

Arabian Seas. The beauty, intelligence, and generosity of the people, however, are the most important qualities of Yemen; they are determined to make Yemen better—one boy at a time and one girl at a time—to make Yemen a shining example among the countries of the Middle East.

I have recently received information from Dr. Dawood that the 250-bed teaching hospital would open in August 2004. Congratulations Dr. Tariq! Congratulations Dr. Dawood! And my congratulations to everyone connected with UST for a job well done. I am grateful for the tour and for the experience.

Notes

1. A hydatid cyst is caused by a parasite, a tapeworm in the intestinal tract of dogs. The young larvae are passed from the dog into the soil. Sheep, goats, cows, and other animals ingest the larvae. People then consume the infected animals and the larvae travel from the small intestines through the blood, where they most often lodge in the right lobe of the liver forming a cyst. Occasionally the larvae lodge in the lungs, forming cysts there. The disease is endemic in the Middle East, Greece, South America, Australia, South Africa, Alaska, and Canada. It is rare in the

continental United States.

Acknowledgment

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Joan Reilly from the American Institute for Yemeni Studies for her professional editing of this report and for her thoughtful suggestions.

Dr. Abdu was born in Yemen in 1932, and, when he was only 9 years old, he left his small village of Aireem. He worked in Aden in a coffee shop and at a laundry, then he worked on the U.S. Air Base. While still only a child, he worked as a houseboy for the American Consul, Harlan B. Clark. One day he told the Consul that he wanted to go to school and become a doctor. Clark then enrolled the young Rashid as a "first grader" in the Marist Brothers' School in Tawahi (Steamer Point). Through a long association with the Clarks, he continued to work and study, eventually studying medicine at the George Washington University School of Medicine. After further specialization, he became a surgeon. Dr. Abdu has written a book detailing his unusual life story, titled "Journey of a Yemeni Boy." It should be available in the spring of 2005 (Dorrance Publishing Co., Pittsburgh).

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



The UST Teaching Hospital, near completion, in April 2004. Photograph: Courtesy of Dr. R. Abdu, 2004.

Yemen Reviews

AIYS invites readers to submit reviews of recent or classic books, monographs, and articles on Yemen. If you would be interested in acting as a reviewer for new books, please send your name and resume to the executive director, Dr. Maria Ellis (see p. 2).

Reuben Ahroni,
Jewish Emigration from the Yemen 1951-1998: Carpet Without Magic.
Richmond, Surrey, U.K.: Curzon Press, 2001. Pp. xviii + 141. Appendices to 178. Notes to 196. Bibliography to 198. Index to 202.
ISBN 0-7007-1396-4. \$75.00

Reviewed by Thomas B. Stevenson

Between 1948 and 1950, roughly 48,818 Jews, primarily from the Imamate of Yemen, were flown from the British Crown Colony of Aden to the newly formed state of Israel. The 430 flights, many made by chartered Alaska Airlines planes, were organized by the American Joint Distribution Committee and financed by the United Jewish Appeal. This massive relocation was dubbed Operation Magic Carpet (or Operation on Eagles' Wings). While their first plane flights may have been magical for the Yemeni, this was the only part of the process that was enchanted. Most of the emigrants were from remote highland villages in the Imamate and had reached the transit camps on foot, or, if they were lucky, by lorry. Their journeys were arduous and many arrived in Aden in poor physical condition.

More daunting than making one's way to Aden was making the decision to emigrate. Despite pleas to take advantage of the opportunity to join their coreligionists in the Holy Land, many Jews were hesitant to leave the life they knew. Individuals vacillated over the prospect of starting life over, families were reluctant to abandon those too frail to make the trip, and many harbored concerns about the secular nature of the new Jewish state. When the last flight was completed in September 1950, an estimated 1000-6000 Jews remained in highland Yemen.

There was less resistance to emigration among Aden's small Jewish community of about eight thousand. Tensions between Arabs and Jews had

been heightening since the 1930s when the groups skirmished. In 1947, following the United Nations's decision to partition Palestine, serious riots erupted.¹ Eighty-two members of the Jewish community died and another 76 were injured. Many Jewish shops were looted, four synagogues were burned, and more than 200 homes were damaged. When the opportunity to leave arrived, most members of the community were happy to board planes for Israel.

Among those emigres was thirteen-year-old Reuben Ahroni, who was settled on a kibbutz near Jerusalem. During the two years it took for his family to arrive, young Reuben became imbued with the socialist ideology typical of the kibbutz movement. Although alienated from the religious conservatism of his Adenite community, Ahroni retained his religious beliefs. He attended Tel Aviv University where in 1954 he completed a bachelor's degree and began graduate studies in Hebrew language and literature. In 1969 the Jewish Agency sent him as an emissary to the Jewish community in Cincinnati where, in addition to his official tasks, in 1973 he earned his doctorate at Hebrew Union College in Bible, Midrash, and Semitic Languages. He returned to Israel to pursue an academic career, but Ahroni was soon invited to be a visiting professor at The Ohio State University. That stay became permanent.²

In addition to writing articles on the Bible and editing the Hebrew Annual Review, Ahroni retained his interest in the Jews of his native land. He authored *Yemenite Jewry: Origins, Culture, and Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). Owing to its colonial history, Aden's Jewish community grew apart from their coreligionists elsewhere in the south and especially from those in the Imamate. Ahroni described the distinctive society and culture of the Adenite Jews in *Yehude 'Aden: Kehilah She-haytah* (Tel Aviv: Afikim, 1991) and *The Jews of the British Crown Colony of Aden: History, Culture, and Ethnic Relations* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994). Although

the subjects differ, Ahroni brings a distinct encyclopedic perspective to his topic. As would be expected, his discussions focus on history, culture, and religion, but as if to insure that no aspect of these disappearing societies is lost, include anthropology, folklore, and literature as well.

The present study owes to good fortune. Max Lapidès, director of Operation Magic Carpet, maintained a large collection of documents on his efforts. Before his death these were passed to Robin Gilbert, who also worked on the relocation of the remaining Jews. In 1996 Gilbert gave these papers, letters, and photographs to Ahroni. Those materials stop in 1958. Ahroni picks up the account when interest in the Jewish remnants revived in the 1980s and extends the story to 1998.

The opening four chapters describe efforts to relocate the Jews remaining in Yemen in the 1950s. Ahroni shows how global politics, particularly the rise of Arab nationalism, and local events, notably the death of Imam Yahya and the attempted coup against Imam Ahmad exacerbated the reluctance of the remaining Jews to emigrate.

Believing there was a good chance of relocating the remaining Jews, Lapidès convinced the Jewish Agency to repost him to Aden. His efforts in 1957-58 are the primary focus of this section of the book. Because Jews, Yemeni or other, could not travel in the Imamate, Lapidès had to rely on Muslim messengers to communicate with the remaining communities. Although these agents were promised bounties for each Jew to reach Aden, they were

viewed with suspicion. In the end, they failed to deliver. In addition to these difficulties, Lapidès had to convince the Jewish Agency that there were good prospects for success and to maintain its support of his efforts.

The documents reveal that the remaining Jews were extremely ambivalent and misinformed about emigration. They were concerned by rumors that the elderly were being thrown from airplanes. They questioned the authenticity of letters from their relatives in Israel. They worried about girls having to serve in the military. Unlike their predecessors who were motivated by religious zealotry, the remnants were concerned about their finances. They cited debts to Muslims and loss of property as barriers to leaving. There were requests for money to pay for travel to Aden. In a note, an exasperated Gilbert refers to them as mercenary.

Although some of these worries were fostered by anti-Israel propaganda spread by Jewish and Muslim sources, some concerns were real. Ahroni confronts the underlying issue directly (pp. 34-35): "...one cannot help raising in this connection the following vexing moral question: the profoundly religious Yemenis had voiced very valid concerns regarding the kind of environment into which they might be plunged upon arrival in Israel. Yet, the Committee's responses to these concerns, particularly relating to elements of moral laxity and the impact of secularism in Israel were not strictly truthful."

If their isolation enabled remaining Yemeni Jews to control their destiny prior to 1962, when their status



Yemeni Jewish women in Haydar facing Torah scrolls.

was again considered in 1980s, outsiders were in charge. The last four chapters focus primarily on pressures put on the Yemen government to relax its emigration policies. The period was characterized by charges and counter-charges that the Jewish remnants were victims of Muslim domination and discrimination³ or were citizens like all Yemeni. The battle for their souls was waged in quarters distant from Yemen, in the international press and through officials in the U.S. government.⁴ The contestants were Yemeni groups in Israel, the anti-Zionist Satmar organization, the Israeli government, and well-connected American Jews on the one hand and the beleaguered Yemen government on the other. Well-documented reports from travelers that the Jews were not mistreated and wished to remain in Yemen were dismissed. Bowing to these pressures, Yemen eased emigration regulation and by 1998 the remaining Jews had been relocated, either to Israel or elsewhere. Not surprisingly, many of these new Israelis found that the nation represented a way of life of which they disapproved. Some wished to return to Yemen. (Despite all efforts, some Jews have chosen to stay in Yemen; during the 2003 parliamentary elections, newspapers printed photographs of Jews in Raida casting their ballots.)

Although he deals with a highly politicized issue, Ahroni is characteristically apolitical and even-handed in his presentation. Indeed, while some authors have stressed the difficult lives of Yemeni Jews, Ahroni frequently notes that the living conditions of Jews differed little from those of their Muslim neighbors. He also points out that while there were conflicts



Yemeni Jewish men at prayer in the Great Synagogue of Aden.

between Muslims and Jews there were also good relations between the communities.

Perhaps because he is not a historian, Ahroni does not frame his work theoretically. Using a reportorial style, Ahroni interweaves specifics about the Jewish remnants with the histories of the two Yemens, framed by the politics of Israel and the Middle East. He writes clearly and concisely. Frequent use of subtitles helps locate the data in context and time.

