

SEMINAR FOR ARABIAN STUDIES

ABSTRACTS

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THURSDAY 23 JULY 2009

Prehistory & Surveys

Chair: Jeffrey Rose (Oxford Brookes University, UK)

09:55 – Thursday – 23 July

JAGHER, Reto

Institut für Prähistorische und Naturwissenschaftliche Archäologie, Universität Basel, Basel, Switzerland

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Reto Jagher is a Research Associate at the Institute of Prehistory and Archaeological Science of the University of Basel where he obtained his PhD. He specialises in early hunter and gatherer archaeology in Europe and the Middle East. From 1989 to 2004 he was field director of the excavations of the Lower Palaeolithic site of Nadawīyah ‘Ayn Askar (central Syria). Since 2006 he has been director of the Central Oman Palaeolithic Survey (COPS).

PÜMPIN, Christine

Institut für Prähistorische und Naturwissenschaftliche Archäologie, Universität Basel, Basel, Switzerland

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Christine Pümpin holds an MSc and is a Research Associate at the Institute of Prehistory and Archaeological Science of the University of Basel. She specialised in geoarchaeology. Her professional experience in the Middle East covers Palaeolithic sites in al-Kawm (Syria) and the royal burial from the Bronze Age in Qatna Tell al-Misrife. Since 2006 she has been a full member of the Central Oman Palaeolithic Survey (COPS).

A new approach to central Omani prehistory

The Central Oman Palaeolithic Survey (COPS), initiated by the Institute for Prehistory and Archaeological Science (IPAS) of the University of Basel (Switzerland), was carried out in 2007 and 2008 in al-Ḥuqf –al-Ḥawshī area (central Oman). The survey targeted the earliest human occupation in the southern Arabian Peninsula. 1,420 locations have been surveyed and 815 archaeological sites recorded. 609 of these held flint artefacts producing ample evidence of a significant and diversified prehistoric legacy in central Oman.

Today it can be stated that the rich cultural legacy known from Levant during the Pleistocene never affected its southern neighbours. This is contrary to paleozoological observations which demonstrate a steady exchange from the south to the north and *vice versa*. Despite our expectations, people did not follow these migrations. The discoveries from al-Ḥuqf so far do not show any influence from the Horn of Africa during the Pleistocene.

At least during the Late Pleistocene (130,000–10,000 years), southern Arabia witnessed an independent cultural history, with no or insignificant influence from outside. At the Pleistocene (tentatively 30,000 to 10,000 years) a new cultural group appeared, characterised by large foliated tools. The COPS and other observations demonstrate cultural originality, traditionally misjudged and assigned to the Neolithic. Due to the comprehensive database of the COPS project, it can definitely be stated, that compared to older cultures, the Neolithic period is not that frequently found despite previous identifications.

Furthermore the COPS surveys revealed important settlement activity during the Bronze and Iron Ages in the southern part of al-Ḥuqf from the coast well into the hinterland, a period when settlements withdraw to actual inhabited areas, in response to progressive aridity.

10:20 – Thursday – 23 July

WILLIAMS, Matt

Department of Archaeology, University of York, York, UK

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Matt Williams graduated from the University of Leeds with a BSc (Hons) in Geography in 2004. He gained an MPhil in Quaternary Science in 2005 from the University of Cambridge, before working commercially as a geoarchaeologist. Currently he is a second year PhD student at the University of York and his project focuses on the provenance of shell mounds on the Farasan Islands, Saudi Arabia.

Shell mounds of the Farasan Islands, Saudi Arabia

The Farasan Islands lie in the southern Red Sea, in Saudi Arabian waters. Recent work has detected the presence of over 1,000 shell mounds dating between 7000–2000 BC, many of which are under threat of destruction, as the islands become a focus for tourist-driven development. The sites are unprecedentedly preserved due to the aridity of the region. Work to investigate these unprovenanced deposits began with reconnaissance fieldwork in 2006, which first identified the mounds as having anthropogenic origins. Full-scale investigations followed in 2008 and 2009; these employed a number of techniques ranging from satellite image interpretation to geoarchaeology. Two key sites were chosen for excavation and detailed survey, revealing two contrasting site histories, and differing modes of evolution. Efforts to disentangle the environmental and cultural signals

between the sites have followed a number of lines of enquiry, including test-pitting, geoarchaeology and landscape survey. Preliminary results reveal an intriguing story of temporal and spatial shell mound evolution at both an inter- and intra-site scale. These are being backed up with a comprehensive dating programme using a variety of dating techniques, some of which have rarely been attempted on sites such as these. Here we present the preliminary results of this work.

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**10:45 – Thursday – 23 July**

**ZARINS, Juris**

*Archaeological Consultant, Office of the Advisor to HM the Sultan for Cultural Affairs, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman*

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Dr Juris Zarins, an archaeological consultant to the Department of Antiquities has conducted field work in Saudi Arabia, 1975–1985. He has also conducted fieldwork in Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen and Oman. He is currently conducting a general survey of the Dhofar Governate, Sultanate of Oman and has research interests in the Peninsula's Bronze Age.

**NEWTON, Lynne**

*Assistant Archaeological Consultant, Office of the Advisor to HM the Sultan for Cultural Affairs, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman*

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Lynne Newton (PhD 2007 University of Minnesota, USA) is an archaeological consultant for the Office of the Advisor to HM the Sultan for Cultural Affairs in Salalah, Oman (2007-present). She conducted her dissertation fieldwork in Yemen and is currently taking part in a comprehensive archaeological survey of Dhofar.

### **Recent archaeological survey results in Dhofar, Sultanate of Oman**

A general archaeological survey of the Governorate of Dhofar, Sultanate of Oman, conducted under the auspices of the Office of the Advisor to HM the Sultan for Cultural Affairs, has been carried out from 2008 to 2009. Over 250 new sites have been identified, adding to the 800 previously known sites. Identification spans from the lower Palaeolithic through to the Islamic period. Geographically, sites have been identified from the Rub' al-Khālī, Najd, the Dhofar Hills and the coastal plains. The most outstanding results of the survey to date include: 1) the prolific nature of the Upper Palaeolithic in the fore Najd; 2) the Neolithic occupation of the Najd and Dhofar Hills (8500–3500 BCE); 3) the expansion of cattle and ovi-caprid domestication in the Bronze Age of the Dhofar Hills and Salalah Plain (3500–1000 BCE); 4) Dhofar Hills Iron Age rock shelters with associated stratigraphical debris and rock paintings; 5) the recognition of early Islamic seaports on the Dhofar coast and 6) the integration of archaeological sites into the medieval al-Balīd horizon (1000–1500 CE).

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11:10–11:40 COFFEE
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### **Bronze Age to Iron Age in S.E. Arabia**

**Chair:** Robert Carter (*Oxford Brookes University, UK*)

**11:40 – Thursday – 23 July**

**AL-JAHWARI, Nasser**

*Department of Archaeology, Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman*

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Dr Nasser al-Jahwari is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Archaeology at Sultan Qaboos University. His main interest is the landscape archaeology of the Arabian Gulf, and he has participated and conducted field surveys and excavations in Oman.

**KENNET, Derek**

*Department of Archaeology, Durham University, Durham, UK*

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Dr Derek Kennet is a lecturer in archaeology at the Department of Archaeology, Durham University, working on Arabia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. He has been working in eastern Arabia from 1989 and has conducted fieldwork in the UAE, Kuwait and Oman.

### **Al-Khashba and al-Ghoryeen: two levels of Umm an-Nar settlement in the Wādī 'Andam (Sultanate of Oman)**

This paper will begin by describing two major Umm an-Nar sites located about 10 km apart in the Wādī 'Andam region of Oman: al-Khashba and al-Ghoryeen.

Al-Khashba is a large site extending over 912.5 hectares, including three round towers, a cemetery of around 60 tombs, some further scattered tombs, areas of pottery scatter and a large (28 m x 28 m) rectangular platform, standing over two metres high and built of stone blocks up to 2.5 m long, that has no parallels to date anywhere else in the Umm an-Nar area. A few brief notes have been published on al-Khashba but it has not yet been fully and properly described in print (Weisgerber 1980: 99–100; Potts 1990: 102; Yule 1993: 143, fig.2a–2b; Orchard & Stanger 1994: 82).

Al-Ghoryeen is a smaller settlement extending over 15 hectares, consisting of one round tower, a cemetery of about 49 tombs and, most importantly, an almost completely preserved domestic occupation area visible as stone wall plans on the surface. Al-Ghoryeen therefore presents a unique insight into a middle-sized rural settlement of the Umm an-Nar period. Al-Ghoryeen is, so far, an unknown site on which nothing has yet been published.

Together these two sites provide important new insights into Umm an-Nar settlement. It will be argued that they represent two distinct tiers of settlement both of which are above the lowest level of village settlement that has been recorded in the area. Having described the two sites the paper will therefore conclude by placing them within their broader context in the Umm an-Nar period and will speculate on what they tell us about the structure and hierarchy of Umm an-Nar settlement.

## References

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12:05 – Thursday – 23 July

BENOIST, Anne

CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), Lyon, République Française

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Anne Benoist is a specialist in the Iron Age Period in eastern Arabia. She has been conducting research at Mleiha (Emirate of Sharjah) and at Bithnah (Emirate of Fujayrah). She is currently directing the French Archaeological Mission at Jawf-Ḥaḍramawt in Yemen and is in charge of excavations in Masāfi for the French Archaeological Mission in the UAE.

New discoveries of an Iron Age cultic area at Masāfi

Between 2000 and 2004 excavations at Bithnah–44 have revealed a cultic area that acted as the focus for meetings and festivities during the Iron Age II period (c.1100–600 BC). Since 2006 new excavations by Anne Benoist at the site of Masāfi have revealed another cultic area (Masāfi–3), which is set in the vicinity of another meeting place (Masāfi–1). On the basis of the data from these two sites, this paper will reconsider some aspects of territorial organisation, religion and collective life during the Iron Age II period in eastern Arabia.

