

# THE ARABIAN PENINSULA IN MODERN TIMES: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

J.E. Peterson

**A paper presented at the Gulf/2000 history conference in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, 2009. To appear in Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Gulf in Modern Times: Peoples, Ports and History*.**

## Introduction

In an article published in 1991, I wrote that “The outlines of Arabia’s modern history are well known. It is the underlying firmament that remains *terra incognita*.”<sup>1</sup> To be sure, much of the territory still remains unknown or unexplored, but, on the positive side, significant inroads have been made over the two decades since then.

This survey is an update of that earlier article. The review of recent literature not only reflects an augmentation of publications but a (seemingly paradoxical) broadening and narrowing of focus. I remarked in the earlier essay that much of the literature was descriptive or narrative. An increasing proportion is more rigorously analytical and methodological, building on the foundations provided by earlier “classical” or seminal works.

The directions of recent literature seem to be determined by two independent variables. One is the unfolding of events that alter the canvas. If British withdrawal from the Gulf, the quickening of American interest, the Iranian revolution, and the Iran-Iraq War shaped key regional and domestic developments in the 1970s and 1980s, the landscape of the subsequent decades has been equally forcefully shaped – or scarred – by such events as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Yemeni civil war, 9/11, the Palestinian *intifadas*, and the American-led invasion of Iraq. Inevitably this has had enormous impact on both the selection of subjects and the approaches taken to studying them. As a prominent example, the Iranian Revolution and subsequent events focused more attention on the political role of Islam and virtually dealt a death knell to the emphasis on the role of the military and secular ideologies. Surprisingly,

---

1. “The Arabian Peninsula in Modern Times: A Historiographical Survey,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 96, No. 5 (December 1991), pp. 1435-1449. The quotation is from p. 1449.

discussion of the topic of a “new middle class,” although perhaps more pertinent than ever, has disappeared as well. More recently, the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the emergence of the global threat of al-Qa’idah and its allies have more tightly focused attention on militant and extremist Islamists. Much of this writing has been policy-oriented and geared to impressing policy-makers and/or the general public. Nevertheless, solid scholarly work has begun to distinguish this field.

My earlier article also remarked on the recent emergence of fragile and seemingly transitory states, given the fact that only two of the seven present states of the Peninsula existed in 1935. From the vantage point of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it appears that the process of state formation has taken deep root. Now the question is how will these states evolve given the pressures of socioeconomic development, political liberalization, globalization and erratic oil prices, socialization and Islamism, and vulnerability to external developments.

Second, another conclusion from my earlier article was that “historical scholarship [on the Arabian Peninsula] has yet to move beyond the comfortable horizons of country studies and political analysis.” (p. 1436) Fortunately, there has been a deepening in both the specificity of topics examined, the analytical and methodological tools used, and the quality of scholarship brought to bear on the region. Yemen has long been a popular subject and specialized centers cater to the relevant scholars. In the late 1980s, an attempt to create a Society for Gulf Arab Studies within the Middle East Studies Association eventually foundered due to the lack of interest. Perhaps now a critical mass on the Gulf side of the Peninsula has been reached.

It only seems prudent to begin with a few caveats – or explanations. My interpretation of what is “historical” will be rather broad for some tastes. It does seem important, though, to bring in a broader perspective on scholarly studies in the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, works that fall within the disciplines of political science, anthropology, and economics will find themselves cited in the following pages. All the references I will cite are in Western languages, since works in Arabic and Persian are covered by other speakers. Most of these works are in English, undoubtedly reflecting the long and deep relations between Britain and the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, as well as English being the nexus for academic writing today. But that should not obscure the recognition that there is an expanding body of literature in other Western languages, particularly French and German.

Reflecting my own interests, the restricted space for this survey, and logical continuation of the terms of my article mentioned earlier, the selection of works for citation is limited to the modern period and geographically to the Arabian Peninsula. Undoubtedly I have missed many pertinent and valuable publications. I beg for the reader’s indulgence and welcome comments and suggestions.

Who are these authors? In my earlier article, I made reference to the many books and articles written by a combination of foreign (heavily British) officials posted to the region and a cadre of intrepid travelers. These are the foundation stones upon which later work and subsequent generations of scholars and other observers have been able to build. We shall not see their like again. For at least some, questions may remain about their politics and their attitudes toward the peoples and culture of the region, but there can be little doubt about their dedication to accurate and often minute description, analysis, and translation. The sympathy and close identification of others is beyond doubt, among them Miles, Thesiger, Ingrams, Wilson, Lorimer, Cox, and Philby.

To be sure, there are diplomats today who publish on the region – and not always on policy-oriented matters. Many find it more convenient to write after their retirement. These may include subjects in which they have had personal interests, as well as memoirs and *mea culpas*, for example, Bernard Burrows and Glen Balfour-Paul.

Of course, a very significant and welcome development has been the growing emergence of scholars from the region. Many have done very competent doctoral work, some of which has been published in book or article form. Unfortunately, the majority seem subsequently to either pursue non-scholarly occupations or get caught in a social environment that deadens the scholarly impulse. There are disadvantages as well as advantages to being from the region or country on which one researches and writes.

There is also the curious phenomenon of scholars who have published on the Arabian Peninsula but then have disappeared from the literature. Some have pursued similar or other interests in a different geographic region, some maintained a scholarly interest in the subject only during and perhaps immediately after their doctoral dissertation/thesis work, and some have abandoned scholarly pursuits altogether. This was perhaps understandable in earlier times when access was extremely difficult. But it is surprising to see this phenomenon continuing into the last two decades.