This short volume is intended for the specialist rather than casual reader. Those unfamiliar with the Jewish presence in Yemen or Operation Magic Carpet are left to seek that information elsewhere. Ahroni clearly seeks to take full advantage of his data and fulfill his debt to Gilbert. He makes frequent use of citations from documents, especially in the first section of the book. Likewise he leaves interpretation of local events to Lapidés. The appendices present the researcher with many valuable English and Hebrew documents. This is a valuable, forthright contribution to the literature on Yemeni Jewry and brings to print materials that might too easily have been lost.

ENDNOTES

1. One knowledgeable historian suggests that the Zionist organization may have instigated these riots to help stimulate the urge to emigrate.
2. Information from Yedida Kalfon Stillman's "Reuben Ahroni: An Appreciation," in *Hebrew Annual Review* 14: 1-4 (1994).
3. Among the explanations for this renewed interest in emigration was the desire to bring to Israel a group with a high rate of reproduction and strong support for the ruling Likud party.
4. Some of these efforts are found in Hayim Tawil's *Operation Esther: Opening the Door for the Last Jews of Yemen* (New York, Belkiss Press, 1998).

Professor Stevenson teaches at Ohio University-Zanesville and he is currently the president of AIYS.

Democracy and Development: Conflicting or Complementary Goals in Yemen?

Marta Colburn,
*The Republic of Yemen: Development Challenges
in the 21st Century.*
London: Catholic Institute for International Relations
(CIIR), 2002. 83 pp.
ISBN 1-85287-249-7

Marina de Regt,
*Pioneers or Pawns? Women Health Workers and
the Politics of Development in Yemen.*
Doctoral Dissertation in Anthropology, University of
Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 2003. 282 pp.

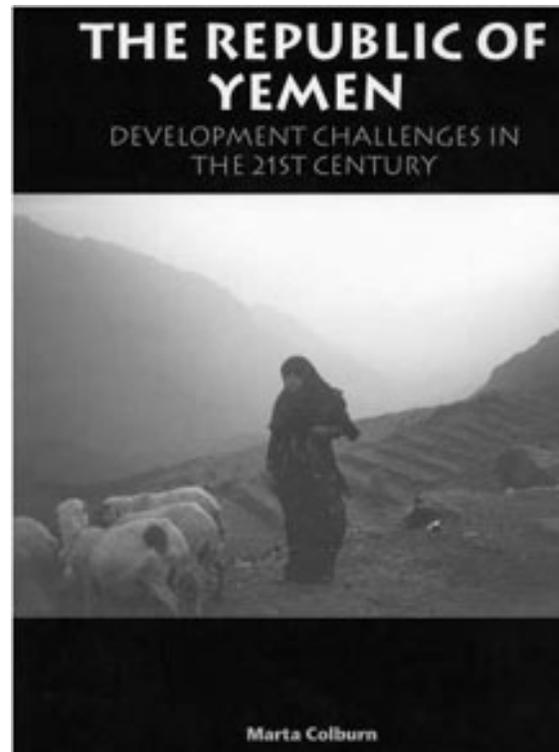
Reviewed by Delores M. Walters, Northern Kentucky
University & The National Underground Railroad
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To what extent are development projects capable of serving all classes and both genders in such multicultural societies as Yemen? Is development aid geared primarily (though perhaps inadvertently) towards elites who have been educated in the vernacular of the developers? What political conditions are required for development, particularly economic development, to reach all quarters of the society? Is government accountability a prerequisite for inclusive deployment of development aid? In essence, can socially conscious economic reform be instituted in a country that simultaneously is struggling to implement democratic reform?

Marta Colburn's *The Republic of Yemen: Development Challenges in the 21st Century* summarizes Yemen's efforts to institute economic reforms, establish democratic ideals, and cope with the fluctuating aid priorities of foreign donors. Written for the International Cooperation for Development (ICD), the book's author brings almost twenty years' professional experience to this report, which aims "to provide in-depth information and to outline the development challenges and opportunities facing the Yemeni people." Colburn was resident director of AIYS between 1998 and 2000 and also served as

consultant for several international development organizations in Yemen. As Dr. Abdulkarim al-Iryani, former prime minister of both the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and the Republic of Yemen (ROY), notes in the foreword, the book also displays the author's affection for her subjects and their culture. Colburn's appreciation is especially evident in her account of traditional Yemeni practices that support community and the environment.

The Introduction outlines Yemen's geographical zones and briefly summarizes government actions and popular sentiments toward the United States in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Part One, "History," is divided into five pre-unification periods – ancient and early Islamic; the era of competing European powers; and the modern and republican eras. Closing this section is a discussion of the ever-present tribal-state tensions that shape Yemeni society. Part Two, "Development," elaborates on local traditions including consensus-making; conflict management; community-building; the role of *hijra* (neutrality) in intertribal markets; land and water conservation strategies; and finally, Yemen's acceptance of female leaders and tolerance for ethnic



Marta Colburn, *The Republic of Yemen.*

diversity. Also explained are Yemeni relations with foreign donors during the cold war period up to unification and the impact of the Gulf war on domestic affairs in Yemen after 1990. Part Three, "Resources" provides printed, human and other resources, including a glossary, a listing of political and community-based organizations, films, and Internet sites that scholars and activists alike will find useful.

The book's depiction of longstanding local traditions as they relate to human and economic development concerns is noteworthy. For example, according to Colburn, the mutual support practices of *zakat* and *sadaqa* (two forms of charitable giving) reached their full expression in the Local Development Authorities (LDAs) established in the YAR during the 1970s and 80s. The LDAs garnered in-kind labor, as well as internal and external support, to fund water projects and to build roads, schools, and health facilities in various local communities. However, these cooperative organizations in the Yemen Arab Republic and the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) lost their community orientation in the mid-



Colburn, p. 42, "Despite political advances for women, literacy rates remain low - 35 percent in 1998 compared to 69 percent of men."

1980s and, after unification, eventually were absorbed under the Ministry of Local Administration after unification. Understandably, the complex interplay between community-based efforts and the central government falls outside the scope of a consultant's report, yet one wishes that more such connections had been demonstrated.

Little attention is given to whether collaborations between indigenous community development activities and their international counterparts were efficacious or not. How, for example, were traditional agricultural and environmental conservation practices incorporated into donor-supported development projects? Were outside developers even cognizant of the possibilities of utilizing traditional Yemeni building strategies (both technical and communal) in designing their construction schemes? Or were foreign aid organizations impeded in their efforts by failure to consider how older as well as newer approaches could be combined? Undoubtedly, traditional methods for removing human waste in Yemeni cities, for example, were viewed by developers as a hazard rather than a benefit to the environment. While the author recognizes the contribution of environmental conservation practices, she does not comment on the position taken by foreign donors. Nor does she indicate whether developers' recognition of indigenous conservation practices has improved.

Also unresolved is the question regarding Yemeni society's acceptance of its diverse social, racial, and ethnic groups—an inclusiveness that is now guaranteed in the constitution. Despite acknowledgment by Yemeni officials that marginalized groups such as the *akhdam* (menial servants) face particular hardships, specific measures to address persistent discrimination are not described. It is not unseemly to compare the marginalization of the *akhdam* (or women) within Yemeni society to the "subservience" of Yemen itself to market forces, economic reform structures, or politicized economic threats by the United States. In both instances, subordinate status does not preclude the ability to negotiate one's inclusion. In this book, women are shown to be emerging into the public arena (utilizing established networking skills), while formerly-excluded groups appear not to have such "choices."

Overall, the book's advantages outweigh its disadvantages. It is especially suitable for classroom

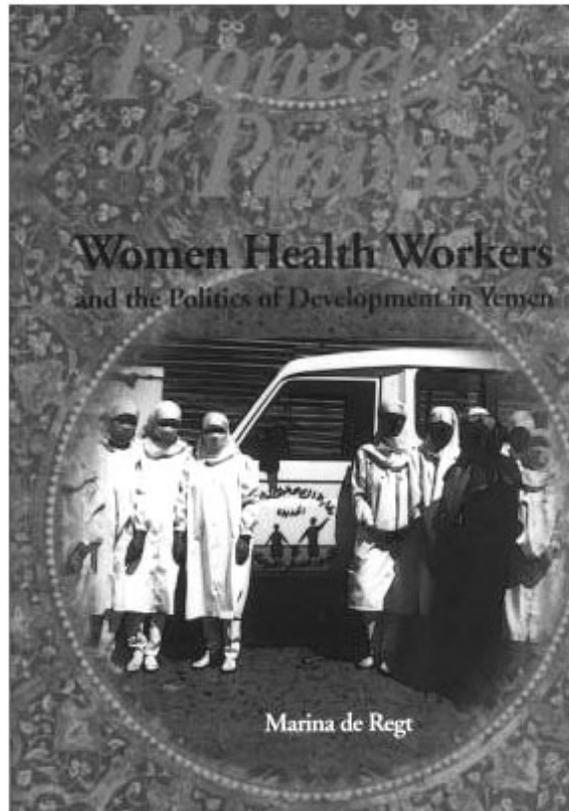
use. If re-issued, however, printing errors should be corrected. These include misleading references to a non-existent map (p. 12), and to a non-existent section on Yemeni women's "struggle with inequality," as well as a missing word with regard to *qat* production. Also, it will be helpful to indicate the source for particular statements — the derivation for the number of *akhdam* residents (p. 63), and the origin of a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (p. 13) are two examples. The photos of stunning landscapes complement the narrative and provide glimpses of daily life, mostly in various regions of the YAR, but these images would convey changing times rather than timelessness if dates were inserted. Still, if students are familiar with Yemen at all, it is likely to be through negative media coverage of the "violent and unusual." This book provides a useful alternative and is a welcome addition to reports on Yemen's past, present, and future progress towards economic and human development from an experienced and perceptive researcher.