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**12:30 – Thursday – 23 July**

**MAGEE, Peter**

*Department of Archaeology, Bryn Mawr College, USA*

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**HØJLUND, Flemming**

*Moesgård Museum, Århus, Kongeriget Danmark*

**ZAMBELLI, Amber**

*Department of Archaeology, Bryn Mawr College, USA*

### A mysterious barrier or just business as usual? First millennium BC trade in the Arabian Gulf.

When Oppenheim published his famous paper on the seafaring merchants of Ur in 1954, he noted that the first half of the first millennium witnessed a re-emergence of trade from Mesopotamia to the southern reaches of the Gulf. The reasons why trade re-emerged and a ‘mysterious barrier’ perplexed Oppenheim, but he felt that the machinations and geo-political activities of Mesopotamian powers were a likely cause. In this paper, we present detailed and newly obtained geochemical data, which documents for the first time Iron Age trade between south-eastern Arabia, Bahrain and Mesopotamia between 900 and 600 BC. Analysis of material from Muweilah, Ḥamrīyah, Qal’at al-Bahrain and the Assyrian capital of Nineveh are included in the paper. We discuss the implications of the results and conclude on some remarks concerning mechanisms of trade in the Gulf and the economic implications for settlements on the east Arabian littoral.

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12:55-14:00 LUNCH

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### Bronze Age to Iron Age in S.E. Arabia (continued)

**Chair:** Derek Kennet (*Durham University, Durham, UK*)

**14:00 – Thursday – 23 July**

**GALLEGO LÓPEZ, Alejandro**

*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Reino de España*

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Alejandro Gallego López is a PhD Student from the Universidad Autónoma in Madrid and is a current member of the Spanish Archaeological Mission at al-Madām (Sharjah, UAE). His research interest is building technology and implements use in the architecture of al-Madām oasis in the later years of the Iron Age II period.

### New evidence on the usage of implements in the al-Madām area (Sharjah, UAE)

The last archaeological campaigns at the Iron Age site of al-Madām (Sharjah, UAE) have been dedicating special attention to several specific and interconnected issues. One focus has been the study of implements and ways of treating materials before they are used for building at a previously reported mud-brick working area (MWA1). During the last campaign, remarkably well-preserved tool marks were unearthed. The concordance in shape and appearance with other features in the same area,

together with possible chronological and geographical correlations, leads us to propose an interpretation of the usage and typology of the implements.

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### **Islamic Arabia**

**Chair:** Derek Kennet (*Durham University, Durham, UK*)

14:25 – Thursday – 23 July

**AL-NAIM, Mashary A.**

*Department of Architecture, College of Architecture and Planning, King Faisal University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*  
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#### **City within a city: a walled city of al-Kut in Hufuf, al-Hasa, Saudi Arabia**

A few Arab cities developed to contain a smaller city. This urban and architectural phenomenon emerged for reasons of security. In the sixteenth century, the Ottomans reached the Gulf coast and took immediate action to build their own administrative bases. The city of Hufuf at that time was very small and consisted of two parts, a western part (the current al-Kut neighbourhood) and a village called al-Riqayat located among the eastern palm trees farms (the current al-Rifa North). When the Ottomans came to Hufuf they developed the city and constructed a number of buildings, including the ‘Alī Basha mosque (the only sixteenth-century mosque with a central dome in the Arabian Peninsula) and a *madrasa*, steam bath, ‘*imāra* and jail, etc. The most important feature was the isolation of al-Kut from the rest of the city by building a wall, which made the neighbourhood a city within a city. This paper tries to concentrate on the smaller city of al-Kut, which became an area with special architectural and social characteristics within Hufuf.

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14:50 – Thursday – 23 July

**AL-SHAIKH, Nabil Y.**

*Saudi Commission for Tourism & Antiquities, Dammam Regional Museum, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*  
nabielalshaikh@gmail.com

Nabil al-Shaikh has twenty-seven years of experience in geology, geoarchaeology and archaeological photography in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait. He has seventeen archaeological publications in English and Arabic. He has undertaken surveys and excavations of many types of archaeological sites, from all time periods in Arabia, the Gulf and the Red Sea, including underwater archaeology. He is based at Dammam Regional Museum, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Saudi Arabia.

**REELER, Claire N.**

*Antiquities and Museums Sector, Saudi Commission for Tourism & Antiquities, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*  
cl.reeler@gmail.com

Claire Reeler has an MA in archaeology (University of Cape Town, South Africa) and has worked with GIS in archaeology in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia over the last 20 years. After moving to Saudi Arabia in 2006, she has become involved in several archaeological projects in the region and is now working as a consultant to the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

#### **The ‘River Aftan’: an old caravan/trade route along Wādī al-Sahbā’?**

Wādī al-Sahbā’ originates in the al-Kharj region in central Saudi Arabia and is formed by the confluence of several wadis. These drainage systems were originally formed by rain falling on the Najd plateau during the Quaternary period. The Wādī al-Sahbā’ runs west-east to Sabkhat Maṭṭi on the Saudi/UAE border. This study is centred on tracing the course of the wadi and the results of an archaeological investigation. Several historical sources and old maps of Arabia give the names ‘River Aftan’ or ‘Wādī Aftan’ and these possibly refer to the Wādī al-Sahbā’. It is probable that these mark an old east-west caravan route. This paper will assess the likelihood that the Wādī al-Sahbā’ is the ‘River/Wādī al-Sahbā’ and part of an old caravan/trade route. Important considerations in this regard will include the geographic formation of the wadi, the presence of vegetation, wildlife and water sources and the nature of the archaeological sites found there. The relationship between the Wādī al-Sahbā’ and surrounding areas with significant archaeological sites, such as al-Kharj, Yabrīn and al-Hufuf, will also be examined. Similarly, the relationship with other, well-documented trade and caravan routes in the area will be investigated.

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15:15 – Thursday – 23 July

**MUNT, Harry**

*Faculty of Oriental Studies, Wolfson College, University of Oxford, UK*  
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Harry Munt is a DPhil student in Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford. His research is on the history and historiography of early Islamic Medina, and more specifically on the emergence and development of Medina as a holy city.

#### **Writing the history of an Arabian holy city: Ibn Zabāla and the origin of Medinan local historiography**

The study of Arabic historiography is currently flourishing, but no survey of the field takes local histories produced in the Arabian Peninsula properly into account. This paper amends this situation by discussing the work of Ibn Zabāla (d. after 199/814), the first local historian of Medina.

Unfortunately his local history has not survived, but Ibn Zabāla was the most important source for later historians of Medina; al-Samhūdī (d. 911/1506) cites him over 650 times in his *Wafā’ al-wafā’*, yet he has never been subjected to the critical study that his importance merits. Citations from later histories will be used to seek answers to these questions: what

inspired him to compose a history of Medina? What were his main concerns and interests? What were his sources? What form did his history take?

Handbooks on Islamic historiography generally tell us that local histories can be divided into two types: chronographic and prosopographical. This paper shows that neither of these models fits Medinan local historiography, and that Medina's status as a holy city led Ibn Zabāla to write its history in a significantly different way.

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15:40-16:10 TEA
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### **Islamic Arabia (continued)**

**Chair:** Andrew Petersen (*Lampeter University, UK*)

**16:10 – Thursday – 23 July**

**BELFIORETTI, Luca**

*Jewel of Muscat Project, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Muscat, PO Box 252, PC 100, Sultanate of Oman*

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Luca Belfioretti is an archaeologist who graduated from University of Bologna in Italy. His thesis addressed the reconstruction of a third-millennium BCE reed boat in the western Indian Ocean. He has worked in Oman periodically from 2000/01, first with the University of Bologna and later for the Ministry of Heritage and Culture of the Sultanate of Oman. He currently resides in Oman, and is employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a site manager on the Jewel of Muscat Project, a reconstruction of a ninth-century CE sewn-plank ship.

**VOSMER, Tom**

*Maritime Archaeology Consultant, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Muscat, PO Box 252, PC 100, Sultanate of Oman*

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Dr Tom Vosmer is a maritime archaeologist specialising in watercraft of the western Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf. He is resident in Oman, working as a consultant to the government on maritime heritage, culture and archaeology. Currently he is employed as project director (construction) on the Jewel of Muscat Project, the reconstruction of an early ninth-century sewn-plank boat that will sail to Singapore in early 2010.

### **The al-Balīd timber, preliminary overview and comparison**

Sewn boat timbers have been discovered in the ruins of the pre-modern Islamic citadel at al-Balīd in Dhofar, Oman. The timbers were re-used in the citadel for beams, shelves, sills and other structural items. These timbers are significant because they represent some of the only remains of sewn-boat technology in the western Indian Ocean region. Others include boat timbers from al-Qusayr Qadim on the Red Sea, and the 9<sup>th</sup> century Belitung wreck found in Indonesia. This form of sewn-boat technology was used through millennia in the Western Indian Ocean.

Identification of the al-Balīd wood has revealed a variety of timbers including teak (*Tectona grandis*) and *Terminalia* species. Three <sup>14</sup>C samples returned dates of 1020, 1260 and 1460 CE ± 40 years. Many of the timbers are planking – some with the stitching that joined them together still extant; others are beams and frames. Dowels, used to lock planks in position relative to each other, are present in some planks. Furthermore, resin identified as bitumen originating from south-western Iran was found on two of the timber samples.

This paper intends to compare the technical characteristics of the individual al-Balīd timbers with other forms of historical evidence to discuss changes in maritime technology in the Western Indian Ocean. Technological adaptation and exchange is complicated and fluid, but it is particularly the case for maritime technology. Differences in methods or structure can result from a diversity of influences: the availability of materials used, technology exchange, use of the vessel, even culture, religion, superstition or even personal taste. The al-Balīd timbers add a valuable contribution to our understanding of pre-modern ship construction in the area, and demonstrate that different techniques and materials were inventively being adapted for use in diverse regions.