There has always been a problem of access to the countries of the Peninsula in order to carry out scholarly research and fieldwork. Notably, this has eased in recent years. For example, access to Saudi Arabia was almost impossible and those who gained it tended either to work in the kingdom or have a personal connection with someone who did. In the last decade or so, however, the numbers of young scholars who have spent time in Saudi Arabia has burgeoned. Their ability to research and write intimately on their areas of specialization owes much to the liberalization of attitudes in the Peninsula to scholars. Many problems remain – for indigenous scholars as well as foreign ones – but progress has been made. In the meantime, scholars such as Assem Dessouki, Paul Dresch, Alexander Knysh, and Madawi al-Rasheed have contemplated the writing of history in and about the Arabian Peninsula and published their conclusions in recent years.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the 1990s, historical study of the region often and necessarily relied upon archives – and principally (although not exclusively) those found in London. The passage of time has altered this necessity. The multiplicity of secondary sources and their extensiveness has enabled many new directions to be pursued. External archives still dominate but these now include a growing number of state archives, such as Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, and especially Ottoman collections. The missing dimension is the difficulty in gaining access to the archival

---

2. Paul Dresch, “Imams and Tribes: The Writing and Acting of History in Upper Yemen,” in Phillip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds., *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 252-287; Assem Dessouki, “Social and Political Dimensions of the Historiography of the Arab Gulf,” in Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides, eds., *Statecraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), pp. 92-115; Madawi al-Rasheed, “Political Legitimacy and the Production of History: The Case of Saudi Arabia,” in Lenore G. Martin, ed., *New Frontiers in Middle East Security* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), pp. 25-46; *ibid.*, “The Capture of Riyadh Revisited: Shaping Historical Imagination in Saudi Arabia,” in Robert Vitalis and Madawi al-Rasheed, eds., *Counter-Narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 183-200; Alexander Knysh, “The Sada in History: A Critical Essay on Hadrami Historiography,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1999), pp. 215-222.

collections of regional states.<sup>3</sup>

While archives in the Peninsula remain closed or non-existent, there is more written material available in the Peninsula. Many government departments provide data on the Web. Newspapers are freely accessible. Some oral history collections do exist. A few commercial firms have allowed researchers to examine their archives. Above all, access to people is easier and often more productive.

Also in the farther realm of caveat, some classes of publication seem to be routinely overlooked. Let us not forget new editions. Some may be recent publications of works written a considerable time ago (as the dissertation of George Rentz), while others may be updates or reworkings of earlier books (Frauke Heard-Bey's survey of UAE history). Many "coffee table" books are just that, pretty objects to decorate the room. But the value of many other "coffee table" books should be recognized, both for the original work that has gone into the writing and for the value of the illustrations they contain. Furthermore, there has been a burgeoning of conferences on the region, organized both by outside groups (such as Gulf/2000) and by institutions within the region. This represents a far cry from such lonely beacons as the 1969 Oxford conference published as *The Arabian Peninsula: Society and Politics*<sup>4</sup> and the annual conferences of the Center for Arab Gulf Studies at the University of Exeter.

## Political History

*Country Studies.* One segment of literature that remains popular is the steady stream of country studies of various sorts. Some of these are reinterpretations, updates, or broader overarching studies of the Peninsula's constituent countries, often building upon or extending "classic" works published before 1990. Other studies concentrate on a particular period or slice of a country's history, most frequently on the 20<sup>th</sup> century and especially since roughly 1970. In addition, a few view the country's history through the prism of a particular theory or aspect. Somewhat surprisingly, regional and comparative studies on a countrywide level remain a persistent lacuna.<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly for monarchies, a frequent focus has been on the leadership role of monarchs and ruling families as a frame for the political direction and evolution of the country. Such studies can be either contemporary (i.e. starting in the early or mid-20th century and

---

3. I am self-consciously pleased that my work in researching and writing the official history of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) in Oman resulted in my creation of the SAF Archives, carefully preserved within the office of the Minister Responsible for Defense Affairs even though it will be many years before anyone is allowed to use them.

4. Derek Hopwood, ed., *The Arabian Peninsula: Society and Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972).

5. One of the few works, albeit a short one, to tackle the job is Frauke Heard-Bey's centenary lecture for the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, "The Gulf in the 20th Century." *Asian Affairs* (London), Vol. 33, Part 1 (February 2002), pp. 3-17. One could also include Hala Fattah's examination of trade in Iraq and the Gulf, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745-1900* (Ithaca, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997). Sheila Carapico has written a sweeping introduction to the study of the region in "Arabia Incognita: An Invitation to Arabian Peninsula Studies," in Robert Vitalis and Madawi al-Rasheed, eds., *Counter-Narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 11-34. Of course there are a number of survey and introductory works that cover the region, especially with chapters by various authors. As these are secondary in nature, they are not discussed here.

running up to the present or reasonably so), or focusing on particular reigns or historical periods. There are numerous examples of the former. As one might expect, the strongest focus has been on Saudi Arabia and Oman.

The formation of the Saudi state, in its three distinct phases, continues to provide fertile ground for analysis, as the works by Abdul Aziz Al Fahad, Alexei Vassiliev, Pascal Ménoret, and Madawi Al Rasheed demonstrate.<sup>6</sup> Another approach has been to choose a particular formative period in a country's history, as Joseph Kostiner has done.<sup>7</sup> In the meantime, changes in Saudi society, politics, and socioeconomic development have been explored by Tim Niblock, Michel Nehme, and Mordechai Abir.<sup>8</sup> Saudi Arabia continues to grapple with the succession process. The glacial pace of change in the kingdom quickened a little when 'Abdullah finally became king on the death of Fahd in 2005. But the aging line of sons of King 'Abd al-'Aziz will not last much longer and there still is no established mechanism to moving beyond another generation, as Joseph Kéchichian relates.<sup>9</sup>

Oman's leadership problem is the opposite of Saudi Arabia – there are not many choices. The reign of the enigmatic and reclusive Sa'id b. Taymur has drawn increasing attention in recent years with studies by Uzi Rabi, Francis Owtram, and Abdullah Al-Wuhaibi.<sup>10</sup> The transition to a modernizing régime under Sultan Qabus has been analyzed by Calvin Allen and Lynn Rigsbee, as well as myself.<sup>11</sup>

---

6. Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 2000; originally published in 1998 as *The History of Saudi Arabia, 1745-1994*); Madawi Al Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Abdulaziz H. Al Fahad, "The Imamah vs. the Iqal: Hadari-Bedouin Conflict and the Formation of the Saudi State," in Robert Vitalis and Madawi al-Rasheed, eds., *Counternarratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. xxx-xxx; and Pascal Ménoret, *L'Énigme saoudienne: Les Saoudiens et le monde, 1744-2003* (Paris: Éditions de la Découverte, 2003; tr. and published as *The Saudi Enigma: A History* (London: Zed Books, 2005).

7. Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia, 1916-1936: From Chieftaincy to Monarchical State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and his "Transforming Dualities: Tribe and State Formation in Saudi Arabia," in Phillip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds., *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 226-251.

8. Mordechai Abir, *Saudi Arabia: Government, Society and the Gulf Crises* (London: Routledge, 1993); Michel G. Nehme, "Saudi Arabia 1950-80: Between Nationalism and Religion," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (October 1994), pp. 931-943; *ibid.*, "Political Development in Saudi Arabia: Empty Reforms from Above," *International Sociology*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (June 1995), pp. 155-171; Tim Niblock, *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival* (London: Routledge, 2006).

9. Joseph A. Kechichian, *Succession in Saudi Arabia* (New York: Palgrave, April 2001).

10. Abdullah M.F. Al-Wuhaibi, "Oman Under Sultans Taimur and Sa'id, 1913-1970," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1995; Francis Owtram, *A Modern History of Oman: Formation of the State Since 1920* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); *ibid.*, "L'Oman et l'Occident: la formation de l'État omanais depuis 1920," in Marc Lavergne and Brigitte Dumortier, eds., *L'Oman contemporain: État, territoire, identité* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2002), pp. 55-73; and Uzi Rabi, *The Emergence of States in a Tribal Society: Oman under Sa'id bin Taymur, 1932-1970* (Eastbourne, East Sussex, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2006). Rabi also examines the "alternative" and older form of government in Oman through its last *imam* in "The Ibadhi Imamate of Muhammad bin 'Abdallah al-Khalili (1920-54): The Last Chapter of a Lost and Forgotten Legacy," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (March 2008), pp. 169-188.

11. Calvin H. Allen and W. Lynn Rigsbee, II, *Oman Under Qaboos: From Coup to Constitution, 1970-1996* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); J.E. Peterson, *The Emergence of Post-Traditional Oman* (Durham, UK: University of Durham, Institute of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 2004); and *ibid.*, "Oman: Three and a Half Decades of Change and Development," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 125-137. Another work is Miriam Joyce, *The Sultanate of Oman: A Twentieth Century History* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995).

The smaller Gulf states have been the subject of relatively less attention. The enduring experiment of the UAE, contrary to many expectations at its inception, has had to cope with the necessity of balancing the interests and quirks of seven different but simultaneous rulers, as Andrea Rugh and Henrik Van Der Meulen show.<sup>12</sup> Kuwait's experience has also been unique in another direction, beginning with the consolidation of power in the hands of the Al Sabah and Kuwait's willingness to contemplate political participation, along with being the leader in the Gulf in the learning experience of development. These themes are explored in Kamal Osman Salih's articles, B.J. Slot's books, and the studies by Jacqueline Ismael and Mary Ann Tétreault.<sup>13</sup> The broad scope of Qatari history, including the emergence of the ruling Al Thani in the mid-19th century, is the subject of Habibur Rahman's work.<sup>14</sup> Pithy but comprehensive portraits of all five countries are to be found in Rosemarie Said Zahlan's *The Making of the Modern Gulf*.<sup>15</sup>

Prior to 1990, authors tended to concentrate on one or the other Yemen. Since 1990, Yemen has achieved a long ambition for unification, marred by the expulsion of Yemeni workers from Saudi Arabia and the loss of nearly all aid in 1990-1991. It suffered through a civil war provoked by the South's attempt to secede in 1994, and an unresolved state of hostilities in the far north in the 2000s. The country continues to face almost unsurmountable problems of poverty, alienation, Islamist extremism, corruption, and a growing lack of water. Paul Dresch's survey of Yemeni history brings the story of Yemen up to date through the post-unification era, thus supplementing and extending earlier country studies. His book complements Sheila Carapico's study of civil society in both separate and unified Yemen.<sup>16</sup>

One approach in country studies has been to use specific rulers as prisms through which to filter political developments. Saudi Arabia has been a particularly popular choice for this – as in the works by Sarah Yizraeli, Uwe Pfullmann, and Joseph Kéchichian<sup>17</sup> – but the undeniable

---

12. Hendrik Van Der Meulen, "The Role of Tribal and Kinship Ties in the Politics of the United Arab Emirates" (Ph.D. dissertation, Tufts University, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1997); and Andrea B. Rugh, *The Political Culture of Leadership in the United Arab Emirates* (New York: PalgraveMacMillan, 2007).

13. Salih, Kamal Osman. "Kuwait: Political Consequences of Modernization, 1750-1986," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1991), pp. 46-66; *ibid.*, "The 1938 Kuwait Legislative Council," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1992), pp. 66-100; Ben J. Slot, *The Origins of Kuwait* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991); *ibid.*, "Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity," in Slot, ed., *Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity* (London: Arabian Publishing, 2003), pp. 5-29; Jacqueline S. Ismael, *Kuwait: Dependency and Class in a Rentier State* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993); Mary Ann Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

14. Habibur Rahman, *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years, 1627-1916* (London: Kegan Paul, 2005).

15. Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989; rev. ed.; Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998).

16. Sheila Carapico, *Civil Society in Yemen: The Political Economy of Activism in Modern Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Relevant although sharply different articles include Robert D. Burrowes, "Prelude to Unification: The Yemen Arab Republic, 1962-1990," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (November 1991), pp. 483-506; Nahida Coussonnet, "Les assises du pouvoir zaydite au XIIIe siècle," *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, No. 67 (1993), pp. 24-37; and Jacque Couland, "Genèse et étapes de l'unité yéménite: trois décennies pour conclure," *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, No. 67 (1993), pp. 79-93. There is also the study of the National Liberation Front in South Yemen by a Russian scholar of the area, Vitaly V. Naumkin, *Red Wolves of Yemen: The Struggle for Independence* (Cambridge, UK: Oleander Press, 2004).