Marina de Regt's *Pioneers or Pawns? Women Health Workers and the Politics of Development in Yemen* is a solid ethnographic study of changes in the economic, educational, and social position of women in the Tihama region. Like Colburn, de Regt brings considerable expertise to her examination of female primary health care providers in this as yet unpublished doctoral dissertation printed as a book. After spending six years as a development worker, first in Rada'a and then in the Hodeida Urban Primary Health Care Project (HUPHC) from 1993 to 1998, de Regt returned to the academy and focused her development anthropology research on the women who had become her friends as well as colleagues. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Amsterdam in the spring of 2003.

In the introductory chapters, de Regt describes her transition from development worker to development researcher. She then poses the question whether the women in the HUPHC project were pioneers who effectively negotiated their own destinies, or pawns who ultimately were subject to myriad controlling forces at all levels of the society. Various ideologies—"modernity," "development," and "identity politics"—influenced the conceptualization

and implementation of the HUPHC, which was funded by the Dutch in cooperation with the Yemeni Ministry of Public Health. In order to convey both the political interests as well as the unintentional consequences of development aid, De Regt opts for an approach that is "community oriented," "multi-leveled" and "nuanced." Such a theoretical vantage allows both the liberation and the reinforcement of social controls experienced by Yemeni women to be acknowledged. Accordingly, de Regt asks: "How are different notions of gender, labour, and (health care) development translated and negotiated in the training and employment of *murshidat* in the Hodeida Primary Health Care Project in Yemen?"

Part One, "The Politics of Development," provides an overview of Yemen's emergence as a nation-state, relevant Yemeni and Dutch discourses regarding women's roles in development and their adaptation in the Dutch-Yemeni health care project. Part Two, "Shifting Boundaries," distinguishes three groups of trainees and describes changes in women's personal



Marina de Regt, *Pioneers or Pawns? Women Health Workers and the Politics of Development in Yemen*.

and social identities as *murshidat*. The first group of *murshidat*, trained in 1985-86, was from relatively upwardly mobile social classes in Yemen who, reflecting the idealism of the newly stabilized YAR government, sought to improve themselves primarily through education rather than income. They overcame not only the resistance of residents in the squatter neighborhood on the outskirts of Hodeida, but also their own reluctance to delivering home care in an unfamiliar area.

Part Three, "New Positions and New Identities," discusses the women in the second cohort, trained in 1988-89, who were explicitly looking for salaried work. Women in this group, though better accepted by squatters' camp residents with whom they were closely identified, were less able to negotiate better working conditions compared to the first group of *murshidat*. Part Four, "Other Modernities," considers the third cohort who became *murshidat* after 1990, specifically women who grew up in Saudi Arabia and emigrated to Yemen with their families during the Gulf war. For this group, notions of modernity as well as the increasing dominance of men's roles characterized

the health care setting. In the concluding section, de Regt finds that while the *murshidat* successfully lifted certain social and gender boundaries, other barriers proved non-negotiable. The final section consists of a summary in Dutch.

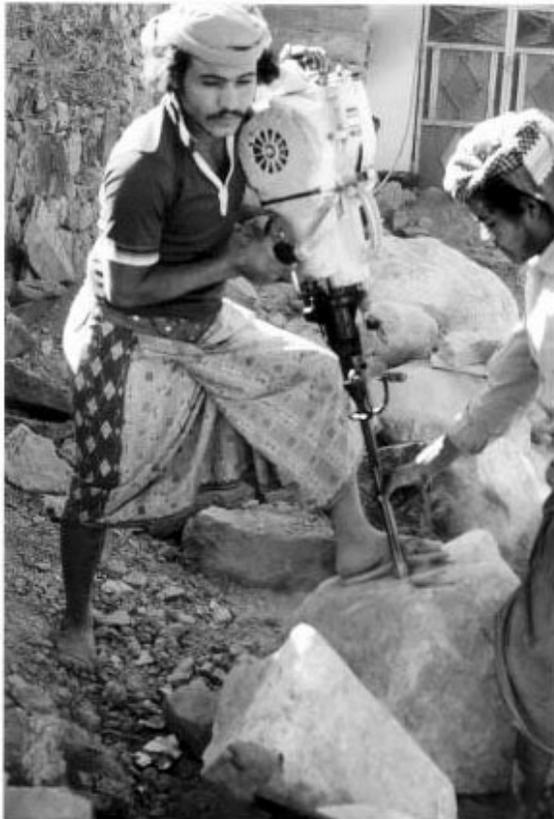
De Regt's depiction of the HUPHC's evolution from project to program is especially informative. The Dutch remained the principal financiers of the program until 1999. (They continued to be major donors of development aid in Yemen.) In the initial stages, health care in Hodeida was merely a component of an urban renewal waste disposal project. As such, it was a manifestation of one of the aforementioned Local Development Associations (LDAs). Only later did the project encompass a Maternal and Child Health clinic employing women in a central role. A shift from Dutch to Yemeni management of satellite health centers occurred when most Dutch staffers returned home during the Gulf war. Thus the move toward Yemeni women's sustainability in the project, while desired, was unplanned. However, in the 1990s a deliberate move toward sustainability occurred with the integration of the HUPHC into the Public Health Office



Marina de Regt with *murshidat* in Hodeida.

in Hodeida. The project became a “program” which emphasized the training of community midwives rather than *murshidat*, reflecting the increasing educational level of young Yemeni women (completion of a ninth grade rather than a sixth grade education was now required). Thus, Yemeni development is recognized as a combination of deliberate actions, imposed agendas, and unintended consequences of local and foreign actors.

Through remarkable vignettes of women from each of the three cohorts of *murshidat* trainees, de Regt astutely examines the transformations (and resistance to change) in the lives of the women, especially personal self-concepts and community interactions. The process toward community acceptance of the *murshidat* as health promoters was not straightforward. As the women speak about the significance of becoming *murshidat*, one discerns the ways in which social status relevant to gender identities was negotiated and redefined as well as reinforced. The earlier trainees, having overcome male family members’ resistance and cultural biases against a



Sana’a, 1980’s. (Photograph by Delores M. Walters)

profession perceived as low status, requiring unavoidable interactions with men, laid a foundation for the second and third cohorts who were trained during the peak years of the project (1988-1993).

In this study, women’s progress toward overcoming gender boundaries (the author’s primary concern) is discussed directly, while depiction of parallel dynamics pertaining to marginalized and racialized groups is largely avoided. For instance, in the vignettes of “Badriyya” and “Iman,” racial and ethnic identities are treated differently, even though both live in squatters’ neighborhoods which in part accounts for the women’s low ranking. Badriyya’s settlement was created to accommodate migrants from abroad while internal migrants established Iman’s area. Badriyya, a *muwallada* (mixed parentage), openly discusses her dual Yemeni and African background with the anthropologist despite the negative connotations that “mixed blood” holds for other Yemenis. Iman’s identity however is implied, presumably because as the most demeaned, lowest social category in Yemen’s social hierarchy, the *akhdam* label is an assigned one and rarely used to identify oneself. Iman’s assignment to *akhdam* status is chiefly based on her parents’ occupation and the fact that non-squatter residents deemed it “very odd” that a respectable and high status anthropologist would visit a lowly squatters’ quarter. As de Regt aptly observes, race still matters in Yemen, despite the legal ban on racialized categories. Therefore, in order to evaluate shifts in social positioning with respect to gender, one must also consider overlapping racial ideologies. Otherwise women’s strategies for surmounting the inferior status that their racial and ethnic identities have been assigned in Yemen are (inadvertently) rendered insignificant.

Furthermore, the health care project in Hodeida apparently trained a substantial number of *akhdam* women. ‘The Dutch project is only training *akhdam*,’ some remarked. In contrast to my research in `Abs, I encountered very few *akhdam* women who were trained as *murshidat*. Such training afforded formerly excluded women an entrée into mainstream society. De Regt’s study therefore documents a significant achievement by a group that typically is discounted by many Yemenis and outside researchers alike. Why then is discussing race relations more difficult than

discussing gender relations? In my current work with undergraduates and community researchers, we are using oral history techniques to document African Americans' pursuit of freedom from enslavement. We research, record and analyze oral traditions in families whose ancestors were enslavers and those whose ancestors were enslaved, including those who assisted the runaways. Our aim is to integrate different perspectives on the highly controversial topic of slavery into the public memory record of American history. Similarly, such approaches can be used to collect various Yemeni views, whether on historical and cultural identities or on traditional building skills for a development project.

De Regt's multiple viewpoints approach to health care development is a thought-provoking addition to studies on the Yemeni Tihama. Editing undoubtedly will remove repetitions and correct syntax (p. 36, fn. 4); typos (p. 164); and such undesired phraseology as "childbirth was not scaring" (p.178). Once published, de Regt's research should contribute to the analysis of social and economic advance of underclass citizens in Yemen and elsewhere, especially if revisions also include an examination of overlapping gender and racial categories. In societies as multiculturally diverse as Yemen, an accurate portrayal of social change necessitates exploring both gender and race with persons who have negotiated both those boundaries.

Marta Colburn's book is available through Stacey International (www.stacey-international.co.uk) or amazon.com.uk. She has two other publications, one on gender in Yemen and another on democratization and development in Yemen. Both of these books are published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, a German non-profit organization and distributed through Ulrike.Esser@fes.de.

Marina de Regt is seeking a publisher for her study. Her current e-mail address is marina.deregt@wxs.nl.