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16:35 – Thursday – 23 July

ROUGEULLE, Axelle

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Dr Axelle Rougeulle is an archaeologist of the Islamic period, specialised in exchange networks in the eastern Islamic world and the Indian Ocean during the medieval period: the harbours, land and maritime routes, trade and merchandise, especially the ceramics. Her main regions of interest are Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen and now Oman where she has started a new research project at the harbour site of Qalhāt.

The Qalhāt Project: New research on the medieval harbour site of Qalhāt (Oman)

Qalhāt, one of the most impressive sites in Oman and one of the most famous medieval harbour cities of southern Arabia, has never been studied with the exception of a single season of excavation. In 2007, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture of the Sultanate asked the author to begin a project of study of development of the site. The first season was held in 2008.

A DEM and kite photo covering were realized, and the analyse of the urban development of the city was started by the identification of different quarters and main buildings. The Friday Mosque was discovered and its last two architectural periods recognized which dated to the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries: both with distinctive glazed tiles decoration. A ceramic kiln

was also discovered and excavated, producing a great deal of information on the local ceramics, unglazed, glazed and painted wares, of the 14th–15th centuries.

Part of a settlement unit was excavated and cleared for further restoration. This consisted of a large house and a small terraced mosque in the NW quarter of the city. Finally, a stratigraphical sounding reached the bedrock 6m below the modern surface level, yielding occupation layers dated from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. The history of Qalhāt, its urbanism and the trade networks of this main Hormūzi harbour are therefore now emerging from obscurity.

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**17:00 – Thursday – 23 July**

**BOULOGNE, Stéphanie**

*CNRS Lamm Aix en Provence, Aix-en-Provence, République Française & IFPO Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic*  
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Stéphanie Boulogne gained her PhD from the Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV). She is a research fellow at the Laboratoire d'Archéologie Médiévale Méditerranée and at the IFPO Damascus and her research focuses upon glass of the medieval to Early Modern periods in the Middle-East. She has recently been awarded a Rakow Grant from The Corning Museum of Glass, USA.

**Glass bangles of Shihr: a corpus of new data (15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries) for the understanding of glass bangles manufacturing in Yemen**

The excavations conducted in the medieval harbour of al-Shihr on the Indian Ocean in Ḥaḍramawt (Yemen) by C. Hardy-Guilbert (UMR 8167) had revealed more than 1700 glass fragments, among them 185 multi-coloured glass bangles and 321 glass vessel fragments. The bangles are mostly dated to the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most of them are made of green glass paste similar to the majority of glass vessel artefacts. Polychrome samples (106 samples) are generally of large diameter, enhanced with diverse decoration such as prunts (A small piece of glass fused to the main body of a piece of glasswork and then shaped or pressed, for decoration). These are well known in the local area, for example, at Kawd al-Saylah, and elsewhere in the Middle East (Egypt, Greater Syria). By contrast, monochrome items are represented by 79 samples, generally of small diameter, many being smooth examples, others decorated with ribs. These are well-known in the Middle East.

Al-Shihr is the second site, after Kawd al-Saylah, to present a full corpus of this kind of glass ornaments. In addition, many crucibles were recorded, and remains of ovens discovered, suggesting a local production at least some of the finds. This paper will focus on the provenance of the glass artefacts, as well as their dating, and typological groups, including comparative data and a survey of textual sources. The results will be compared to data on bangles dated to medieval and later times in central Jordan, for which archaeometric studies, coupled with typological and ethnographic information, have suggested a foreign provenance (India or elsewhere in Asia), mixed in with local products. The study of the Shihr glass bangles will present new data on the organization of glass bangle production in medieval and later times.

*References*

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The MBI al-Jaber Public Lecture

Ancient Arabia and the Written Word

M.C.A. Macdonald (*University of Oxford, UK*)

18:30 – **Thursday** 23 June – Stevenson Lecture Theatre
(Limited Seating)

Followed by a RECEPTION hosted by the MBI al-Jaber Foundation
(Clare Centre East)

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## FRIDAY 24 JULY 2009

### Morning Parallel Sessions

#### **Focus Session: Current Fieldwork in Qatar**

**Organizers:** Faisal Al-Naimi (*Qatar Museums Authority, State of Qatar*) & Derek Kennet (*Durham University, Durham, UK*)

**Chair:** Derek Kennet (*Durham University, Durham, UK*)

There has been a notable increase in the amount of archaeological fieldwork being conducted in Qatar from the Parthian/Hellenistic to Islamic periods. Many of the researchers involved have offered papers to this year's Seminar reporting on their work. Much of this research (although not all) is still in its early stages but it is resulting in important new information. It was felt that it would be useful to support this work by putting these papers into a Focus Session – adding time for a general discussion on the results, the issues faced, the methods used and how researchers might co-ordinate their work.

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09:30 – Friday – 24 July

BEARDMORE, Rebecca

Visual and Spatial Technology Centre (VISTA), Birmingham University, Birmingham, UK.

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Rebecca Beardmore is a post-excavation officer at 'Birmingham Archaeology'. Her research interests include the prehistory of arid environments, in particular late Bronze Age Kazakhstan, and the applications of databases and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in heritage management. She has previously worked on surveys of rock art and archaeological excavations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

CUTTLE, Richard

Visual and Spatial Technology Centre (VISTA), Birmingham University, Birmingham, UK.

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Richard Cuttler is a senior project manager at Birmingham University. He has undertaken archaeological surveys and excavations in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. His research interests include Palaeolithic and Holocene Arabia, landscape survey, the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for cultural resource management, and the application of geophysics in archaeology.

KALLWEIT, Heiko

Honorary Research Fellow, *Birmingham University, Birmingham, UK.*

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Heiko Kallweit studied Archaeology, Mineralogy, Geoscience and Ethnology at Freiburg University and completed a doctorate on the Bronze Age and Neolithic Occupation in the Wādī Dhahr [Dharr], Yemen in 1997. He has since worked on research projects in Jordan, the UAE, Yemen, Qatar, Kuwait. His research interests include the Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods in the Near and Middle East, the Palaeoecology, fauna and flora of arid landscapes and the archaeology of nomadic groups.

RAMSEY, Eleanor

VISTA, Birmingham University, Birmingham, UK.

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Eleanor Ramsay graduated with a degree in Ancient History and Archaeology from Birmingham University in 1994 and worked for several years as an archaeological supervisor. As a researcher at 'Birmingham Archaeology', her recent projects have included the Humber Regional Environmental Characterisation Project, Qatar Remote Sensing project (including Historic Environment Record development and GIS training), the Longstanton intra-site GIS project, and the West Coast Palaeolandscapes project. Her research interests are mainly focused on GIS, 3-D visualisation and marine remote sensing.

AL-NAIMI, Faisal Abdulla

Antiquities Department, Qatar Museums Authority, Doha, State of Qatar

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Faisal Abdulla Al-Naimi is Head of the Antiquities Department at the Qatar Museums Authority. His research interests include the management of the archaeological resource of Qatar, prehistoric lithics technology and archaeological field survey.

FITCH, Simon

VISTA, Birmingham University, Birmingham, UK.

s.fitch@bham.ac.uk

Simon Fitch took his undergraduate degree in Geology at Durham University (UK) and his postgraduate degree in Landscape Archaeology at Birmingham University. He maintains research interests in the use of visual and immersive technologies in the investigation of marine geophysical data, and has been an external advisor to geophysical software companies. He has worked on a variety of projects from Oman to the USA. His current research interests are now focused upon marine prehistory across the globe.

Reconstruction of the Late Pleistocene and Holocene palaeogeography of Qatar using remotely sensed datasets, and the implications for the integration of such data into the National Monument Record for Qatar

At the peak of the last glacial maximum, approximately 18,000 years ago, the Gulf was entirely free of marine influence. The area would have been populated, and almost certainly contains one of the most detailed and comprehensive records of a Late Quaternary and Holocene landscape. Despite this the management of this resource has been perceived as being beyond the reach of archaeologists, a *terra incognita*.

As a result of recent developments in remote sensing this should no longer be considered the case. Countries such as Qatar are in a unique position in that oil exploration has provided extensive datasets that can be used to model past landscapes and inform future research within the region. However, the true value of such datasets can only be achieved if they are integrated as part of a larger inventory of heritage resources. Over the past year Qatar has developed a new National Monument Record for this purpose. This involved the development of data standards for recording and archiving currently known and new archaeological sites

The integration of remotely sensed marine and terrestrial data into the National Monument Record has facilitated pro-active management and monument protection, from designation and curation to forward planning.

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**10:00 – Friday – 24 July**

**SCHREIBER, Juergen**

*Munich, Bundesrepublik Deutschland*

juergenschreiber@mnet-online.de

Juergen Schreiber received his PhD from Munich University on the topic of ‘Oasis Settlements in Oman’. From 1995 to 2007 he has worked on different excavation and survey-projects in Oman. He has been director of the excavations at Umm al-Mā’ in Qatar from 2008.

**Excavations at Umm al-Mā’, Qatar - preliminary report on the first two campaigns**

The vast prehistoric cairn field of Umm al-Mā’ is located on Qatar’s north-west coast, some 80 km north-west of Doha. First mentioned by the Danes in the late 1950s during their work in the Gulf region, ten graves were excavated, but are still unpublished. In the late 1980s and early 1990s this work was followed by a Japanese team. They excavated another ten of these tombs and suggested, at least for some of them, a date between 100 BC and AD 100.

On behalf of Qatar Museums Authority, work was resumed at Umm al-Mā’ in February 2008 and two campaigns of excavations were subsequently conducted. The preliminary results of these two seasons of excavation will be presented in this paper.

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10:30 – Friday – 24 July

GUÉRIN, Alexandrine

GREMMO, La Mission Française Archéologique à Qatar, Maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée, Lyon,

République Française

alexandrine.guerin@mom.fr

Alexandrine Guérin has been in charge of the French Archaeological Mission in Qatar from 2002. She directs a research programme on settlement patterns in a desert context during the Islamic period, especially that of the Abbasid.