17. Sarah Yizraeli, *The Remaking of Saudi Arabia: The Struggle Between King Sa'ud and Crown Prince Faysal, 1953-1962* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1997);

personal impact of individual rulers on the course of modern history has also been examined for other countries, particularly Kuwait as discussed by Salwa Alghanem and B.J. Slot.<sup>18</sup> The anthropologist Gabriele vom Bruck has taken a slightly different view in elucidating the role of Yemen's *sadat*, the country's pre-revolution ruling class.<sup>19</sup>

Most work by scholars from the region on country-study topics has yet to be published. A few exceptions are Hussein Ghubash's revised French doctoral thesis on Oman and another revised thesis by Aqil Kazim on the UAE. Several other theses done in Britain remain unpublished and difficult to access. These include two on Oman, Said al-Hashimy's thesis on the Ibadī Imamate in Oman and Abdulmalik al-Hinai's study of state formation in Oman.<sup>20</sup>

*Sub-Country Studies.* The broad country-wide emphasis only explains part of what has happened and why in these countries. Narrower or more focused studies on smaller geographic units have also been a feature of the recent literature. Much of this has been devoted to Saudi Arabia. But Saudi Arabia is a recent invention and its component parts have their own distinct pasts. The most prominent of them is of course Najd, the homeland of the Al Sa'ud as well as the location of their capital at Riyadh. But Najd itself is divided into distinct components. So while Uwaidah al-Juhany explores the pre-Al Sa'ud past, Madawi Al Rasheed and Michael Baran illuminate the role of the Al Rashid of Ha'il in northern Najd, who a century ago briefly supplanted the Al Sa'ud as rulers of all Najd.<sup>21</sup> The history of Riyadh has been laid

---

Joseph A. Kechichian, *Succession in Saudi Arabia* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

18. Salwa Alghanem, *The Reign of Mubarak al-Sabah, Sheikh of Kuwait, 1896-1915* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); Uwe Pfullmann, *Ibn Saud – König zwischen Tradition und Fortschritt* (Berlin: Edition Ost, 1999) and *ibid.*, "Thronfolge in SaudiArabien: Vom Anfang der wahhabitischen Bewegung bis 1953; Der matrilinearer Background im 'Abd al-'Aziz Zweig der Al Sa'ud Dynastie," *Archiv Oriental*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (1995), pp. 162-179; and B.J. Slot, *Mubarak Al-Sabah: Founder of Modern Kuwait, 1896-1915* (London: Arabian Publishing, 2005). In this regard, Uzi Rabi, "Oil Politics and Tribal Rulers in Eastern Arabia: The Reign of Shakhbut (1928-1966)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (May 2006), pp. 37-50, contributes a short study of Sa'id b. Taymur's contemporary, Shaykh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi, an example of being perhaps the right man in the right place but at the wrong time.

19. Gabriele vom Bruck, *Islam, Memory, and Morality in Yemen: Ruling Families in Transition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

20. Said bin Muhammed bin Said al-Hashimy, "Imam Salim b. Rashid and the Imamate Revival in Oman 1331/1913 – 1338/1920" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1994); Hussein Ghubash, *Oman: une démocratie islamique millénaire, la tradition de l'Imâma, l'histoire politique moderne (1500-1970)* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1998; translated into Arabic as *'Uman: al-dimuqratiyah al-islamiyah, taqalid al-imamah fi al-tarikh al-siyasi al-hadith (1500-1970)* [Beirut: Dar al-Jadid, 1997]; and translated into English as *Oman: The Islamic Democratic Tradition* [London: Routledge, 2006]); Aqil Kazim, *The United Arab Emirates, A.D. 600 the Present: A Socio-Discursive Formation in the Arabian Gulf* (Dubai: Gulf Book Centre, 2000); Abdulmalik Abdullah al-Hinai, "State Formation in Oman, 1861-1970" (Ph.D. thesis, London School of Economics, 2000) and *ibid.*, "Aspects des antagonismes sociaux en Oman: marchands contre paysans (1861-1960)," in Marc Lavergne and Brigitte Dumortier, eds., *L'Oman contemporain: État, territoire, identité* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2002), pp. 43-54.

21. Madawi Al Rasheed, *Politics in an Arabian Oasis: The Rashidi Tribal Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991); *ibid.*, "Durable and NonDurable Dynasties: The Rashidis and Sa'udis in Central Arabia," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1992), pp. 144-158 (reprinted as "Dynasties durable et non durables: le Al Rachid et les Sa'ud en Arabie centrale," *Maghreb-Machrek*, No. 147 (1995), pp. 13-25); *ibid.*, "The Rashidi Dynasty: Political Centralization Among the Shammar of North Arabia," in R.L. Bidwell, G. Rex Smith, and J.R. Smart, eds., *New Arabian Studies*, Vol. 2 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), pp. 140-152; *ibid.*, "Tribal Confederations and Emirates in Central Arabia," in Faleh Abdul-Jabar and Hosham Dawod, eds., *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi, 2003), pp. 214-233; Michael Baran, "The Rashidi Amirate of Hayl: The Rise, Development and Decline of a Pre-modern Arabian Principality, 1835-1921" (Ph.D. dissertation,

out by William Facey.<sup>22</sup>

On the other side of the Peninsula, al-Hijaz has an even more storied past, in part because the holiest sites of Islam are to be found there in Makkah and al-Madinah. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century following the demise of the Ottoman Empire, saw the struggle for control of al-Hijaz between the Hawashim (or Hashimis, the family that had exercised responsibility for the holy cities over centuries) and the Al Sa'ud (the evangelizing expansionists from Najd) in favor of the latter. This conflict has been dissected in recent decades by Joshua Teitelbaum in his books and articles, as well as in the articles of William Ochsenwald, Joseph Kostiner, and Suleiman Mousa. In addition, Hijazi scholar Mai Yamani has examined the persistent lure of Hijazi nationalism. At the southern tip of the kingdom lies 'Asir, incorporated into Saudi Arabia in the early half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but previously an independent Idrisi state, as Anne Bang shows.<sup>23</sup>

Oman has also received attention from Paolo Costa and myself because its capital, Muscat, was until 1970 one of the best preserved capitals in the world.<sup>24</sup> The history of its regions has been largely unexplored, although the survey of Qalhat under the Kings of Hormuz by Mohammed Redha and Bernadette Bhacker can be mentioned. This is not true of Yemen where Shelagh Weir has studied the tribes of a far northern part of the country while Paul Dresch also examines tribal documents in a different area. Two articles look at other areas – E.J. Keall the faded town of Zabid in the Tihamah and H. Matsumoto a region farther inland. To the southwest, Linda Boxberger expands on works about the Hadramawt and the far eastern reaches of Yemen. In the Gulf, Christopher Davidson has explored the explosive growth of Dubai.<sup>25</sup>

---

University of Michigan, 1992); and Uwaidah M. al-Juhany, *Najd Before the Salafi Reform Movement: Social, Political, and Religious Conditions During the Three Centuries Preceding the Rise of the Saudi State* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, in association with the King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives, 2002).