Delores Walters is a former AIYS and Fulbright fellow. In 1992-93 she received an AIYS fellowship for her research on, "Women and Social Transformation in the Republic of Yemen: The Interrelation of Social Status, Race and Gender. In the 1996-97 competition she received an award for the production of a video-documentary, "Murshidat: Female Primary Healthcare Workers Transforming Society in Yemen." The video-documentary is distributed by Penn State Multimedia Sales (<<http://www@mediasales.psu.edu>>).

Dr. Walters is an assistant professor at Northern Kentucky University, Institute for Freedom Studies—Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy. She is also a Community Research Specialist at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Fellowship Narratives - U.S. Citizens

Every year AIYS conducts a fellowship competition for US citizens. All fellows, upon the completion of their research or study in Yemen, submit a narrative report. In this issue we are publishing a small selection of narratives from past US fellows of AIYS: Michelle Lamprakos, Kareem Kysia, and Krista Lewis.

AIYS fellowships are made possible through a grant from the US Department of State, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Michelle Lamprakos
AIYS Fellow 2001-2002

Title: "Sana'a, Yemen: Tradition and Modernity in a World Heritage City"

With the assistance of a grant from AIYS, I conducted preliminary research in Sana'a for my proposed dissertation (from October 12, 2002 to November 2, 2002). The trip was invaluable on many counts. As I noted in my proposal, there has been no major study of the conservation effort in Sana'a. Ron Lewcock, the former UNESCO coordinator for the Campaign to Save Old Sana'a, provided me with numerous contacts. While in Sana'a, I met many of these individuals, some of whom are still involved in conservation. They were able to reconstruct for me the history of the campaign and the subsequent development of conservation efforts in the city. I was also able to obtain several reports and theses on conservation and building practice that would not have been available to me in the US.

My research confirmed a close link between conservation and the development of architectural taste and building practice. Tours of the old and new sectors of the city, often in the company of my contacts, provided numerous examples of hybrid forms. At one end of the spectrum are local revisions of what is locally called the "Egyptian international style," that is, the incorporation of "traditional" elements or imagery into an imported constructive system. In some cases, in particular the villas of the Hadda district, masons trained in the old style layered patterned brick veneer onto concrete frames designed by engineers. At the other end of the spectrum there is what my contacts called the "evolving traditional," where masons incorporate imported materials and

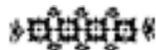
techniques into prevailing practice. These cases illustrate the persistence and evolution of traditional building practice and, in some cases, the adaptation of the mason to a new work context in which he carries out the directives of an architect, engineer, or contractor. The changing role and perspective of the mason can be traced across two generations, with sons trained in the traditional manner but carrying out projects on engineered, concrete constructive systems.

These various permutations have been affected, directly or indirectly, by the conservation effort and the accompanying perception of local architecture as a source of pride. The old city appears to serve as a kind of mirror in which the largely unsatisfactory experiments in urbanization and western-style housing are reflected and assessed. The Old City has come to be increasingly valued in monetary terms. The result is less than desirable in the eyes of many conservation planners and practitioners, leading to the sale, rental or even demolition of houses and the spread of commercial activities into residential areas. In contrast to many other places where officials have seized upon conservation as a way to attract investors, in Sana'a—perhaps because of financial constraints—official discourse emphasizes the need to "protect" the delicate physical and social fabric from the very processes that conservation helped set in motion.

In conclusion, the trip confirmed that my proposed dissertation topic is not only feasible, but will be able to draw on a rich and multi-layered context. It is also timely, in light of a draft conservation law that was being developed. Will the law be modeled after western examples, which have tended to reify historic districts? Or will it be informed by the observation of one of its authors that "cultural heritage" is a borrowed term that does not really apply to a built environment

that continues to provide shelter, and social and spiritual sustenance?

Michelle Lamprakos is a trained architect and a graduate student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture.



Kareem Kysia

AIYS Fellow 2000-2001

Title: "Who's Developing Who? Development, Modernization and Gender in the Republic of Yemen"

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Broadly construed, my study explored the effects of transnational development aid on Yemeni society. A second part of my project was an ethnographic analysis of development personnel working in Yemen. To accomplish this, I focused on educational development programs funded by international organizations in Yemen. In reference to this I conducted in-depth interviews with a variety of personnel involved in educational development in Yemen. These interviews included personnel working for the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, human rights workers, private consultants in education, various non-governmental organizations active in Yemen, and employees of the Ministry of Education (including teachers, directors, and project managers). In addition, I did site visits and interviews with World Bank/Ministry of Education personnel working on the Basic Education Expansion Project, Educational Reform Investment Project, and (as part of those projects) personnel at the Teacher Training Institute in Sana'a.

A second part of my study investigated the current state of primary education in Yemen. As part of this work I did school observations in Sana'a, Hadhramaut, and Hudeida. In Sana'a I conducted observations at the Jamal Jameela, Umm Salamah, Rabia Alawiyya, Al-Quds, Al-Jeel Jadeed, Al-

Shaheed Kibsi, and Jamal Abdul Nasser primary schools. I conducted in-depth classroom observations at the Jamal Abdul Nasser school (it was impossible for me, as a man, to observe at the girl's schools). I was able to interview teachers and directors at these schools through my contacts with the school inspection division of the Ministry of Education.

Through in-depth interviews and participant observations I understood the processes of educational development in Yemen. Specifically, I was able to trace out how large-scale development programs are planned, set in motion, and completed. Development is often understood as being something that is done to the Third World from outside. Although it is important to understand the role that the center plays in affecting the periphery, it is also important to understand how the periphery is taking an active part in both resisting and enabling that development. As part of my research I hoped to understand the debates that form in Yemen over development and the ways in which both individual Yemenis as well as officials contribute to it. I conducted three workshops in Sana'a that focused on Yemeni perceptions of development organizations. This, in conjunction with living in Yemen for one year, allowed me to gauge Yemeni perceptions on development and the differences.

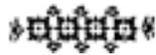
Interviews with government officials and international personnel working on development in Yemen, allowed me to trace out the debates and manoeuvrings that take place in order for development work to be done. Moreover, I was able to understand the motivations and beliefs of development workers themselves. Through this work I hope to contribute useful insights into international development that will help future projects offer sustainable and culturally sensitive change.

Preliminary findings from this study suggest that educational development in Yemen has come a long way but much still needs to be done. Specifically, the government of Yemen needs to develop clear goals and programs that they wish to implement. Currently, international organizations feel there is little internal planning in Yemen around educational development. As such, it is often the case that international organizations suggest, develop, and fund programs they would like to see implemented rather than programs that are developed from within Yemen. An

integral part of sustainable development is building the capacity of host countries to implement and maintain their own development projects. Although Yemen is moving in this direction a more sustained effort is needed to bring Yemen to the point where outside intervention is minimal.

A second preliminary suggestion deals with international organizations and their personnel. Often times the “experts” in educational development who are recruited have little to no experience in Yemen. These experts are brought to Yemen for short periods of time (such as one to two months) and from that base of experience develop projects and make suggestions for the future of Yemen. In order to develop culturally sensitive and high impact projects, the personnel working on those projects need to have a firm grasp of Yemeni culture and history. As such, experts need to be recruited from people who have spent extended time in Yemen or personnel need to be assigned to Yemen for extended periods of time.

Kareem Kysia is a graduate student at the University of Chicago with the Committee on Human Development.



Krista A. Lewis
AIYS Fellow 2000-2001
Title: “A Himyarite Estate and Its Landscape”
(In collaboration with T. J. Wilkinson)

One of the recent goals of the Oriental Institute Project for the Archaeology of Yemeni Terraced Agriculture was to record in detail the agricultural system of a Himyarite estate in the Wadi Shalalah area. This study area, located approximately 8 km northeast of the modern city of Yarim, is an approximately 5 by 5 km block of land focused on the wide intermontane valley at the head of the Wadi Shalalah, a long fertile wadi with perennial running water that drains to the southeast. Research and mapping in the Shalalah study area was conducted in February and July 2001, and in April 2002.

Archaeological survey in the Shalalah area was

conducted in the valley, wadi, and in the surrounding mountains. This program of survey, along with interviews of locals, has revealed a number of ancient habitation sites and a wealth of ancient agricultural features and intact fragments of an important Himyarite road system. The entire study area has been systematically and intensively surveyed, and soil and carbon samples have been taken from agricultural features in the area. In addition to the archaeological survey and mapping, we have recorded local names for these sites and features, as well as local interpretations of the archaeological landscape. All these elements have contributed to a rewarding program of research in this area.

The valley at the head of the Wadi Shalalah is a fertile plain greater than a square kilometer in area that remains green and cultivable even through the dry season. The most distinctive archaeological feature of this area is a massive Himyarite wall, Harra Haqi, which is over one half kilometer in length, and bisects the valley into upstream and downstream portions. This valley does not have a single name, but rather locals have separate designations for the parts of the valley to the east and west of this wall, despite the fact that geographically they can be considered as a single unit.

The western, upstream part of this valley is known locally as Qa al-Tabl, or Valley of the Drum, while the eastern part of the valley is called Mataran. An intricate system of ancient agricultural features is concentrated in Qa al-Tabl, including at least one dam, a number of monumental retaining walls, and a series of canals. Below Harra Haqi, in Mataran, we have been unable to locate any traces of ancient agricultural features, although some locals claim that one of the canals from Qa al-Tabl passed beneath the cross valley wall and into Mataran.

The major dam of the system, Sedd Bab al-Salaba, is located at the mouth of a small wadi that drains into the west end of Qa al-Tabl. The dam is now breached, but its construction style is evident. The dam was a thick, double wall construction, with a rock cut sluice on the north side. According to locals, the water from this dam was sent out into the canal system of Qa al-Tabl to water the fields in the dry season between October and March. In the rainy season the fields of this valley were irrigated by the same system of canals,

but with the water coming from a second wadi that drains into Qa al-Tabl from the southwest. There may have been a small check dam, Sedd Balasah, in a small tributary ravine to this second wadi, but no conclusive evidence of this was found.