AL-NAIMI, Faisal Abdulla

Antiquities Department, Qatar Museums Authority, Doha, State of Qatar

falnaimi@qma.com.qa

Faisal Abdulla Al-Naimi is Head of the Antiquities Department at the Qatar Museums Authority. His research interests include the management of the archaeological resource of Qatar, prehistoric lithics technology and archaeological field survey.

Using Pottery to understand a district in the Abbasid village of Murwab (9th century – Qatar)

Starting with the ceramics discovered in stratigraphic contexts at Murwab, the combination of various studies makes it possible to assign particular functions to spatial units, i.e. habitation and artisanal zones. Typologies of form and wares are cross-referenced with the stratigraphy and the find-spots of ceramic fragments.

11:00 – Friday – 24 July – Questions & discussion

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**11:20-11:50 COFFEE**  
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Focus Session: Current Fieldwork in Qatar (continued)

Chair: Derek Kennet (*Durham University, Durham, UK*)

11:50 - Friday – 24 July

PETERSEN, Andrew

Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Wales, Lampeter, UK
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Andrew Petersen is Director of Research in Islamic Archaeology at the University of Wales, Lampeter. Previously he has been Assistant Professor of Islamic Archaeology at the UAE University in al-‘Ayn and Research Officer for the CBRL, based in Amman Jordan. He has carried out fieldwork throughout the Islamic world including Oman, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Turkmenistan and on the Swahili coast of East Africa. He is particularly interested in the archaeology of the middle and late Islamic periods in the Levant and Arabia. In addition to his specific research interests, Andrew is interested in developing the field of Islamic archaeology both as an academic discipline through an edited series in the journal *Antiquity* and as a way of improving cultural understanding.

Qal’at al-Ruwaydah, Qatar

This paper will discuss the results of the first season of excavations at Qal’at al-Ruwaydah sponsored by the Qatar Museums Authority and carried out by a team from the University of Wales, Lampeter. al-Ruwaydah is a large Islamic period site stretching over an area of more than two kilometres along the beach of a shallow bay on the northern tip of Qatar. In fact the site comprises at least seven discrete areas including an extensive prehistoric component. Although the site has been noted before, this is the first time the site has been investigated through archaeological excavation and topographic survey. Preliminary findings indicate that the main site was inhabited from the medieval to the early modern period (c. 11th–18th centuries) although this dating is subject to modification based on further analysis of the finds and other dating materials. Excavation concentrated on the most visible feature of the site, which is a fortress divided into four separate courtyards. The principal aim of the 2009 excavation was to identify the building sequence of the fort and also get some idea of its foundation date. The results of the excavation will be discussed within the context of other sites in northern Qatar and in relation to other maritime sites in the Gulf.

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**12:20 - Friday – 24 July**

**WALMSLEY, Alan**

*Institut for Tværkulturelle og Regionale Studier, Københavns Universitet, København, Kongeriget Danmark*  
walmsley@hum.ku.dk

Alan Walmsley is Professor of Islamic Archaeology and Art at the University of Copenhagen, and conducts fieldwork in Qatar and Jordan. He uses material culture to document social and economic change in formative historical periods, specifically the central Arabian Gulf in the second millennium and Syria-Palestine between the sixth and eleventh centuries.

**Al-Zubārah and its hinterland: archaeology and heritage**

In anticipation of a major new project at the extensive Islamic-period walled site of al-Zubārah on the west coast of northern Qatar, an exploratory programme of archaeological survey work, excavations and environmental studies was undertaken from January to May this year. At the invitation of the Qatar Museums Authority – Antiquities Department, the University of Copenhagen fielded a team of thirteen lead by Alan Walmsley (Director, Excavations) and Ingolf Thuesen (Director, Heritage) with the intention of completing a preliminary assessment, recording and survey of al-Zubārah and its hinterland, as well as initial reconnaissance of other north Qatar sites. This paper will focus on the results of the work in and around al-Zubārah, including the mapping of the site, the geomorphological and archaeological investigation of its hinterland including associated sites, and two areas of investigative open-area excavations within the town of al-Zubārah. Overall, the extraordinary complexity of the natural and human environment encountered through this work is being

revealed, and suggests that in the future many more rewarding outcomes can be expected in the study of Qatari archaeology, history and heritage.

**12:50 - Friday – 24 July – Questions & discussion**

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13:10–14:30 LUNCH
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**Special Session: The Development of Arabic as a Written Language**

**Organizers:** Robert Hoyland (*University of St Andrews, UK*), Michael Macdonald (*University of Oxford, UK*) & Venetia Porter (*British Museum, UK*)

**Chair:** Janet Watson (*University of Salford, UK*)

Throughout most of the pre-Islamic period Arabic was a purely spoken language, which co-existed with many written languages in the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt and other parts of the Middle East. In Late Antiquity and the early Islamic period, Arabic began to be written and eventually displaced almost all its predecessors to become the written language *par excellence* of the region. Why and how did this happen? What dialects developed from the literary language? Why was Nabataean script used to write Arabic, and in what ways was it altered and improved to express the language? How was writing used in the early Islamic period, and who by? How long did the ‘oral’ culture persist after the development of written Arabic, and why did it do so? These are only some of the questions that will be addressed by an international group of scholars at this Special Session of the Seminar for Arabian Studies.

**09:30 – ROBIN, Christian**

(*Collège de France, République Française*) – **Introduction**

Dr Christian Robin has worked on the epigraphy and history of pre-Islamic Arabia, particularly Yemen, for four decades. He is Directeur de Recherche in the CNRS and for many years was the director of the Institut de Recherches et d’Études sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman, in Aix-en-Provence. He now directs the UMR 8167, Orient et Méditerranée, of the CNRS and is a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. He has published extensively on, among much else, Arabia in Late Antiquity and the development of the Arabic script, and is leading a Saudi-French archaeological and epigraphic survey of the Najran area in southern Saudi Arabia.

**09:40 - Friday – 24 July**

**MACDONALD, Michael**

*Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, UK*

michael.macdonald@orinst.ox.ac.uk

Michael Macdonald has worked for the last thirty-five years on the languages and scripts used in ancient Arabia, and on the many and varied uses of literacy in the Peninsula. He has also written on the history of the nomads and the rock art of Arabia. He has published numerous articles, some of which have been collected in a book entitled *Literacy and Identity in pre-Islamic Arabia*, which was published Oxbow Books earlier this year. He has lived and worked in the Middle East for many years; and is a Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford.

**Why did Arabic remain a purely spoken language for so long?**

The populations of pre-Islamic western Arabia produced vast numbers of formal and informal inscriptions and documents in a variety of languages and dialects. However, in all of these, the dialects which we would recognize as ‘Arabic’ are represented in only a handful of inscriptions in a variety of scripts. Yet these sparse, scattered, exceptional texts suggest that Arabic was being spoken over a long period and a wide area. Why was it not until the sixth century AD that Arabic came to be written habitually and thus develop a dedicated script? It will come as no surprise that this paper will *not* provide definitive answers to these questions. It will, however, examine the milieu in which Arabic existed as a purely spoken tongue alongside numerous written languages, and will suggest some possible explanations for this.

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09:55 - Friday – 24 July

NEHMÉ, Laïla

UMR Orient et Méditerranée, CNRS, Paris, République Française

laïla.nehme@ivry.cnrs.fr

Laïla Nehmé is a researcher at the CNRS in Paris and co-director of the Madā’in Sālih Archaeological Project. She is a specialist of Nabataean epigraphy and urban spaces of Petra and Hegra [al-Ḥijr]. She is also part of the Darb al-Bakra survey project, directed by Ali al-Ghabban.

AL-GHABBAN, Ali

Supreme Commission for Tourism and Antiquities of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

ali.alghabban@scta.gov.sa

Professor Ali Ibrahim al-Ghabban is the Vice-President of the Supreme Commission for Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Having received his doctorate at the University of Aix-en-Provence, he then taught for many years at King Saud University, Riyadh, before being appointed to the Supreme Commission in 2003. He has made numerous epigraphic and archaeological surveys including the spectacular finds of late Nabataean and early Arabic inscriptions on the ‘Darb al-Bakra’, the ancient road between Petra and Hegra, which he discovered.

New very late Nabataean and early Arabic inscriptions and a comparison of their content

This paper will present some representative examples of two categories of inscriptions: 1) ‘late Nabataean’, that is inscriptions containing dates which place them in the 3rd century AD or later (4th and 5th), or those in which the letter forms can be dated, at least provisionally, to the interval between the 3rd and the 5th centuries; 2) ‘early Arabic’, that is, the earliest Arabic inscriptions dated to the decades following AD 622. As a corollary of this, we shall discuss the ‘transitional’ period and the criteria, which can be used to determine whether we are dealing with a late Nabataean or an early Arabic text. We shall focus, in this paper, not only on the characteristics of letter forms and the ligatures between them but also on the possible differences in the formulae between the ‘classical’ Nabataean graffiti and the ‘late Nabataean’ examples, as well as on possible signs of breaks or shifts from one writing tradition to another. Most of the examples that will be presented come from Saudi Arabia and a large proportion of them were discovered during the Darb al-Bakra Survey Project, directed by Ali al-Ghabban.

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**10:30 - Friday – 24 July**

**HOYLAND, Robert**

*Department of Arabic and Middle East Studies, St Andrews University, UK*

rg9@st-andrews.ac.uk

Robert Hoyland is Professor of Arabic and Middle East History at St Andrews University. He is author of *Arabia and the Arabs* as well as a series of publications on the history of the late antique and early Islamic Middle East.