22. William Facey, *Riyadh: The Old City From Its Origins Until the 1950s* (London: Immel, 1992). Facey is also co-author, along with Gillian Grant, of *Kuwait by the First Photographers* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

23. Suleiman Mousa, "Sharif Husayn and Developments Leading to the Arab Revolt," in R.B. Serjeant, R.L. Bidwell, and G. Rex Smith, eds., *New Arabian Studies*, Vol. 1 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993), pp. 36-53; Joseph Kostiner, "Prologue of Hashemite Downfall and Saudi Ascendancy: A New Look at the Khurma Dispute, 1917-1919," in Asher Susser and Aryeh Shmuelevitz, eds., *The Hashemites in the Modern Arab World: A Festschrift in Honour of the Late Professor Uriel Dann* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), pp. 47-64; Anne K. Bang, *The Idrisi State in 'Asir, 1906-1934: Politics, Religion, and Personal Prestige* (Bergen, Norway: Bergen Studies on the Middle East and Africa, 1996); Joshua Teitelbaum, *The Rise and Fall of the Hashemite Kingdom of Arabia* (London: C. Hurst, for the Tel Aviv University Moshe Dayan Center, 2001); *ibid.*, "'Taking Back' the Caliphate: Sharif Husayn ibn 'Ali, Mustafa Kemal, and the Ottoman Caliphate," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2000), pp. 412-424; *ibid.*, "Pilgrimage Politics: The Hajj and Saudi-Hashemite Rivalry, 1916-1925," in Asher Susser and Aryeh Shmuelevitz, eds., *The Hashemites in the Modern Arab World: A Festschrift in Honour of the Late Professor Uriel Dann* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), pp. 65-84; *ibid.*, "Sharif Husayn ibn 'Ali and the Hashemite Vision of the Post-Ottoman Order: From Chieftaincy to Suzerainty," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January 1998), pp. 103-122; Mai Yamani, *Cradle of Islam: The Hijaz and the Quest for an Arabian Identity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); and William Ochsenwald, "Islam and Loyalty in the Saudi Hijaz, 1926-1939," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2007), pp. 732.

24. Paolo M. Costa, "Historical Interpretation of the Territory of Muscat," in Paolo M. Costa and Maurizio Tosi, eds., *Oman Studies: Papers on the Archaeology and History of Oman* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989; Serie Orientale Roma, Vol. 63), pp. 97-117; J.E. Peterson, *Historical Muscat: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

25. E.J. Keall, "Drastic Changes in 16th Century Zabid," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 21 (1991), pp. 79-96; H. Matsumoto, "The History of 'Uzlah and Mikhlah in North Yemen," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 24 (1994), pp. 175-182; Linda Sue Boxberger, "Conflicts of Interests, Contests of

*Biographies and Autobiographies.* Works of this genre abound, adding to the richness of understanding and presenting different as well as more personal points of view. The majority of this category of the literature involves Westerners who have lived and worked in the region but there is a healthy sub-genre of studies of local personalities. Not surprisingly, given the crucial role of personal leadership in these states, many biographical works deal with rulers. The additions are welcome because of the paucity of material except on King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz of Saudi Arabia. It is not surprising that so much has been written on King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, his life, his creation of the Third Saudi State, and his relations with foreign powers, given his pivotal role in modern history. The numbers of books, articles, and other studies on him virtually mushroomed in the 1960s and 1970s. One needs to be either foolhardy or extremely insightful to base work within the confines of that subject today. There is little original that can yet be written and the quality of writing ranges from incisive to hagiographic.<sup>26</sup> Another formative figure in Saudi Arabia’s history, Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of the school of thought that Westerners often refer to as Wahhabism, continues to receive attention as well from Esther Peskes and by the publication after many years of the seminal doctoral dissertation by George Rentz.

Longtime Saudi Arabian minister, writer, and poet Ghazi Algosaihi is one of the few Gulf politicians to publish an autobiography. A more recent but equally imposing figure in Saudi history, King Faysal, is the subject of a biography by Joseph Kéchichian, while David Ottaway has produced a study of Saudi Arabia’s long-time ambassador to the US, Prince Bandar b. Sultan.<sup>27</sup> From a different point of view, Mamoun Fandy has produced pen portraits of prominent Saudi dissident leaders and Steve Coll chronicles the history of the Bin Ladin family, far more complex than caricatured in the popular image of Usamah b. Ladin.<sup>28</sup>

Elsewhere in the Gulf, Robert Jarman has written on Amir Sabah of Kuwait and Andrew Wheatcroft on Amir Salman of Bahrain, both 20<sup>th</sup>-century rulers.<sup>29</sup> A rare autobiography has

---

Ideals: Change in the Qu’ayti and the Kathiri Sultanates of Hadramawt (Yemen), 1880s-1930s” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1998); Mohammed Redha Bhacker and Bernadette Bhacker, “Qalhat in Arabian History: Context and Chronicles,” *Journal of Oman Studies*, Vol. 13 (2004), pp. 11-56; Paul Dresch, *The Rules of Barat: Tribal Documents from Yemen* (Sanaa: Centre Français d’Archéologie et de Sciences Sociales and Deutches Archäologisches Institut, 2006); and Shelagh Weir, *A Tribal Order: Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007); Christopher Davidson, *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success* (London: Hurst; New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

26. One recent work is Sa’id A. Al-Harhi, *King Abdul Aziz: An International Perspective* (Riyadh: Al-Qimam Multimedia, 2004).