With the assistance of local farmers we were able to map the canal system in Qa al-Tabl using hand held GPS units. The canals are being damaged by farm machinery, but we were able to discern the location of many major canals by the presence of rubble alignments and, in some cases, buried but seemingly intact segments of canal masonry. We hope to return to this area to excavate at least one of the intact canals, which could contribute greatly to our understanding of the system. Such an excavation must be undertaken after harvest when there are no crops in the fields and the work would not interfere with the needs of the local landowners and farmers. We fear, however, that due to continued agricultural development, in the near future there will be no remaining examples of such canals to be investigated.

In addition to dams, canals, and the major cross-valley wall of Harra Haqi, we also recorded three major ancient agricultural walls in the secondary wadi southwest of Qa al-Tabl. These walls appear to have functioned as large, valley bottom, soil retaining walls, and they are of more formal construction than simple terrace walls. These walls probably also functioned to help direct rainy season wadi flow into the Qa al-Tabl canal system. Local names for these features were given as Harra Dhi Wusada, Harra Musaidda, and Harra Birian.

Twenty archaeological sites have been recorded in the Shalalah area. Most of these sites date to the Himyarite to late Islamic periods, but two Bronze Age sites and some sites of unidentifiable date have been documented as well. We also have received radiocarbon date results for a terraced field in the Shalalah area, placing it in the eleventh to sixteenth century AD.

The study of the ancient agricultural systems of the Shalalah valley has been very rewarding, exceeding expectations with its intact and coherent nature. The

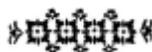
biggest surprise, however, has been the discovery of a segment of a major Himyarite road system running through the valley. Two surviving fragments of an ancient paved road have been recorded in the Shalalah study area, and the route of the ancient road has been mapped for an extent of approximately four kilometers by the remaining traces of the road and the advice of local informants.

The road apparently entered the Shalalah valley from the north, passed through it, and then ascended over a mountain range to the south. Local legend asserts that this was part of the royal road between the ancient capital cities of Marib and Zafar. Further research outside of the Shalalah study block seems to confirm that this road did indeed reach Zafar.

South of Qa al-Tabl, on the ascent to a mountain pass between two high peaks, a paved section of road survives, about 25 meters long. It is paved with darkly varnished basalt stones in a series of wide, low steps, bound by an edge alignment of stones. According to a local informant, not more than 20 years ago the stepped stone paving of this road was intact all the way over the mountain pass and down the other side into the plain to the south. It was later bulldozed to provide passage for cars over the same route, although it seems doubtful that this modern version of the road is in fact any better than the ancient.

The second surviving section of ancient road has been mentioned previously, but in an agricultural context. The major cross-valley wall, Harra Haqi, seems to have served as a roadway as well as a soil and water management feature. This is not unsurprising as it is also regularly used today as a vehicle route across the valley. The recognition that these features may have served, at least in some cases, as transportation routes and possibly directional markers, opens up many possibilities for reinterpretation of ancient features recorded elsewhere in the Dhamar survey area outside of this study block.

Krista Lewis is a graduate student at the University of Chicago, in the Department of Anthropology.



The Yemeni Curators-in-Residence Fellowship Program Research Report Abstracts

Christopher M. Edens

Since 1992, AIYS has offered an annual competition to Yemeni nationals for research; the fellowships support scholarly investigations in Yemen. The program is funded by AIYS' program grant from the US State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The competition is announced in the early autumn of each year, with the deadline for submissions currently December 31. The completed applications are then sent to the US for the consideration of the fellowship committee. The applicants are informed of the committee's decisions in May, when the Yemeni Fellows may collect their research funds. Each fellow then has a year to complete his or her research, and to submit a report.

Abd al-Hakim Tahir al-Hamdani

Women's inheritance: between text and practice

Islam guarantees inheritance by women, by the principles laid down in the Qur'an (for example, Nisa' verse 10 identifies the inheritance shares that sons and daughters and other family members are entitled to receive under various circumstances). Yemeni law also provides for inheritance by women, and protection of other rights. Yet women routinely face customary and legal repression (e.g. minimal place in workplace, education, requirements of husband's permission to work and travel; the relative ease of divorce), and routinely do not receive their allotted inheritance.

This study, based on 19 cases of disputed women's inheritance (9 cases in the urban areas of Sanaa and Aden, 10 cases in rural areas of Dali' and Ibb governorates), examines the means by which male inheritors deprive their female relatives of proper inheritance, and the means by which the women seek to claim their due shares of inherited property. The study relies on in-depth interviews and group discussions, in April-September 2000, with the family members, legal advisors, and magistrates involved in these cases. The central actors in these cases—the women claiming their inheritance—were typically over 40 years of age, having waited for the help of their adult sons to dispute their brothers' diversion of the inheritance due them.

The study found a number of recurring patterns in the cases. Male members of most families refused to honor women's—sisters, mothers, daughters—inheritance rights, and indeed often actively attempted to defraud women of their rightful inheritance. Brothers

might deceive their sisters into ceding the inheritance due them, or might seize their sisters' property on the pretext of managing it to meet the sister's financial obligations; men might confer on their sons the inheritance portions rightfully belonging to their mother or grandmother; a father might sell part or all of his daughter's inheritance portions to his sons; various people might pressure female inheritors to sell or cede their allotments.

Although this was common practice, most women did not take their male family members to court to press their claims of inheritance. Legal costs might often be prohibitively high, sometimes exceeding the value of the inheritance. Moreover lawyers, court officials, and other authority figures sometimes pressured female claimants to grant usufruct of their inheritance, or gained power of attorney and then embezzled the apportionment.

Instead of seeking judicial redress, women most commonly tried to solve inheritance disputes inside the family. Some women succeeded in gaining their allotted inheritance in this way, but only by granting brothers or other male family members long-term (12-40 years) usufruct of the property. Other women settled for a smaller portion than was rightfully theirs, received inheritance portions falsely reduced in value, or failed entirely to obtain any of their rightful inheritance portion. In seeking to obtain their rightful inheritance portions within the family, most women suffered from a disadvantageous ignorance of their legal and religious rights. Most of the women acting on their own behalf were illiterate, were content with their brothers' assurances and agreements regarding inheritance portions, and then waited for their

brothers' decision actually to distribute inheritance portions. The situation was particularly acute in the case of minor female legatees, who could easily be done out their proper inheritance in the absence of sons or a husband to act on their behalf, or the usufruct of whose property could easily be assumed by a brother or other male family members assigned as their guardians.

The study concludes that legal protections are inadequate for most or even all female legatees to withstand the pressures and scheming of their male relatives. As a result, the distribution of inheritance is seldom in accordance with Shari'a law, and the provisions and enforcement of the Yemeni legal system are not sufficient to prevent blocking or defrauding of women's inheritance rights. For these reasons, the author recommends: using all available means to enforce the Islamic laws of inheritance; conducting workshops to showcase the problem of inheritance fraud, and the strategies of fraud; publishing casebooks of rulings and penalties in cases of inheritance fraud; and encouraging more research on the subject and subvening students intending to specialize in this aspect of the law.

Fatima Humayd

Female circumcision in Yemen

Whereas circumcision of boys is a standard Islamic practice, the practice of circumcising girls is followed most notably in northeast Africa. Folk wisdom holds that the practice cools women (including their sexual passions) in these hot regions. Adherents of the procedure gain a measure of religious endorsement from several *'ahadith* (e.g. circumcision is a requirement [*summa*] for men but a noble deed [*makruma*] for women), but others object to the practice by noting that the Prophet neither circumcised his own daughters nor recommended its practice to his followers.

Female circumcision is found in certain sections of Yemen, notably in the Tihama and several other areas, and notably among the *akhdam*. This documentation of the practice focused on several towns of the Tihama, listed from N to S: the towns of Harad, Midi, °Abs, Bayt al-Faqih, and Zabid. The

practice is far from universal within Tihama. Of the study's informants, 33% of those in °Abs, 27% in Harad and Midi, and 13% in Zabid and Bayt al-Faqih report circumcising their daughters; the *akhdam* account for the great majority of these cases.

The procedure takes two different forms, one in which a large portion of the clitoris is removed, the other in which all external genitalia are removed. The former procedure is far more common in Tihama than the latter, which is practiced mainly among *akhdam* in °Abs. The procedure is performed on girls during a morning of the first week of the first month after their mothers have sufficiently recovered from delivery, and is carried out by a village woman of good repute equipped with a razor, a sewing needle, an alcohol antiseptic, cotton wool, and a poultice mix (which might include coffee, ginger, saffron, turmeric, and egg yolk). The mother holds her baby daughter during the operation, after which the wound is packed with the poultice, and the removed parts are buried in a small hole dug into the floor of the house. The mother then hosts family and friends at a celebratory lunch featuring distribution of meat to the neighborhood.

The practice carries potentially severe health consequences, for which accidentally cutting a blood vessel, and covering the wound with dirty packing are the most common immediate causes. The overwhelming majority of informants (85%) report persistent hemorrhaging following the operation, and mortality is extremely high—according to the study's informants 52% of the circumcised infants die within several months of the operation (the informants attribute these death mostly to general weakness after the operation; the author relates them directly to hemorrhaging and unsanitary conditions). Surviving infants often suffer from blockage of urine, nervous shock, and infection, these factors introducing longer term health complications including damage to the urinary tract and scar tissue; 84% of the informants experience complications arising from the operation before or after marriage.

Most women hold ambivalent opinions about the operation, the conflict arising from an approved religious and customary practice clashing with the obvious difficulties of the operation. In contrast, men are much more likely to endorse the practice.