**Power, patronage and Arabic inscriptions**

Recently there have been a number of Qur’ān folios sold in auction houses that would seem to date to the reign of the caliphs ‘Uthmān (644–656), ‘Alī (656–660) and Mu‘āwiya (661–680) and also a number of rock inscriptions have been discovered that belong to the same period. Evidently the use of Arabic for a variety of purposes was a feature of the very earliest stages of the Islamic state. This is not an obvious development. The key languages of the Middle East for hundreds of years before Islam had been Greek and Aramaic. This presentation will explore the background to this rise to prominence of the Arabic language; in particular, the ways in which certain Arab groups had worked their way up the upper echelons of imperial society, becoming members of the elite, even if only at a local level and the ways in which this newly-acquired power manifested itself in the epigraphic record.

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10:55 - Friday – 24 July

LARCHER, Pierre

Département d’études moyen-orientales, Université de Provence Aix-Marseille I, République Française

Pierre.Larcher@univ-provence.fr

Pierre Larcher holds a PhD (1980) and Docteur d’État (*habilitation*, 1996) from the University of Paris–Sorbonne Nouvelle. He is Professor of Arabic Linguistics at the University of Aix-en-Provence (France) and a researcher at the IREMAM (CNRS). He lived in the Arab World (Syria, Libya, Morocco) between 1971 and 1982, holding several research and teaching positions. He has published extensively in different fields of Arabic and Semitic Linguistics including *Le Système verbal de l’arabe classique*, 2003; co-edited with P. Cassuto *La Sémitologie, aujourd’hui*, 2000 and *La Formation des mots dans les langues sémitiques*, 2007. He also translated pre-Islamic Arabic poetry into French (*Les Mu‘allaqāt*, 2000; *Le Guetteur de Mirages. Cinq poèmes préislamiques*, 2004).

In search of a standard: dialect choices in the development of Classical Arabic

The few surviving pre-Islamic inscriptions in both the Arabic language and the Arabic script show the absence of a standard written language. We will take as a sample of variation the inscriptions of Jabal Usays (528–529) and Harrān (568). A meticulous examination of the first inscription suggests that its author, a soldier, writes the way he speaks in a case-less variety of Arabic. In this context, we will examine the famous bilingual Greek-

Arabic papyrus PERF 558 (22/643), in which the name Ibn Abū Qīr occurs twice. The Arabic Abū Qīr is the Greek Apa Kyros. In order to get to the form Abū Qīr, one has to go through the form Abā Qīr, reinterpreted as the accusative of the three-case (triptotic) inflection Abū/Abā/Abī. Both types of Arabic, the so-called Old Arabic (inflected) and the so-called Neo-Arabic (non-inflected) coexist, but the scribe uses the New Arabic type. However, it is the Old Arabic type, which was codified and became Classical Arabic. We will try to understand the reasons of this choice.

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**11:20–11:50 COFFEE**  
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The Development of Arabic as a Written Language (continued)

Chair: Janet Watson (*University of Salford, UK*)

11:50 - Friday – 24 July

DEROCHE, François

École Pratique des Hautes Études, IV^e section: «Antiquités et codicologies arabes», République Française

francois.deroche@dbmail.com

François Deroche is a specialist in Arabic manuscripts: his contributions have been devoted to codicology and the history of the book in the Islamic world.

The Codex Parisino-petropolitanus and the Hijāzī scripts

The *disjecta membra* of the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus, an early Qur'anic manuscript, are of great interest for the history of the Arabic script as a book script. The production of this copy involved five copyists and their various hands witness the state of development of the script during the second half of the first century of the *hijra*. The paper will investigate the relationship of the manuscript with other written documents of the period as well as the way in which the copyists made use of the Arabic script when transcribing the Qur'ān.

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**12:15 - Friday – 24 July**

**GEORGE, Alain**

*School of Arts, Culture and Environment (ACE), University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK*

a.george@ed.ac.uk

Alain George holds a PhD from the University of Oxford and is Lecturer in Islamic Art at the University of Edinburgh. He has published several articles on early Qur'anic calligraphy; his book about the origins and development of this art form, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, is currently in press. In addition to calligraphy, his present research interests include Umayyad art and the impact of the Indian Ocean trade on early Islamic material culture.

### **On the roots and context of the Hijāzī corpus**

The earliest manuscripts of the Qur'ān are of crucial importance to the history of Arabic script – and indeed, of the Qur'anic text. In this paper, we will attempt to place the Hijāzī corpus in a broad historical context that ranges from the sixth century to the early Umayyad period. Through an analysis of ruling, quire structure and pen type, we will identify, below the most visible layers of a manuscript, affinities of technique that lead back to older manuscript traditions of the Middle East, notably biblical. Together with information provided by early Arabic texts, this will open new perspectives on the nature of the underlying process.

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12:40 - Friday – 24 July

PORTER, Venetia

Middle East Department, British Museum, London, UK

vporter@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

The use of writing in magic

Early in the Islamic era, clusters of recognizable Arabic letters began to be used on a variety of materials including Arabic papyri and amulets. The style is often referred to as Linear Kufic and it is characterised by the use of early Arabic letterforms. Clearly magical in intent, the uses of these inscriptions belong within a vocabulary that includes 5-pointed stars and other elements. Once established, the style continues to be used in magical contexts even to the present day. Magical scripts, which include Egyptian hieroglyphs and Yemeni Ḥimyaritic scripts, are described by a number of medieval writers. This paper will examine the use of these magical scripts and Linear Kufic, in particular. It will look at the form the inscriptions take and what meaning they may have. It will question whether these are simply abracadabra or whether they can be interpreted as survivals from the pre-Islamic period adapted for new purposes.

13:05 – Friday – 24 July

SCHOELER, Gregor

Orientalisches Seminar, Universität Basel, Switzerland

gregor.schoeler@unibas.ch

From 1963 to 1972 he studied Oriental Studies, especially Islamic Studies and Semitic Languages, at the Universities of Marburg (Lahn), Frankfurt (Main) and Giessen in Germany. In 1972 he completed his PhD at the University of Giessen. From 1982 he has held the Chair of Islamic Studies at the University of Basel, Switzerland and in 2000 presented lectures at the École Pratique des Hautes Études à la Sorbonne in Paris. In 2006 he received the Delalande-Guérineau of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Institut de France) award for 2002. *Écrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l'Islam* (Paris; tr. 2009. *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*. Edinburgh).

The Relationship of Literacy and Memory in the 2nd/8th century

The relationship between literacy and memory (or orality) in early Islam is complex and has been difficult for scholars to appreciate. We are confronted with the problem especially in the 2nd/8th century, for in that century there was a long-lasting discussion among traditionists whether or not it was permitted to write down *hadīths* and other reports (especially historical accounts). Many scholars took the view that this material was to be memorized and transmitted orally only; in spite of that, a considerable amount of material was written down, a fact which is becoming evident from the polemics against this practice. The most important and very comprehensive works: for example, Ibn Ishāq's *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, Mālik b. Anas's *al-Muwatta'*; also *hadīth* compilations, for example, Ma'mar b. Rāshid's *Kitāb al-Jāmi'*) came into being. These works, the original forms of which are lost, without exception, survived in later versions (recensions); this fact led scholars to the assumption that these works were transmitted 'orally' until their definitive redaction. The first writings appeared, edited definitively by their authors and intended for a reading public: mostly in the form of epistles, *rasā'il*; 'Abd al-Hamīd's and some of Ibn al-Muqaffa's works, and Sibawayhī's *Kitāb*.

This complex situation can be explained by the unique development of Arabic literature. Most of the early works (including the Qur'ān, for some twenty-five years) and even entire genres (but not the *rasā'il*) were not initially 'literature' but, at a later stage of development, eventually became written literature. For a long time, memory (or orality) played a significant role in keeping, disseminating and transmitting these works.

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13:30–14:30 LUNCH

### **Related papers to The Development of Arabic as a Written Language**

**Chair:** Venetia Porter (*British Museum, UK*)

14:30 – Friday – 24 July

**FRASER, Marcus**

*Department of Art History, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK*

marcus@marcusfraser.co.uk

Marcus Fraser is an independent Islamic Art specialist and curatorial consultant. He was formerly Head of Islamic and Indian Art at Sotheby's, London, and senior specialist for Islamic Manuscripts. He has an MA (Hons) from Edinburgh University in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies (1990) and is now reading for a PhD (part-time), also at the University of Edinburgh, on the subject of early Qur'ān manuscripts and calligraphy.

### **Qur'āns in 'Hijāzī' Scripts: marshalling the evidence**

Qur'āns written in so-called 'Hijāzī' scripts have long been associated with a very early period of production, possibly as early as the first century Hijri. While studies on palaeographic, codicological and textual aspects of these fragmentary manuscripts provide a growing body of evidence to support their early dating, the precise corpus of relevant material remains elusive. Most of the studies have focused on single or small groups of fragments and incomplete manuscripts. No-one has yet, to my knowledge, gathered, described and illustrated the complete known extant corpus of this material. Moreover, new discoveries of fragments of this type in the last thirty or so years have provided important additions to the previously known corpus.

This paper will provide an overview of all the known extant fragments of Qur'āns in 'Hijāzī' scripts. It will list them, describe them and attempt to link currently dispersed fragments from the same original codices. It will then enumerate them, both in terms of the number of separate fragments known today and how many original codices these might have constituted. This basic gathering of information is considered crucial to the effectiveness of studies in this field, and it is hoped that the understanding of early Arabic scripts and early Qur'āns in general, as well as this researcher's own palaeographic studies, will benefit from the exercise.

**14:55 – Friday – 24 July**

**LIEBHABER, Samuel J.**

*Middlebury College, Vermont, USA*

slieb@middlebury.edu

Sam Liebhaber is an Assistant Professor of Arabic and International Studies at Middlebury College. His dissertation, 'Bedouin Without Arabic: Language, Poetry and the Mahra of Southeast Yemen' (University of California, Berkeley, 2007), provides a close analysis of the poetic traditions and sociolinguistic bearing of the Mahra, one of the few, non-Arabic language groups remaining on the Arabian Peninsula.