27. Esther Peskes, *Muhammad b. ‘Abdalwahhab (1703-92) in Widerstreit: Untersuchungen zur Rekonstruktion der Frühgeschichte der* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993); Ghazi A. Algosaihi, *Yes, (Saudi) Minister! A Life in Administration* (London: London Centre of Arab Studies, 1999); George S. Rentz, *The Birth of the Islamic Reform Movement in Saudi Arabia: Muhammad b. ‘Abd alWahhab (1703/41792) and the Beginnings of Unitarian Empire in Arabia* (edited with an introduction by William Facey; London: Arabian Publishing, 2004); Joseph A. Kéchichian, *Faysal: Saudi Arabia’s King for All Seasons* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008); David B. Ottaway, *The King’s Messenger: Prince Bandar bin Sultan and America’s Tangled Relationship with Saudi Arabia* (New York: Walker, 2008).

28. Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent* (New York: St. Martin’s Press; Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1999); Steve Coll, *The Bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century* (New York: Penguin, 2008).

29. Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa: Ruler of Bahrain 1942-1961* (London: Kegan Paul, 1994); Robert L. Jarman, *Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait, 1965-1977: A Political Biography* (London: London Centre of Arab Studies, 2002).

been penned by Easa Saleh al-Gurg, a prominent Dubai businessman and UAE ambassador to the United Kingdom. The study of established merchant families in the Gulf has been enhanced by a “biography” of Bahrain’s best known family by family member Khalid M. Kanoo and by James Onley’s articles on an earlier Perso-Bahraini family.<sup>30</sup> In 1947, Imam Yahya took a radical step for Yemen and sent a small group of young men out of the country for education. These “Famous Forty” and the several hundred other Yemenis educated abroad until 1959 are the focus of Robert Burrowes’ article. Another rare autobiography has been published by Mohsin Alaini, a prime mover behind the fledgling Yemen Arab Republic as frequent prime minister and foreign minister, and translated into English. In counterpoint, a voice from Aden and the founder of South Yemen’s Communist Party, ‘Abdullah Ba Dhib, is discussed by A.K. al-Ilbi.<sup>31</sup>

Westerners involved with Arabia have produced far more autobiographies and have been the subject of both casual and serious biographers. The substantial genre of travel writing, which revealed so many details of the lives of authors, has been largely superseded by guidebooks as mass tourism has entered the region.<sup>32</sup> Britain has had the most substantial and enduring relationship with Arabia and the Gulf of any Western power. Not only is there a long history of diplomatic ties with regional entities but the smaller Gulf states were British “protected states” as mentioned below. Consequently, British memoirs published in the last two decades have been written by Political Residents, Political Agents, and Resident Advisers in the Gulf and South Arabia. Through their pages, the reader can gain understanding of the transition from the Indian Political Service and from Sudan administration to the Gulf, which occurred in the decades prior to official British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971.

A number of these books were penned prior to 1990 but more recently Julian Walker has written of his time in the Gulf while Michael Crouch and Nigel Groom recount their experiences in British-administered South Arabia.<sup>33</sup> Former Political Resident Bernard Burrows followed up an earlier chronicle of his time in the Gulf with a more general autobiography of his diplomatic

---

30. Easa Saleh al-Gurg, *The Wells of Memory: An Autobiography* (London: John Murray, 1998); Khalid M. Kanoo, *The House of Kanoo: A Century of an Arabian Business* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); James Onley, “Transnational Merchants in the Nineteenth Century Gulf: The Case of the Safar Family,” in Madawi Al-Rasheed, ed., *Transnational Connections and the Arab Gulf* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), pp. 59-89; and *ibid.*, “Transnational Merchant Families in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Gulf,” in Alanoud Alsharekh, ed., *The Gulf Family: Kinship Policies and Modernity* (London: Saqi, 2007), pp. 37-56.

31. A.K. al-Ilbi, “L’apport de Abd Allah Badhiub (1931-1976) à l’analyse de la formation socio-economique du Yemen,” *Cahiers du GREMAMO*, Vol. 10 (1991), pp. 171-178; Robert D. Burrowes, “The Famous Forty and Their Companions: North Yemen’s First-Generation Modernists and Educational Emigrants,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Winter 2005), pp. 81-97; Mohsin A. Alaini, *50 Years in Shifting Sands: Personal Experience in the Building of a Modern State in Yemen* (translated by Hassan al-Haifi; Beirut: Dar An-Nahar, 2004).

32. Fortunately, that effective demise of exploratory travel writing has not put an end to writing about travelers: Michael, Wolfe, ed., *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing About the Muslim Pilgrimage* (New York: Grove, 1997); Terence Clark, “The British in Oman Since 1645,” in Paul and Janet Starkey, *Unfolding the Orient: Travellers in Egypt and the Near East* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2002); Hilal Al-Hajri, “British Travellers in Oman from 1627 to 1970,” in Andrzej Kapiszewski, Abdulrahman alSalimi, and Andrzej Pikulski, eds., *Modern Oman: Studies on Politics, Economy, Environment, and Culture of the Sultanate* (Krakow: Ksiegarnia Akademicka, 2006), pp. 63-88.