Sa'ïd Muhammad Qa'id al-Makhlafi
Women in political parties and associations in
Yemen: a comparative analytic study

When Yemen unified in 1990 and the two ruling groups in north and south opened the doors to political competition, over 40 political parties and organizations emerged to take up the challenge. And although a law of May 16, 1991 defining valid parties and organizations reduced this number to 17, the political arena remained a competitive one. Women, who have the franchise in Yemen, are potentially important to the success of any party in gaining its goals. This study addresses the integration of women in party ideology, activities, organizations, leadership, and election campaigning. Based on a review of party publications and interviews with female party leaders, the study examines the place of women specifically in the General People's Congress (GPC), the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), the Yemeni Group for Reform (Islah), the Nasirite party, and the Ba'ath (Renaissance) Party.

Two of the parties—the Nasirites and the Ba'athists—have roots in the wider Arab nationalist and socialist movements of 1950s and 60s. Two of the parties—the GPC and the YSP—formed as the ruling political faction in the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen respectively, the GPC founded 1982 and the YSP in the late 70s (south). After unification the two continued, somewhat transformed, as a ruling and a minority party respectively. Islah solidified in 1990 as an expression of the emerging Islamicist (Salafi) movement, having its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood and various Islamicist thinkers. After unification Islah aligned itself with GPC in opposition to YSP (despite the latter's more liberal and nationalist incarnation).

Yemeni nationalist and socialist movements in the past emphasized national and liberationist success, leaving women's issues a secondary place, the 1965 pact to liberate women from traditional limits notwithstanding. Left wing socialists provided a partial exception to this generalization. The southern constitution of 1970 explicitly recognized the equal rights and responsibilities of women under the law, and provided for political, economic, and social equality; family law 1 of 1974 stipulated equality in marriage, divorce, and other domestic matters. The

YSP maintained this attitude during the decade following unification, affirming general principles of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, color, political or social identity, and explicitly affirming women's political, economic, social, and cultural activities, and women's right to vote and to stand for election. The other parties presented vague and general rhetoric on this subject. Examination of party literature from 1997 shows the Nasirites stating that no woman should be deprived of her legal, social, and political rights (without explicitly identifying those rights), and that women have a role to play in national development; the Ba'athist literature also stated simply that women have a role in national development. GPC and Islah literature both emphasized the primarily domestic roles of women, and awarded secondary status to women's participation in national economic and political developments. In sum, party ideology and rhetoric generally glosses over women's political and social roles, despite the occasional rhetoric.

Women's place in party organization is equally superficial. Islah maintains a separate women's division, which should properly be seen as a form of ghettoization. But women in fact form a very small proportion of membership in all five parties. Looking at an aggregate sample of 12,975 members, women comprise merely two percent of party membership, with female membership in individual parties ranging from 1% (in Islah) to 4% (in GPC). Women in top positions of party leadership are equally rare, running from 0% (Islah) to 6% (the Nasirites). The paucity of women in leadership roles is illustrated by membership of governing party bodies: in the GPC, 5.5% of the Standing Committee are women, and one woman sat on the General Committee (Political Office) in July 1999; women formed merely 5% of Islah's Consultative Body in 1997, 5% of the Nasirites' Central Committee in 1999, and 2% of YSP's Central Committee in 1999.

Parties also rarely put up women as candidates in elections: in election to the Council of Deputies (301 members), the five parties presented to the voters a total of nine women in 1993 and five in 1997. [Editor's note: The study did not address female candidates in local elections, where the numbers of female candidates have been substantially higher, but dropping significantly with each election.]

This comparative study points to a wide

separation between party rhetoric and party action regarding women. Indeed, the women in positions of authority (party or government) may be seen largely as window-dressing. The distance between rhetoric and action has potentially severe consequences for Yemen as an emerging democracy, given the connection between genuine women's participation in civic life and availability of international aid and loans.

Naziha Shamsan

High fertility and the use of family planning in Yemeni society

The significant social changes that Yemen experienced following the 1962 revolution upset the existing demographic balance between fertility and mortality rates. By the 1990s, the population growth rate was 3.7% per annum, and the population of Yemen had risen from 6.3 million in 1970 to 11.3 million in 1988, and to 16 million in 1995. Recognizing the social and economic undesirability of such a rapid population growth, the government and various foundations began in 1986 to take action to stem the growth rate, and government decree no. 3 of 1988 established family planning services. However, these actions have yet to make a noticeable impact.

This study addresses women's and men's attitudes towards, and actions regarding, family sizes, birth intervals and various means of birth control. The research, conducted in May 2000, is based on questionnaires of 21 questions answered by women from 80 families in Ta'izz (the urban sample) and 80 families from the north of Ta'izz governorate (the rural sample). Men from 40 additional families in each of these two areas answered a questionnaire of 9 questions.

The women in these samples are mostly still in their child-bearing years (80-85% are 21-40 years old), whereas one-third of the men are over 40 years old. Roughly half the women and men in the two samples are illiterate; the remainder had attained some degree of schooling (less than 20% of the women had completed high school and 10% had attended university). Illiteracy is significantly higher in the rural samples. Women's occupations fall in a narrow range, the great majority (four-fifths of the rural sample, two-

thirds of the urban) working at home and another 16% working as teachers. Average family income is low in both samples: YR 9000/month (\$56) for rural families and YR 13,000/month (\$81) for urban families.

Early marriage is typical for both women and men. About three-quarters of the urban and rural women were married by 20 years of age, only 2-3% waiting until over age 30. Men were somewhat older at marriage, 50-60% marrying by 20 years of age, and the remainder by 35. Educated women and men married somewhat later in life than their illiterate counterparts. Family size varies with residential location, rural families on the average having one child more than urban families. Married men over the age of 40 in the rural setting had 5.5 children, in the urban setting 4.3 children (according to 1994 statistics, a Yemeni woman produced on average 7.4 children during her reproductive life time). Residential location influences men's ideal family size: two-fifths of the rural men with an opinion on the subject want at least seven children, whereas two-thirds of the urban men with an opinion want no more than six children. Moreover, one-fifth of the urban men do not want to decide whether to sire more children (leaving this decision to their wives) but only 5% of the rural men take this attitude. In keeping with the difference in family size and male philoprogenitive tendencies, rural and urban women report significantly different birth-spacing, with only 10% of rural women spacing child-birth at least three years apart, but half the urban women reporting this spacing.

Use of birth control among the women is strongly affected by both residential location and education level: in the two samples (rural and urban respectively) 12-19% of the educated women but only 0-6% of the illiterate women report using birth control in the past, and 6-20% educated women and 4-10% of the illiterate women said that they were using birth control at the time of the study. Preferences in the methods of birth control also differed by residential location. Reliance on lactation to suppress ovulation was used by half the rural women but only a quarter of the urban women. Roughly one-third of the two samples used oral contraceptives; nearly one-third of the urban women used a coil, but this method was far less popular among rural women. Other methods less frequently practiced include tracking ovulation (both

rural and urban samples), tubal ligation (urban sample), and folk methods and astrology (rural sample; these are not described in the report). The majority of urban women, but only a small proportion of the rural women report no difficulties obtaining contraceptive devices. The majority of women in both samples reporting various complications when using contraceptive devices (including nausea and headaches, mood disturbances, bleeding, pregnancy with the coil). Women report diverse reasons for using birth control. Most generally, women under the age of 40 years seek to space their children, this desire strengthening with age, while women over 40 years of age seek to prevent additional children. More specifically, women seek to avoid health problems associated with pregnancy and delivery, want to gain space for raising existing children, to enjoy the economic benefits of fewer children, and to pursue work outside the house (the order of these reasons differs for the urban and rural samples, but the latter two economic reasons are last for both samples).

Men's use of contraception also varies with residential and educational status: 40% of the rural sample and 60% of the urban sample, only one-quarter of each sample being illiterate, report using a means of birth control. The men who do not want to use contraception take that attitude for various reasons, the most common being religious objections to the practice; other reasons include inconvenience, a sense of fatalism, dissatisfaction with the available means of contraception, and the side-effects of the available means of contraception.

The study concludes with recommendations for a national policy to limit population growth. Such a policy, devised at the national level and implemented at the governorate and *nahiya* levels, must recognize the links between residence, education, dissemination of information and social services, and other factors that play a role in high birth rates. The campaign should include a number of components, among them: launching public awareness campaigns about Yemen's population problem and its effects, the campaigns to include the social and economic consequences of large families, related health issues (e.g. the difficulties associated with early and late pregnancies, the impact of large families on children's health), the concept of family planning, and the use of birth control devices;

enlisting Islamic authorities in these public awareness campaigns; increasing the availability of birth control devices; implementing health programs for women and children; setting legal limits on early marriages (e.g. at 18 years); and launching effective educational (literacy, vocational) programs for women.

'Anis Ahmad Tayi'

Gender roles presented in basic education text books in Yemen

The Yemeni revolutions—September 1962 and October 1963—undertook to change traditional relations between the sexes. In this endeavor education plays a fundamental role: text books and teachers help shape the social, economic, political, and cultural roles of men and women in the next generation. While some changes have been accomplished, much remains to be done, and in 2002 the Ministry of Education announced a campaign to improve and develop primary education, with special attention given to female students. In the latter context, this study examines the gender roles presented in the text and illustrations of 22 government text books in five subjects (Arabic language, geography, science, social studies, and history).

The analysis identified 18 role settings—including familial, political, religious, educational, social, administration, professional, legislative, military, scientific, etc.—presented in the text books. Female exemplars personified these roles in less than 10% of instances, rating most highly in familial (24%) educational and professional (10%), and administrative (7%) roles, but not appearing at all in nearly half of the role settings (business, health, sports, tourism, military, legislation, invention).