**Written Mahri, Mahri fushā and their implications for early historical Arabic**

As recently as 2004, written poetic texts in the Mahri language of south-east Yemen began to appear at the initiative of native speakers who had a serious interest in preserving and promoting their linguistic heritage. As one of the few, surviving non-Arabic languages indigenous to the Arabian Peninsula, the Mahri language remained oral prior to 2004 and is still essentially inaudible at the margins of the sociolinguistic framework that characterizes the Arabic-speaking world. However, the mixed oral-literate environment of al-Mahra enables us to draw parallels between it and the environment that obtained for Arabic speakers at the cusp of literacy in the late Jāhilī and early Islamic eras. This paper will draw on fieldwork that I undertook in al-Mahra between 2003 and 2008, during which time the impact of writing on the poetic idiom of one of al-Mahra's most prolific poets was analyzed. Specifically, I will examine how Mahri-language literacy has forced a reappraisal of native valuations of linguistic 'quality', with close reference to a commonly held, yet far from consensual, notion of an exemplary idiom known locally as Mahri 'fuṣḥā'. By examining the shifting valences of Mahri 'fuṣḥā' in recent decades, we can shed some light on the composition and evolution of Arabic fuṣḥā in its pre- and early historical guises.

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15:20–15:50 TEA

Afternoon Parallel Sessions

Architecture, Landscape & Food Resources

Chair: Mark Beech (*ADACH, UAE*)

15:50 – Friday – 24 July

DARLES, Christian

École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Toulouse, 83, rue Aristide Maillol, BP 10629, 31106 Toulouse cedex 1, République Française

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La généralisation du bois chez les bâtisseurs du Yémen antique

Les recherches archéologiques menées depuis plus de 25 ans ont permis de bien comprendre l'art des bâtisseurs de l'Antiquité. L'architecture édifiée en Arabie du Sud est de mieux en mieux connue et chaque campagne de fouille permet de recueillir de nouveaux témoignages sur les modes constructifs mis en œuvre durant l'Antiquité. Si l'architecture monumentale, comme celle des temples par exemple, souvent très bien conservée, a été parfaitement analysée et a fait l'objet de nombreuses publications, il n'en va pas de même pour l'architecture civile destinée principalement à l'habitat résidentiel, constitué par des maisons édifiées au-dessus de hauts soubassements massifs maçonnés. Cette architecture est caractérisée par un usage important de pièces de bois qui constituent une ossature tridimensionnelle dont le contreventement est assuré par un remplissage composé généralement de briques crues. D'autres utilisations du bois sont attestées dans des configurations constructives différentes : des planchers, des poutres et des poteaux confectionnés en bois ont été découverts lors des différentes fouilles. Les éléments de décors qui nous sont parvenus doivent être comparés aux panneaux en dalle de calcaire dont les motifs reprennent des assemblages de menuiserie. Cette pétrification du bois donne également de multiples informations sur les encadrements et les systèmes de fermetures des fenêtres de ces édifices.

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**16:15 – Friday – 24 July**

**BANDYOPADHYAY, Soumyen**

*School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK*

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Soumyen Bandyopadhyay is Professor in Architecture and Design at the Nottingham Trent University.

Previously, he was at the University of Liverpool where he was Director of Studies for the MArch programme

and founding Director of India in the World Research Centre (IWRC). He has researched and published widely on aspects of traditional Omani architecture, supported by grants from the AHRC and the US government. He has recently completed an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded study on the nature of Modernity in Indian architecture, focusing on the role of the Rock Garden in Chandigarh, on which he has co-authored a book (Liverpool University Press, 2007).

#### **Topographic conceptions in Omani architecture**

This paper aims to discuss two key themes persistent within the decorative tradition of Omani architecture: stars and date palms. The research is based on material collected through fieldwork in al-Dākhliyah region, which includes an AHRC-supported project to document the decorated *maharib* of Oman. It adopts a phenomenological approach to understand the role and overlapping meaning of these motifs within the traditional architectural context. Representations of these motifs – often used interchangeably – are frequently set within an ‘endless knot’ motif. While the latter has been variously employed throughout the Middle East to depict time or the endless, fathomless expanse of time or topography, the inset stellar motifs – echoing Sufi mystical conceptions of illumination – represent temporal ‘moments’. While this celestial topography plays an important role in the Omani decorated *maharib*, entrances to Omani dwellings are frequently adorned with the representation of a more immediate physical topography, employing the ‘endless knot’ in conjunction with a planimetric representation of the palm. An attempt to connect the celestial topography and the physical one has been the basis of the complex water distribution strategy of the *falaj* irrigation system. The paper also aims to study the close connection between these topographic conceptions and articulation of thresholds (both sacred and domestic).

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15:50–18:30 – Workshop for Arabic as a Written Language

This workshop develops discussions resulting from the Special Session on ‘The Development of Arabic as a Written Language’ and related papers. Seminar Participants are also invited to bring photographs of particular inscriptions, manuscripts, documents, coins and objects of relevance to the subject of the Special Session. If you wish to present such an item, please contact the Secretary well in advance with details of the object and how you wish to present it (digital photographs preferred).

The Sackler Room is located to the right of the entrance into the BP Lecture Theatre

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**18:30 RECEPTION**  
**Clare Centre, The British Museum**

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SATURDAY 25 JULY 2009

Arabic and Modern South Arabian

Chair: Michael Macdonald (*Oriental Institute, Oxford, UK*)

09:30 – Saturday – 25 July

NAÏM, Samia

Lacito, (FRE 2204) CNRS, 7 rue Guy Moquet, Bat. 23, F-94801 Villejuif cedex, République Française
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Samia Naïm is a researcher at the CNRS-Paris. A linguist who has specialised in Semitic languages, she is specifically interested in the Arabic dialects of the Middle East and Arabia, which she studies from a historical, comparative and typological perspective. Samia has published many articles and books about the dialects of Sanaa and Zabīd such as 2009. *L'Arabe yéménite de Sanaa* (Leuven-Paris-Dudley: Peeters) and 1995 *Yémen* (Arles: Actes Sud). She has also contributed to, or directed, interdisciplinary works on contemporary Yemen, such as 2001. *Yémen: d'un itinéraire à l'autre* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose) and 1995 *Sanaa: architecture domestique et société* (Paris: CNRS Éditions).

The semantic structure of motion verbs in the dialect of Zabīd (Tihāmah)

Les verbes de mouvement-déplacement, dans le dialecte de Zabīd, sont susceptibles d'être répartis en deux paradigmes, en fonction du degré de complexité de leur structure sémantique. Les plus complexes fusionnent les notions de temporalité, de trajectoire, de territorialité et de finalité. Pour l'expression du mouvement et des éléments sémantiques qui lui sont sous-jacents, deux procédés sont ainsi attestés dans la langue: 1) la constitution intrinsèque du référent, par fusion, grammaticalisation, lexicalisation... ; 2) la constitution extrinsèque du référent, par individuation ou satellisation des qualités de l'expérience (particule verbale, adposition...). En fonction du groupe verbal auquel il est fait appel, l'expression linguistique du déplacement va recourir ainsi à l'un ou l'autre procédé. Mais cette répartition n'est pas absolue. Elle est fonction du contexte et de l'univers dans lequel prend place le déplacement.

On s'intéressera à la structure sémantique de ces verbes, à leur morphologie et au déploiement de leur sens en emploi. De même qu'on s'interrogera sur les schèmes conceptuels qu'ils véhiculent en temps que moyen d'accès aux représentations mentales que les individus se forment de leur environnement.

9.55– Saturday – 25 July

WATSON, Janet C.E.

School of Languages, University of Salford, Salford, UK

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Janet Watson is Professor of Arabic Linguistics at the University of Salford. She has published widely on Yemeni Arabic dialects, and on the phonology and morphology of modern Arabic dialects. She has recently begun to conduct research on the Modern South Arabian Language (MSAL), Mehri; from 2008 this has involved collaborative work with Alex Bellem on the phonetics and phonology of emphatics in Mehri and Yemeni Arabic.

BELLEM, Alex

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Alex Bellem is Research Fellow/Director (Syria) of the British Institute, Amman, and post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Salford. She is a theoretical and comparative phonologist who works on Semitic sound systems, particularly those of modern Arabic dialects.

A detective story: emphatics in Mehri

Until 1970, Ethio-Semitic was believed to be the only Semitic sub-family in which emphatic consonants were realised as ejectives. Since T.M. Johnstone's discoveries, however, ejectives have been recognised as a South Semitic feature, attested not only in Ethio-Semitic, but also in Modern South Arabian (MSAL). In this paper, we ask why it took so long to identify ejective emphatics in MSAL. Works based on fieldwork of the Viennese expedition in the early twentieth century (e.g. Jahn 1902, Müller 1909, Bittner 1909) and Bertram Thomas (Thomas 1937, Leslau 1947), describe emphasis in MSAL as similar to, but less salient than, emphasis in Arabic. Today there is no common consensus: in most works post-1970, the MSAL emphatics are described as generally post-glottalised (e.g. Johnstone 1987, Simeone-Senelle 1997). For some dialects of the languages, however, post-glottalisation is said to be increasingly restricted to a sub-set of the emphatics (Lonnet 2009).

Are researchers necessarily discussing different dialects, or could there be some other reason for the lack of consensus? In our detective work, we examine earlier descriptions of emphatics in Mehri. We then

consider new phonetic and phonological evidence from a dialect of Mahriyôt (eastern Yemen), and take a short, but instructive, incursion into the sound system of San'ani Arabic.

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#### **Ancient South Arabia**

**10:20– Saturday – 25 July**

**MULTHOFF, Anne**

*Lehrstuhl für Semitische Philologie und Islamwissenschaft, Jena, Bundesrepublik Deutschland*

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Anne Multhoff studied Semitistics, Islamic Sciences and Philosophy at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, 1996 to 2004. MA in Semitistics 2004. Research Assistant at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, from 2006.

Dissertation in Semitistics in preparation.