33. Michael Crouch, *An Element of Luck: To South Arabia and Beyond* (London: Radcliffe Press, 1993); Julian Walker, *Tyro on the Trucial Coast* (Durham, UK: Memoir Club, 1999); Nigel Groom, *Sheba Revealed: A Posting to Bayhan in the Yemen* (London: London Centre of Arab Studies, 2002).

career, as did retired ambassadors Ivor Lucas and Glencairn Balfour Paul.<sup>34</sup> The redoubtable Gertrude Bell, who held a variety of positions in Iraq and the Gulf states throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, is the subject of biographies by Georgina Howell and Liora Lukitz, and has had her diaries edited by Rosemary O'Brien. An attempt to explain the attitudes and behavior of British officialdom in the Gulf through their public school experiences was published by Paul Rich.<sup>35</sup>

Another treasure trove of British autobiography are the memoirs of military men serving in Arabia. Oman, with two internal wars, has been a particular focus of this genre, with post-1990 books by Johnny Cooper, who served with the Special Air Service (SAS) in Oman's 1950s Jabal Akhdar War, former commanders of the Oman armed forces Corran Purdon and John Graham, and former field officers Peter Thwaites and Ian Gardiner, who relate their experiences in the 1960s/1970s Dhufar War. Two other military memoirs of interest that include service in Arabia are by Peter de la Billière, who commanded British forces in the 1991 Kuwait War, and A.J. Deane-Drummond, a storied commander of the SAS. Finally, Xan Fielding has recounted the life of British army officer and politician Billy McLean, who saw action with the royalists during the 1960s North Yemen civil war.<sup>36</sup> Prince Khalid b. Sultan, the commander of Arab forces during the 1991 liberation of Kuwait and son of the Saudi Minister of Defense and Aviation, is probably the only Gulf military officers to pen an autobiography.<sup>37</sup>

The early days of Arabia's oil industry was dominated by larger-than-life men. Aileen Keating tells the story of Frank Holmes, a pioneering geologist who acquired and lost what became Arabia's biggest concessions. Early ARAMCO head Thomas Barger has published some of his correspondence of the late 1930s while Fahd al-Semari and Jill Roberg have edited the recollections of a number of Americans who lived and worked in the kingdom. Speaking of Americans, Shaykh Sultan al-Qasimi, historian and the Ruler of Sharjah, has written a short biography of an apparently American cabin boy who became the virtual ruler of Oman's southern region of Dhufar in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. French medical doctor Claudie Fayein, who earlier published her autobiography of life in Yemen in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, recounts events in

---

34. Ivor Lucas, *A Road to Damascus: Mainly Diplomatic Memoirs from the Middle East* (London: Radcliffe Press, 1997); Bernard Burrows, *Diplomats in a Changing World* (Durham, UK: The Memoir Club, 2001); Glencairn Balfour Paul, *Bagpipes in Babylon: A Lifetime in the Arab World and Beyond* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

35. Paul Rich, *The Invasions of the Gulf: Radicalism, Ritualism and the Shaikhs* (Cambridge, UK: Allborough Press, 1991; apparently derived from "The Rule of Ritual in the Arabian Gulf, 1858-1947: The Influence of English Public Schools" [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Western Australia, Perth, 1989]); Rosemary O'Brien, ed., *The Arabian Diaries, 1913-1914, by Gertrude Bell* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Georgina Howell, *Daughter of the Desert: The Remarkable Life of Gertrude Bell* (London: Macmillan, 2006; published in the US as *Gertrude Bell* [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007]); Liora Lukitz, *A Quest in the Middle East: Gertrude Bell and the Making of Modern Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006). A related study of interest is Maria Holt, "Memories of Arabia and Empire: An Oral History of the British in Aden," *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Winter 2004), pp. 93-112.

36. Xan Fielding, *One Man in His Time: The Life of Lieutenant-Colonel N.L.D. ('Billy') McLean, DSO* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Johnny Cooper with Anthony Kemp, *One of the Originals: The Story of a Founder Member of the SAS* (London: Pan, 1991); A.J. Deane-Drummond, *The Arrows of Fortune* (London: Leo Cooper, 1992); Corran Purdon, *List the Bugle: Reminiscences of an Irish Soldier* (Antrim, UK: Greystone Books, 1993); Peter de la Billière, *Looking for Trouble: An Autobiography – from the SAS to the Gulf* (London: HarperCollins, 1994); Peter Thwaites, completed by Simon Sloane, *Muscat Command* (London: Leo Cooper, 1995); John Graham, *Ponder Anew: Reflections on the Twentieth Century* (Staplehurst, UK: published privately by Spellmount, 1999); Ian Gardiner, *In the Service of the Sultan: A First Hand Account of the Dhofar Insurgency* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Books, 2006).

37. HRH Khaled Bin Sultan, *Desert Warrior* (London: HarperCollins, 1994).

a more recent article.<sup>38</sup>

*Boundaries and Legal Matters.* Boundaries in the Arabian Peninsula have been one of the principal legal problems over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a point underscored by Richard Schofield, John Wilkinson, Ibrahim Ibrahim, and Husain Albaharna.<sup>39</sup> The British-sponsored 1922 conference at al-'Uqayr (now in Saudi Arabia) established the outline of borders between Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq, as well as two Neutral Zones, as Eran Segal discusses and Anthony Toth elucidates the tribal aspect of the divisions. Yitzhak Gil-Har points out that the British also played a major role in delineating the Saudi-Jordanian border. John Willis has examined the question of borders in Yemen, including between former North and South Yemen. Most borders have been settled by comprehensive agreements in recent years – among them the Saudi-Yemeni border, which has been studied by Askar Al Enazy and in the book edited by Renaud Detalle.<sup>40</sup> So have most of the most contentious issues, such as the Saudi claims to al-Buraymi oasis (subject of an article by Tore Tingvold Petersen), the dispute between Bahrain and Qatar over islands and the enclave of Zubarah (examined from a Bahraini point of view by the edited work by Jawad al-Arayed), and Iraq's claim to Kuwait (which has spawned a large literature, headed by studies by Richard Schofield, Maurice Mendelson and Susan Hulton, David Finnie, and Habibur Rahman).<sup>41</sup> But one dispute that continues to fester is

---

38. Claudie Fayein, "Le Yémen imamite dans les années cinquante," *Cahiers du GREMAMO*, Vol. 10 (1991), pp. 167-170; Sultan b. Muhammad al-Qasimi, *The White Shaikh* (Sharjah, privately printed, November 1996; also published in Arabic); Thomas Barger, *Out in the Blue: Letters from Arabia, 1937-1940* (N.p., 2000); Fahd al-Semmari and Jill A. Roberg, eds., Michael Crocker, comp., *Forever Friends: Americans Share Their Fondest Memories of Work Life in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1938-1998* (2nd ed.; Riyadh: King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives, 2000); Aileen Keating, *Mirage: Power, Politics, and the Hidden History of Arabian Oil* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005).