The analysis also identified 15 specific roles for each gender, among them family figures (father/mother, son/daughter, brother/sister, uncle/aunt, student), scientist, farmer, soldier, doctor, ruler (king/queen, president etc), poet, judge, worker, teacher, and professional. The texts presented men in all of these roles, most frequently as ruler, followed in order (for roles with at least 100 instances) by son, father, student, teacher, soldier, doctor, poet, and scientist. In contrast, women are most commonly presented as

mother and student (the only two roles with at least 100 instances), followed in order of frequency by daughter, ruler, teacher, sister, doctor, scientist, aunt, and poet, and portrayed as no other role.

The illustrations accompanying the texts reveal a similar bias. As measured by area of illustration, men occupy three-quarters, and females one-quarter, of the illustrations; the illustrations show men (in order of frequency) as professionals, soldiers, farmers, fathers, teachers, administrators, sons, kings, and judges, but women as mothers, daughters, administrators, nurses, and queens.

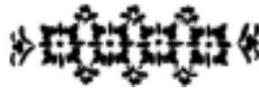
The analysis also assessed the texts for gendered valuation of 19 different desirable personal qualities, e.g. becoming educated, faith and piety, leadership, compassion, scientific invention. The texts recommended to women these qualities in extremely divergent proportions (0-89% of instances for each quality). The texts present two qualities—attention to family care, and mercy and compassion—as desirable female qualities (women accounting for 89% of instances for each); service to others and gentleness are also relatively female qualities (women in 33% and 25% of instances). Women appear as occasional exemplars of becoming educated, giving sincere advice, leadership, craftsmanship, heroism, creativity, piety, and scientific invention (each less than 10% of instances), but did not appear in connection with

productivity, trustworthiness, resistance and struggle, intelligent behavior, and fair play.

The analysis also points out that although Arabic contains feminine forms for various professions and roles (e.g. historian, educator, director, citizen), and also feminine forms of imperatives used in textbook instructions to students, nevertheless the texts use only the masculine form of these words in the great majority of instances (91% in aggregate, 87-99% in the different class subjects), thus appearing to address themselves largely to male students.

The study concludes with recommendations that: (1.) special effort be made to present girls and women in non-traditional roles (e.g. manufacturing, agriculture, engineering, medicine, technology, education) in the text and illustration of school books; (2.) that school books present girls and women in a wider range of valued personal qualities and in equal measure with boys and men; and (3.) that school books adopt gender-neutral language in presenting subject matter and in addressing themselves to students.

For further information on fellowships for citizens of Yemen see the announcement in this issue. For earlier research abstract reports see: Yemen Update 44 (2002) pp. 52-53.



Recent AIYS Fellows

Fellowships Awarded in the 2003-2004 Competition

A. Competition for U.S. Citizens

Bonsu, Aja Cittrece (Graduate Student, University of Texas at Austin), Arabic language study.

Buchman, David Meyer Dr. (Faculty, Hanover College), "Longitudinal Study of the Sufis of Yemen."

Corstange, Daniel M. (Graduate Student, University of Michigan), Arabic language study and feasibility study: "Tribes, Believers, and Partisans: 'Traditional' and 'Modern' Politics in Yemen."

DeCarlo, Lindsay Anne (Graduate Student, University of Chicago), Arabic language study.

Eddins, Quinn W. (Graduate Student, Harvard University), Arabic language study and dissertation feasibility study: "Childhood Language Learning and Cultural Practice in Sana'a."

Liebhaber, Samuel (Graduate Student, University of California – Berkeley), "New Trends in Poetry and Song from al-Mahra."

Mahoney, Daniel E. (Graduate Student, University of Chicago), Arabic language study.

Ransom, Marjorie (Georgetown University: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy), "Arab Women's Heritage: Researching the Disappearing Tradition of Silver Jewelry in Yemen."

Yadav, Stacey S, Philbrick (Graduate Student, University of Pennsylvania), "Islamist Parliamentary Politics and the Remaking of Democracy: Hizb Allah and al-Islah in Comparative Perspective."

B. Competition for Citizens of Yemen

Al-Ghauri, Aziz Abdulbaqi (Sana'a University, Graduate Student), "The Ma'afar Project: An Archaeological and Ethnological Study (a joint project with three participants): The Western Ma'afar."

Ahmed, Naji Abduh (Sultan, Sana'a University, Faculty of Agriculture), "Studies on Some Fungi Leaf Spots of the Potato Crop."

Alhag, Mohey Aldean Ali M. (Dr.; Sana'a University, Faculty of Agriculture, Dept. of Agricultural

Economy and Extension), "An Analytical Study Project of the Economic Variables Affecting the Production and Marketing of Yemeni Coffee."

Al-Hejri, Kamal Ali Mohammad (Ministry of Education, Teacher) "Yemeni Folk Poetry – Life's Experiences."

Al-Maqtari, Mahmoud Ahmad Thabet (Dr.; Ibb University, Faculty of Arts-Department of English), "Promoting Democratic Values Among University Students of English."

Al-Sunaidi, Mohammad Ali (College of Education, Saber Lahej, University of Aden), "Field Survey of Chemical Pesticides Used for the Control of Agricultural Pests in Lahej, Abyan, Hadhramaut, Taiz and Dhale Governorates (Toxic and Risk Classifications According to WHO Criteria)."

Bahaj, Ashar Ahmed Saeed (University of Aden, Education College), "Street Children in the Main Cities of Yemen: Study in Human Rights Geography."

Fare'a, Aref Mohammad Abdu Allah (University of Ibb), "Yemeni Texts on the Wahabi Movement in the Arabian Peninsula."

Ghalib, Sami Sharaf Mohamed (Sana'a University, Graduate Student), "The Ma'afar Project (a joint project with three participants): The Eastern Ma'afar."

Garallah, Abdurahman Hasan (Dr.; University of Sana'a, Faculty of Arts, Dept. of Archaeology), "The Style of Mosques Still Standing in Yemen."

Hambalaha, Hassan Ahmed Abdu (University of Aden, Faculty of Education-Geography Section), "Hydrochemistry and Pollution in the Taiz Basin."

Naseem, Alzubair Ayash (Dr.; University of Aden, Faculty of Art), "Improvement of Census Questionnaires, Birth, and Death Certificates."

Radman, Hayat (University of Aden, Graduate Student, Geography), "Spatial Relationships of the Female Workforce in Yemen."

Saeed, Bashir Abdu al-Rageeb (Sana'a University, Graduate Student), "The Ma'afar Project (a joint project with three participants): The Middle Ma'afar."

AIYS Fellowship Program For Study and Research in Yemen

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

Competition for US Scholars

Eligibility for this program is limited to US citizens who are enrolled as full-time graduate students in recognized degree programs or who are post-graduate researchers. Awards will be made on the basis of merit as determined by a review committee of scholars from AIYS member universities. All funds currently available or pending come from US government sources and may be awarded only to US citizens. These fellowships are fully taxable after legitimate deductions for professional expenses. There is no restriction as to field or discipline, but project funds may only be used to support research costs incurred in Yemen. Projects are not normally funded above \$10,000. Applicants may need to secure additional funding for other expenses or for extended research periods, but in the case of multiple awards AIYS reserves the right to modify or cancel its fellowship offer. A full statement of conditions governing fellowships may be obtained from the AIYS office or the AIYS website. Researchers whose projects will take them to more than one country are advised to consider applying to CAORC's Multi-Country Fellowship Program as well as to AIYS.

General Fellowship Program: Proposals are invited from graduate and post-graduate scholars for feasibility studies or research projects. Collaborative or group projects are eligible for funding. It is permissible to combine Arabic language study with a research or feasibility project. Arabic language training grants provide funds for a 10-week program at one of the language centers in Sana'a and for residence at the AIYS hostel in Sana'a. These fellowships, for which all local arrangements are made through AIYS' Sana'a office, are intended to enable persons to conduct research in Yemen, and applicants should relate their intended use of fellowship funds to their present interests and to future research plans. Those desiring general Arabic language training for purposes not related to Yemen should apply to other language programs.

How to Apply

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

- a completed application form (available from AIYS administrative office and at www.aiys.org);
- a curriculum vitae;
- an application narrative consisting of:
 - (a) for applicants for Arabic language training grants: a short statement explaining their interest in Yemen.
 - (b) for all other applicants: a project description and proposed budget. Five pages suggested maximum length.

Required supporting documentation to be sent directly to AIYS by the application deadline; single copies are acceptable.

- all applicants should provide three (3) letters of recommendation;
- pre-doctoral applicants must have both undergraduate and graduate transcripts sent; recent Ph.D. recipients are encouraged to provide a graduate transcript.

Deadline for Applications

The annual deadline for receipt of applications is December 31. To be certain of consideration

applications must be complete and in the AIYS office by the deadline. This includes letters of reference and transcripts sent directly to AIYS by third parties. For further information see www.aiys.org or contact the AIYS office (AIYS, PO Box 311, Ardmore PA 19003-0311; 610-896-5412, aiys@aiys.org).

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

In order to encourage original research by Yemeni scholars in all fields of the humanities, social sciences, and sciences, the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS) may support research projects proposed by qualified researchers who are citizens of the Republic of Yemen. The deadline for receipt of completed applications is December 31, 2004.

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

*Fellowships are not available for translation or publication projects.

*As a general rule AIYS cannot consider applications from researchers who have received funding from an AIYS fellowship within the previous three years.

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

*Applicants must show qualifications for undertaking the project described in the proposal. An advanced degree is not a requirement, nor is fluency

in English. However, the application cover form must be submitted in English.

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

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

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

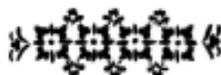
*Researchers are responsible for obtaining whatever research permission is necessary for their projects.

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

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

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

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



Mellon Research Fellowships

For Central and Eastern European Post-Doctoral Scholars in Yemen

The American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS) is pleased to invite applications for Mellon Research Fellowships in Yemen for 2005-2006. AIYS is offering two fellowships to scholars from East European and Baltic countries including Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Applicants must hold the PhD or its equivalent. They may engage in individual advanced research projects in any research field of the humanities or the social sciences involving Yemen. The fellowships are for two to three months for research to be carried out in affiliation with the AIYS center in Yemen.