#### **How difficult it is to dedicate a statuette: A new approach to some Sabaic inscriptions from Ma'rib**

The Sabaic inscriptions from the city of Ma'rib are currently under investigation in the framework of a research project supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. In addition to a complete catalogue of all texts known from the capital of Saba and its surroundings, the project aims at a critical re-interpretation of all known texts according to the present state of research. The immense progress in Ancient South Arabian epigraphy during the last years has led to some striking revisions in our understanding of several inscriptions, which will improve our knowledge of Sabaeen culture. One of these aspects is the mode of dedication. Even though dedicatory inscriptions form a major part of the epigraphic material and must have been a common activity in the religious life of the town, finding the appropriate temple for a dedication and procuring an adequate object was not always easy, as the new reading of some inscriptions suggests. The paper will propose some new ideas for a number of difficult passages from dedicatory inscriptions from Ma'rib.

**10.45 – Saturday – 25 July**

**FRANTSOUZOFF, Serge A.**

*Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg Branch, 18 Dvortsovaya embankment, 191186, St Petersburg, Russian Federation*

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Serge Frantsouzoff graduated from the Oriental Faculty of the Leningrad St Petersburg University as a specialist in the history of Arab countries in 1985. In 1990 he defended his PhD thesis on the history of Ḥaḍramawt in the early Middle Ages. His main fields of interest are the following: South Arabian epigraphy (especially Ḥaḍramitic), the history of Yemen in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, the Christian 'Orient' (especially Christian Arabic and Ethiopic manuscripts).

#### **Once more on the Interpretation of *mtl* in Epigraphic South Arabian (a new expiatory inscription on irrigation from Kamna)**

Last year in her contribution to the Seminar, A. Multhoff tried to demonstrate that the term *mtl* in several contexts of Sabaic, Minaic (originated in Kamna) and Ḥadramitic inscriptions should be interpreted as ‘similar’. However, an unpublished inscription from Kamna kept in the stores of the Military Museum at Sanaa under no. 148 proves that at least in the case of Minaic her conclusion was incorrect.

This expiatory text dated from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC on the basis of palaeographic criteria was compiled by the previously unknown king of Kaminahū Dhamarkarib Riyām, son of Ilīsami’, and his commune (*s<sup>2</sup>’b-s<sup>1</sup>*) Kaminahū (ll. 1–3). One of the acts, of which they did penance to the god Dhū Madahwū (ll. 3–4: *nthy|w-ntdr/k-D-Mdhww*), is rendered as follows: *w-b-hn/ygw/b-s<sup>1</sup>|wl/yṭ’d-s<sup>1</sup>/mtl* ‘and because they were laying on a wrong course for the stream which the document prescribes to use for irrigation’ (ll. 6–7). Therefore in the final formula *f-ḥmy|n/bn/’rh/mtl-s<sup>1</sup>n* (ll. 11–12) this term should have the same meaning: ‘and may (they) be defended from the case (specified) in the document on them (i.e. on the cultivated lands designated as *mwfr-n* /l. 11/’.

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11:10–11:40 COFFEE
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### **Ancient South Arabia (continued)**

**Chair:** Christian Robin (*Collège de France, République Française*)

**11.40 – Saturday – 25 July**

**STEIN, Peter**

*Lehrstuhl für Semitische Philologie und Islamwissenschaft, Jena, Bundesrepublik Deutschland*  
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Peter Stein was apprenticed as a tool maker 1987–1990, studied Assyriology, Semitistics and Theology at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, 1992–1998; studied at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1995–1996. MA in Assyriology 1998. Promotion (PhD) in Semitistics in 2002. Research Assistant at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, from 2002.

### **Irrigation management in pre-Islamic South Arabia according to the epigraphic evidence**

Irrigation as a particular feature of Ancient South Arabian culture is not only known from archaeological remains, but is also reflected in the contemporary epigraphic sources from the region. From these, we know much about irrigation devices such as dams, canals, sluices, and wells. On the one hand, from particular building texts, mainly from dedicatory inscriptions, we are informed of the importance of regular rainfall and resulting agricultural produce, as well as the disaster of drought. On the other hand, the actual management of irrigation, the question how the canal systems were supervised, how the water was allotted, and so on, have hardly been detected from epigraphic texts. Meanwhile, however, a number of inscriptions have appeared, most of them written on wooden sticks, which give detailed insights into the administrative procedure of water distribution in the oasis of Nashqum in the Wādī al-Jawf. The evidence will be presented in this paper.

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12:05 – Saturday – 25 July

AGOSTINI, Alessio

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Dr Alessio Agostini obtained his PhD degree in 2008 at the University of Florence with a study of South Arabian construction inscriptions. From 2002 he has been conducting fieldwork in Yemen (Tamna’ and Barāqish) as member of the Italian Archaeological Mission directed by Professor Alessandro de Maigret.

Building materials in South Arabian construction inscriptions

Among the specifications that are given in South Arabian construction inscriptions, one of the most interesting is the terminology which identifies the materials used in building operations. We will present the most common vocabulary utilized for domestic, sacral and defensive architecture, in order to show which materials were involved and recorded in these texts.

The analysis of this lexical data within South Arabian documentation can reveal uniformity, but also in some cases linguistic differentiation depending on the area, chronology and monument concerned.

We will also try to demonstrate that an analysis of the terms, together with the archaeological records at our disposal, will reveal interesting nuances of semantic value, i.e. distinguishing words indicating raw materials, combination of different materials and those representing finishing processes.

There are also cases in which a word, although common to all South Arabian, clearly identifies different materials in one or more dialects, because the vocabulary was adapted to the different natural resources available in a given area.

12.25 Poster Session

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**12:55–14:30 LUNCH**  
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Ancient South Arabia (continued)

Chair: Ricardo Eichmann (*Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Bundesrepublik Deutschland*)

14:30 – Saturday – 25 July

BUCKLEY, Stephen

Department of Archaeology, University of York, York, UK
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Dr Stephen Buckley is an Honorary Research Associate in Bioarchaeology at the University of York. As part of the university's Mummy Research Group, he has studied human remains from Egypt, Nubia, Italy, Ireland, South and Central America and is currently undertaking long-term research into the mummification practices of ancient Yemen.

WORTHINGTON, Katherine

BioArCh, Departments of Archaeology, Biology and Chemistry, University of York, York, UK
Worthington.ka@googlemail.com

Katherine Worthington has just completed an MChem degree in Chemistry at the University of York. For the past year she has worked as part of the university's Mummy Research Group looking into mummification practices of ancient Yemen, focusing on chemical analysis of the leather and textiles associated with the mummies.

FLETCHER, Joann

Department of Archaeology, University of York, York, UK
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Dr Joann Fletcher is an Honorary Research and Teaching Fellow at the University of York where she teaches Egyptian archaeology and mummification. As part of the university's Mummy Research Group she has studied human remains from Egypt, Italy, the Canary Islands, Ireland and South America and is undertaking long-term research into the burial practices of ancient Yemen.

PENKMAN, Kirsty

Department of Chemistry /Department of Archaeology, University of York, York, UK
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Dr Kirsty Penkman is a Lecturer in Analytical Chemistry and Biomolecular Archaeology. Her interest is in the application of analytical chemistry to archaeological and geological questions. A particular focus is the analysis of proteins: their pathways of degradation, their methods of preservation, and how these molecules can inform us.

BUCKLEY, Michael

BioArCh, Departments of Archaeology, Biology and Chemistry, University of York, York, UK

Dr Mike Buckley is a Research Fellow and member of the University of York's BioArCh. His interest is in biomolecular methods for accurate species identification in archaeozoology. In particular, the use of proteomics and analytical biochemistry applied to bone and skin collagen for phylogenetic analyses of archaeological remains.

KOON, Hannah

BioArCh, Departments of Archaeology, Biology and Chemistry, University of York, York, UK
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Hannah Koon is a Wellcome Research Fellow developing tools to detect sub-clinical pathology in scorbutic bone. She completed her PhD in 2006 developing a new model of collagen deterioration

Study of leather involved in ancient Yemeni burial practices

Following preliminary work carried out to investigate mummification practices in ancient Yemen, which focused primarily on the embalming materials and textiles associated with the bodies (Buckley *et al*), this

current study examines the leather encasing the bodies. It presents the results of the scientific analyses of leather samples taken from seven Yemeni mummies, dating from c. 1200 BC to 300 BC, with consideration for the possible symbolic and ritualistic significance of the results. Analytical techniques which have already proved to be successful on archaeological samples are being employed in this study, including Reverse Phase High Pressure Liquid Chromatography (RP-HPLC), Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC) and proteomics-Mass Spectrometry (Humpula, Ostrom *et al.* 2007; Nielsen-Marsh, Richards *et al.* 2005 & Buckley, Collins & Thomas-Oates 2008). RP-HPLC showed that six of the seven archaeological leather samples had high concentrations of amino acids with expected collagen-like profiles, while the one exception appears to be completely mineralised. As a technique commonly used in the leather manufacturing industry to test different tanning agents, DSC is being used to assess the quality of tanning and state of preservation of the leather samples, with further analysis aimed at species identification of the leather being carried out using proteomics-MS.

References

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**14:55 – Saturday – 25 July**

**YULE, Paul**

*Seminar für Sprachen und Kulturen des Vorderen Orients, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Bundesrepublik Deutschland*

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Paul Yule completed his *habilitation* at the University of Heidelberg, where he currently teaches. His most important publications deal with the early metallurgy of South Asia as well as Arabia of the late pre-Islamic and early medieval periods. He is a proven fund raiser with numerous successful projects and a corresponding Member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut.