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

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

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

How to Apply

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

Deadline for Applications

Applications and supporting letters (which may be sent separately) must be submitted by March 4, 2005, to the US office of AIYS in Ardmore (see page 2 in this issue).

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

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

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

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

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

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

14. List other fellowship and grant applications submitted.

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

16. Sign and date the application.

Note for Successful Applicants

Yemen requires that all foreign scholars planning to carry out research in Yemen must obtain formal permission from the agency charged with oversight of their particular discipline. Forms and information on

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

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

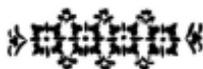
AIYS expects to notify applicants of the decision of the Committee on Fellowships in late May of 2005.

Winners of the Mellon Fellowships, 2004-2005

This is the first year that AIYS was invited to be a part of the Mellon program. The fellowships were announced during the 2003-2004 academic year, for projects in the 2004-2005 academic year; the deadline for submissions was in March 2004. The winners are:

Dr. Viktor Èerný, "The Archaeogenetics of Yemeni Populations." Institute of Archaeology, Prague, Czech Republic.

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



AIYS Publications

Please note that AIYS publications are distributed by:

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

Make check payable to MESA.

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

Items marked * are out of print.

Yemen Bibliography Series

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

Yemen Development Series

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

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

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

Sadek), 2003. ISBN 1-882557-09-3. \$15.

6. *Anthropological and Historical Studies* (edited by Lucine Taminian). Spring 2005. ISBN 1-882557-14-X.

Yemen Translation Series

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

Miscellaneous Research and Documentation Publications

1. *Ma'alim al-zira'a fi-l'Yaman (Agricultural Knowledge in Yemen)* by Yahya Al-Ansi. Sana'a: Published jointly by the Centre Français d'Études Yéménites (CFEY) and the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. Volume 1: 1998. Volume 2: 2003 (in press). Vol. 1 distributed by CEFAS (POBox

2660, Sana'a, Yemen; www.univ-aix.fr/cfey/). Vol. 2 will be available through MESA and CEFAS.

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

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

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

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

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

Videos

The Architecture of Mud, a video documentary project of Pamela Jerome and Caterina Borelli supported by an AIYS USIA/NMERTA fellowship; produced by Caterina Borelli. 1999. 52 mins. The video is available in Arabic (PAL format) or English (NTSC or PAL format). To order, contact DER Documentary Educational Resources (617-926-0491,

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

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

Qudad: Reinventing a Tradition, a video documentary project by Caterina Borelli supported by an ECA-funded AIYS fellowship. 2003. 55 mins. The video is in Arabic with English subtitles (PAL and NTSC formats). To order, contact DER Documentary Educational Resources (617-926-0491, fax 617-926-9519, docued@der.org). AIYS institutional members receive a discount on the purchase price and should place their order through the AIYS office. The video may also be rented from Anonymous Productions (917-743-5696, fax 212-226-3976).

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

New Books of Interest from Members of AIYS

Sultan Al-Qu'aiti announces the publication of the following books:

Al-Qu'aiti, Sultan Ghalib, *The Holy Cities, the Pilgrimage and the Islamic World: From the Earliest Traditions until 1925* (forthcoming in 2004).

Al-Qu'aiti, Sultan Ghalib, *The Unitarian Call: The Two States and the Birth of Saudi Arabia* (forthcoming in 2004).

He also has the following titles available:

Arabian Essays (10 pounds) and *Ta'ammulat 'An Tarikh Hadhramaut Qabl al-Islam wa fi Fajrihi* (15 pounds).

The books are available from the author:

Sultan Ghalib Al-Qu'aiti

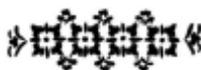
P.O. Box 54557

Jeddah 21524

Fax: 009662-6917939

Also published recently:

Al-Salami, Khadija and Hoots, Charles, *The Tears of Sheba, Tales of Survival and Intrigue in Arabia*, John Wiley and Sons, 2003. ISBN #0-470-86725-6.



Yemen Update News

Announcements

The Queen of Sheba in America

Exhibits building on the civilization of ancient Sheba and its legendary queen have traveled through Europe for the past several years. Two of them will now come to the US also, one on each coast. The information below was supplied by those responsible for the exhibits.

From October 17, 2004 – March 13, 2005 the Bowers Museum of Santa Ana, California, will feature the exhibit “Queen of Sheba: Legend and Reality...Treasures from The British Museum.” The exhibit of over 100 objects traces the fascination with the Queen of Sheba over the centuries, from ancient Southern Arabian civilization through modern times. The lecture series scheduled in conjunction with the exhibit incorporates major themes and examines specific artifacts from the galleries and explores the queen’s legend in European, Near Eastern, African, and American traditions. An extension course at UCLA will take place in February 2005. A full de-

scription of the complete program can be found at <http://www.bowers.org/sheba/sheba.html>.

From June 25, 2005 through September 18, 2005 Yemen’s stunning artistic heritage will be examined in a major international exhibition organized by Washington’s Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Drawn from the collections of the Republic of Yemen, the American Foundation for the Study of Man, the British Museum, and Dumbarton Oaks, this exhibition of approximately two hundred objects explores the unique cultural traditions of the ancient kingdoms of Yemen. It gives special emphasis to the rich artistic interaction that resulted from overland and maritime contacts linking the southern Arabian peninsula with the eastern Mediterranean, northeastern Africa, and south and southwest Asia. Information on the exhibit will be posted on the Sackler Gallery website at <http://www.asia.si.edu/>.

FRIENDS OF HADHRAMAUT



Friends of Hadhramaut is a non-profit organization that provides aid to the people of the Hadhramaut region of Yemen. It was founded to promote philanthropic, educational, and medical links between the people of Hadhramaut and Friends from overseas.

Among their many projects, the September 2003 newsletter of FOH reported that they are raising funds to build a Women’s Sewing Center in Mukalla. Amina al-Haddad, Director of the Women’s Social Welfare Society in Mukalla, runs a sewing center for women

and girls. The school teaches sewing skills to women in distressed circumstances, and the funds from the local sale of their products provide aid to their families and helps to support the center. In 1999 the Governor of Hadhramaut donated land for a new building. FOH hopes to build a facility with workshops/classrooms, offices, store, and toilets. In the future they hope to add additional rooms for literacy classes and First Aid instruction.

FOH also raises funds to purchase and ship medical equipment and supplies (such as wheelchairs, maternity and folding cots) and provides aid to primary and secondary schools. They would like to add other projects to meet the needs of the impoverished people of this region.

To become a Friend of Hadhramaut and for further information go to the FOH website at: www.hadhramaut.co.uk.

Email: hadhramaut@euphonyzone.com.

Obituaries

Ambassador David Ransom

Ambassador David Ransom died in New York City on December 4, 2003. David Michael Ransom, 65, was a Middle Eastern specialist in the Foreign Service who retired in 1997 as U.S. Ambassador to the State of Bahrain (1994-1997). Ambassador Ransom and his wife Marjorie have had a long, friendly, and fruitful association with Yemen and its people. They first came to Yemen in 1966, but stayed only a short time due to regional political complications. In 1972 he became Yemen desk officer in the State Department in Washington, DC. Several years later he returned to Yemen as deputy chief of mission at the US embassy in Yemen from 1975 – 1978.

Ambassador Ransom was a career US Diplomat, an Arabist, a loving husband and father, and a successful businessman. Among his many activities, he was an Adjunct Scholar at the Middle East Institute and he also served on the Board of Trustees at the Rock Creek International School. He is survived by

his wife Marjorie, his three daughters, Elizabeth, Katherine, and Sarah, his brother, Clifford, a son-in-law, Craig, and two grandsons, Ransom and Gabriel.

Marjorie Ransom continues their long association with Yemen. In September 6, 2003 she gave a talk at the symposium, *Windows on the Cultural Heritage of Yemen*, that was held in Washington DC. She delivered a talk titled: “Discarded Beauty: Traditional Yemeni Silver Jewelry.”

In cooperation with the Bead Museum in Washington DC, she was co-curator of an exhibition titled “Silver Speaks: Traditional Jewelry of the Middle East.”

In the 2003-2004 competition, she was awarded an AIYS Fellowship; she will return to Yemen in the fall of 2004 to conduct research on her project: “Arab Women’s Heritage: Researching the Disappearing Tradition of Silver Jewelry in Yemen.”

Nuha al-Radi

Nuha al-Radi, the Iraqi artist and diarist (*Baghdad Diaries*, first published in 1998 and reissued in May 2003 in a much enlarged edition) died in Beirut on August 30, 2004 after a battle with leukemia at age 63. The sister of AIYS Board member, Selma al-Radi, Nuha visited Yemen repeatedly and was a member of AIYS. She brought an exhibit of her work to Yemen several years ago and some of the works from that exhibit are now in the AIYS center in Sana’a.

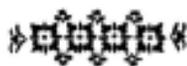
The works are on display in the entrance hall where they have delighted visitors for many years. The obituaries in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* (both published on September 7, 2004) are eloquent testimonials to Nuha’s versatile career, wide-ranging interests, and friendships. She will be greatly missed.

Nuha is survived by her mother Suad, brother Abbad, sister Selma, and aunt Naira.

Birth Announcement

Paul Zimmerman, AIYS Fellow (1996-1997 and 1998-1999 competitions) and Yelena Zora Rakic

announce the birth of a baby boy, Armando Alexander Zimmerman, on May 22, 2004.



AIYS welcomes and will print news from members and other organizations as space permits. Items for inclusion should be sent to the AIYS administrative office (see page 2 for the address).



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