#### **Fieldwork in Zafār, capital of Himyar (Yemen)**

From 1998 to 2009, nine seasons of survey-mapping, museum cataloguing and excavation in and around Zafār have revealed considerable information about the Himyarite empire (c. 270–523) and late/post (523–632) periods, which comprise the temporal focus of our project. The subject of this presentation is the excavation results of the campaign that took place in February and March of 2009. The main object of study is the so-called Stone Building, which we began to investigate in 2004. This turns out to be a large (presently 18 m x 18 m) courtyard, which lies inside of what appears to be temple, to judge from the motifs in the reliefs. The campaign of 2007 cleared most of the northern end of the court and associated building. This season we propose to clear the rest of the adjacent features in the central portion. To date, this excavation has yielded several hundred relief fragments – more than other sites. Radiocarbon determinations suggest that these do not date as late as suspected, but rather largely in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. Palaeobotanic investigations are intended to shed light on the ancient environment, particularly its vegetation.

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15:20 – Saturday – 25 July

LEWIS, Krista

Department of Anthropology, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, USA

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Dr Krista Lewis is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Lewis is an archaeologist specializing in food and agriculture in prehistoric and early historic south-west Arabia and directs a long-term research project in the Dhamār region of highland Yemen.

KHALIDI, Lamya

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Dr Khalidi received her PhD at the University of Cambridge in 2006. Her dissertation focused on late prehistoric culture-contact along the Tihāmah Red Sea coastal plain, Yemen. Besides her work with the Dhamār Survey Project in the Yemen highlands, she has directed four survey projects in Yemen, as well as a reconnaissance mission in Eritrea. Other current projects include the Franco-Italian Paleo-Y Mission, Yemen, and excavations at the sites of Tell Hamoukar and Tell Brak, Syria. She was a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at

the Department of Anthropology, University of Louisville, KY during the Spring Term 2009 and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre d'Étude Préhistoire, Antiquité, Moyen Age (CEPAM-CNRS) in Valbonne, France.

ISENBERGER, Bill

Cartographer, Digital Mapping & Graphics, Springfield, Missouri, USA

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William H. Isenberger, CEO of Digital Mapping and Graphics, Springfield, Missouri, specializes in archaeological cartography, GIS development and digital reconstructions. From the early 1980s, Isenberger has been involved in over 300 archaeological and historical projects, primarily in the United States and the Middle East with extensive experience in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Oman.

SANABANI, Ali

Director of the Museum of Archaeology in the Dhamar Province, Republic of Yemen

Mapping Maṣnaʿah Maryāḥ: Using GIS to reconstruct the development of a multi-period site in the Highlands of Yemen

The 2008 University of Arkansas at Little Rock Archaeological Project in Yemen's field season was dedicated to creating a detailed, three-dimensional map of the 40.4 hectare highland site of Maṣnaʿah Maryāḥ, occupied from the Neolithic to the Ḥimyarite period. In addition to precise mapping of topography, buildings, streets, birkahs and other cultural features visible on the surface, we conducted a comprehensive assessment of the distribution of cultural artefacts across the site's surface. This work has also clarified Maṣnaʿah Maryāḥ's cultural chronology as it developed from a town with a focus on ceremonial space in the Bronze and Iron Ages to an urban defensive and trade outpost in the Ḥimyarite period. The artefact densities and distributions systematically mapped out across the site reflect a number of processes that allow us to understand the use of space through time. We have identified evident access routes for local obsidian procurement and trade, specialized areas for iron working, drainage patterns, water management strategies, as well as areas currently heavily affected by and prone to erosion. This paper explains the mapping strategy developed at Maryāḥ and presents the implications of the data for the spatial, socio-political and economic transformation of this site over several millennia.

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**15:40–16:10 TEA**  
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Ancient South Arabia (continued)

Chair: Janet Starkey (*Durham University, Durham, UK*)

16:10 – Saturday – 25 July

WOLF, Pawel

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin, Bundesrepublik Deutschland

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Pawel Wolf (Dr-phil.) was born in 1958 in Moscow, Russia. He is a Sudan-archaeologist and Egyptologist; from 1992 has been conducting archaeological fieldwork projects in Sudan (Musawwarat al- Ṣufrāh, Jabal Barkal, Meroë city, at the 4th Nile Cataract, etc.) and in Eritrea (Qohaito). At present he is directing excavations at Wuqro/Tigray (Almaqah temple) and Hamadab/Sudan (Meroitic settlement).

The Almaqah temple near Wuqro (Tigray, Ethiopia)

After the discovery of an inscribed and well preserved libation altar, a seated female statue (similar to the one from Adi Galamo), incense altars, and inscribed stone blocks by the Tigray Tourism & Culture Commission (TCC) in December 2007, an archaeological survey and excavations were started at the site by a newly founded Ethiopian–German Archaeological Project (TCC – German Archaeological Institute – F.-Schiller –University Jena).

Our preliminary excavations at the site of *Mekaber Ga'ewa* near Wuqro revealed early evidence of South Arabian activity in Tigray: a single-roomed temple with porticus, surrounded by a wide forecourt with subsidiary rooms. According to the inscribed altar objects, it was dedicated to the Sabaeen god *Almaqah*. The altar and the inscribed objects, dating to the early first millennium BC, belong to its first building period and are still *in situ* at their original place within the temple's *cella*. Their *Ethio-Sabaeen* inscriptions mention a hitherto unknown king of *D'm't*, as well as for the first time the ancient name of *Yeha*. The survey revealed further ancient sites although not exactly dateable at the present state of research. The paper presents the excavation results, fieldwork activities until present, and gives a short idea of future research plans.

South Arabian Ethnography

Chair: Janet Starkey (*Durham University, Durham, UK*)

16:35 – Saturday – 25 July

AGIUS, Dionisius A.

MARES Project, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK

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Professor Dionisius A. Agius is known for his work on Islamic material culture, maritime ethnography and Arabic language and linguistics. He has conducted ethnographical fieldwork among seafaring communities on the coasts of the Arabian Peninsula and the African Red Sea coast, and is the author of several volumes on the subject. His present research is on the history of watercraft typology, nomenclature of parts of boats and maritime ethnography of the Red Sea.

COOPER, John

MARES Project, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK

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Dr John P. Cooper completed his doctoral thesis on the navigation and landscape of the medieval Egyptian Nile, investigating the medieval Nile network, sailing conditions and journey times, and the factors determining the location of major ports. His current research focuses on boat-building traditions in Yemen.

ZAZZARO, Chiara

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Dr Chiara Zazzaro's area of expertise is the maritime archaeology of the Red Sea and Horn of Africa, on which subject she wrote her PhD thesis at the University of Naples 'L'Orientale'. She has been involved in excavations at the Pharaonic harbour of Marsa Gawasis, Egypt, where she was field director in 2007–2008. Her current research focus is the pre-Islamic Red Sea.

VAN RENSBURG, Julian Jansen

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Julian Jansen van Rensburg is a PhD student investigating the maritime traditions of the island of Socotra. He has co-authored and published several articles related to fieldwork on the island and in Iran. He has worked for the Cambridge Archaeology Unit, and Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology, and on numerous overseas projects.

Wooden boatbuilding in Yemen: Arabia's last redoubt (The MARES Project)

The MARES Project team at Exeter University aims to study the maritime heritage of the Red Sea and the Arabian/Persian Gulf. For our first fieldwork excursion we chose Yemen's Gulf of Aden and Red Sea coasts as potentially rich areas of maritime tradition. Like Oman, Yemen is distinguished by unique boatbuilding practices, and is one of the last redoubts of wooden boatbuilding in the Arabian Peninsula. In the past 5–10 years, however construction of wooden boats has largely come to an end, to be replaced by fibreglass boats. Our fieldwork (February 2009) involved a preliminary survey of current and former boatbuilding centres in the region, including Aden, Khawr al-Ghurayrah, al-Makha, al-Khukha, al-Hudaydah and al-Salif: the survey aimed to develop an understanding of the state-of-play of the wooden boatbuilding industry, and to understand local boat typology and construction, boatbuilding techniques, and timber types and sources. Boats in these areas were surveyed, and ethnographic interviews conducted with boat carpenters, mariners and fishermen. It became apparent from our survey that the wooden boatbuilding tradition is rapidly disappearing, and that both the material culture and human expertise and traditions surrounding the wooden boatbuilding tradition are dying out, and that there is an urgent need to recording and document this tradition before the data are lost. So far, our fieldwork has enabled us to establish a preliminary classification of dhow types, and deepened our understanding of the boat construction sequence, including a hitherto unknown process of keel-final construction. We have also developed an understanding of maintenance and decorative practices. Meanwhile, ethnographic interviews have deepened our understanding of navigational practices of local fishing people, and of the mariners who sailed these traditional dhows. A longer-term objective of the project is to examine coastal sites that on this visit were identified as potentially important ancient and medieval Islamic port sites.

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17:00 – Saturday – 25 July

**RODIONOV, Mikhail**

*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Science, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation*  
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Mikhail A. Rodionov is a Professor at the Oriental Department of the St. Petersburg State University and is Head of the South and Southwest Asia Department at the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences. His interests include Arabian field ethnology, folk poetry and religion.

**A *şarf* talisman from Ghayl Bā Wazīr, Hadramawt**

This paper addresses written and functional aspects of magic practices still in use in South Arabia. Based on new data collected during my 2008 year field season in Ḥaḍramawt, it provides a case-study of a talisman, the photocopy of which I made with the permission of ʿUmar Bā Maṭraf, the custodian of the Cultural Centre in Ghayl Bā Wazir. The talisman belongs to the *şarf* category (literally a pebble) because the strongest magic texts have to be written on flat stones with a durable paint (e.g. either saffron or dragon’s blood) in the belief that the integrity of letters and material guards the power of a talisman. The *şarf* under examination, however, was written on paper, according to modern practice. It was kept between two layers of leather in a dagger sheath of a Bedouin ʿAwaḍ b. Ṭifla (in this kind of talismans only maternal names matter). When compared with the manuscripts on magic from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of St Petersburg, the *şarf*’s text seems to have been styled in conformity with *Shams al-maʿārif* by Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Būnī (d. 622 /1225). Local people agree that tradition of written talismans (*al-katba*), both malevolent and benevolent, is in force in the Ghayl and elsewhere with its rich variety of cultural and functional features.

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17:25 – Closing Remarks

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