39. John Wilkinson, *Arabia's Frontiers: The Story of Britain's Blue and Violet Lines* (London: I.B. Tauris; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); Ibrahim Ibrahim, "Sovereign States and Borders in the Gulf Region: A Historical Perspective," in Ibrahim Ibrahim, ed., *The Gulf Crisis: Background and Consequences* (Washington: Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1992), pp. 3-17; Richard Schofield, ed., *Territorial Foundations of the Gulf States* (London: University College of London Press, 1994); *ibid.*, "Down to the Usual Suspects: Border and Territorial Disputes in the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf at the Millennium," in Joseph A. Kechichian, ed., *Iran, Iraq, and the Arab Gulf States* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 213-236; Husain M. Albaharna, *British Extraterritorial Jurisdiction in the Gulf, 1913-1971* (Slough, UK: Archive Editions, 1998).

40. Yitzhak Gil-Har, "Delimitation Boundaries: TransJordan and Saudi Arabia," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1992), pp. 374-384; Renaud Detalle, ed., *Tensions in Arabia: The Saudi-Yemeni Faultline* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000); Anthony B. Toth, "The Transformation of a Pastoral Economy: Bedouin and States in Northern Arabia, 1850-1950" (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 2002); *ibid.*, "Conflict and a Pastoral Economy: The Costs of Akhwan Attacks on Tribes in Iraq, 1922-29" *Critique*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (September 2002), pp. 201-227; *ibid.*, "Tribes and Tribulations: Bedouin Losses in the Saudi and Iraqi Struggles Over Kuwait's Frontiers, 1921-1943," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (November 2005), pp. 145-168; Askar H. Al Enazy, *The Long Road from Taif to Jeddah: Resolution of a Saudi-Yemeni Boundary Dispute* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2005); John M. Willis, "Unmaking North and South: Spatial Histories of Modern Yemen" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 2007); *ibid.*, "Leaving Only QuestionMarks: Geographies of Rule in Modern Yemen," in Robert Vitalis and Madawi al-Rasheed, eds., *CounterNarratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 119-150; Eran Segal, "The Uqair Conference (1922) Revisited: Britain and the Question of Boundaries in the Arabian Peninsula," in Zoch Levey and Elie Podeh, eds., *Britain and the Middle East: From Imperial Power to Junior Partner* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), pp. 231-247. Although not dealing with border questions, a study on a somewhat related legal topic is Bernard Haykel, "Al-Shawkani and the Jurisprudential Unity of Yemen," *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, No. 67 (1993), pp. 53-65.

41. Maurice Mendelson and Susan C. Hulton, "La revendication par l'Irak de la souveraineté," *Annuaire Français*

that of ownership of the islands of Abu Musa and the two Tunbs, seized by Iran over the strong objection of the UAE. Publications abound on both sides of the issue: the Iranian point of view is represented by Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh, Hooshang Amirahmadi, Farhang Mehr, and Jalil Roshandel while the UAE side has been taken by Mohamed Abdullah Al Roken, Hassan al-Alkim, and Thomas R. Mattair, with more neutral assessments provided by Richard Schofield and Richard A. Mobley.<sup>42</sup>

*Military and Security.* It will be obvious to any casual observer of the region that the topic of “Gulf security” receives global attention and that the literature, both scholarly and policy-oriented is enormous – as well as being outside the scope of this survey. That includes publications on Western military activities. My annotated bibliography lists more than 2,200 entries on the subject through 2004.<sup>43</sup> A small nucleus of writing focuses on the history of armed forces and local conflicts in the Arabian Peninsula. Jerzy Zdanowski has written on Wahhabi military organization and the British-created and -officered Trucial Oman Scouts have received thorough examination from Peter Clayton, Michael Mann, and Tom Walcot. Frank Edwards, Cliff Lord and David Birtles, and Jonathan Walker have written on similar forces and operations in South Arabia. I have published a study of Oman’s two internal wars with Imamate forces in the north and Marxist insurgents in the south.<sup>44</sup>

---

*de Droit International*, Vol. 36 (1990), pp. 195-227); Richard Schofield, *Kuwait and Iraq: Historical Claims and Territorial Disputes* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, April 1991; 2nd ed., 1993); *ibid.*, “Britain and Kuwait’s Borders, 1902-23,” in Ben J. Slot, ed., *Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity* (London: Arabian Publishing, 2003), pp. 58-94; David Finnie, *Shifting Lines in the Sand: Kuwait’s Elusive Frontier with Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1992); Tore Tingvold Petersen, “Anglo-American Rivalry in the Middle East: The Struggle for the Buraimi Oasis, 1952-1957,” *International History Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (February 1992), pp. 71-91; Habibur Rahman, *Making of the Gulf War: Origins of Kuwait’s Long-standing Territorial Dispute with Iraq* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1996); Jawad Salim al-Arayed, *A Line in the Sea: The Qatar v. Bahrain Dispute in the World Court* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2003).

42. Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh, *The Islands of Tunb and Abu Musa: An Iranian Argument in Search of Peace and Co-operation in the Persian Gulf* (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Centre of Near and Middle Eastern Studies, Occasional Paper No. 15, 1995); Hooshang Amirahmadi, ed., *Small Islands, Big Politics: The Tonbs and Abu Musa in Iranian Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); Farhang Mehr, *A Colonial Legacy: The Dispute Over the Islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997); Mohamed Abdullah Al Roken, “Historical and Legal Dimensions of the United Arab Emirates-Iran Dispute Over Three Islands,” in Edmund Ghareeb and Ibrahim Al Abed, eds., *Perspectives on the United Arab Emirates* (London: Trident Press, 1997), pp. 139-159; Jalil Roshandel, “On the Persian Gulf Islands: An Iranian Perspective,” in Lawrence G. Potter, and Gary G. Sick, eds., *Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles and the Search for Consensus* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 135-153; Hassan al-Alkim, “The Islands Question: An Arabian Perspective,” in *ibid.*, pp. 155-170; Richard Schofield, “Anything But Black and White: A Commentary on the Lower Gulf Islands Dispute,” in *ibid.*, pp. 171-187; Richard A. Mobley, “The Tunbs and Abu Musa Islands: Britain’s Perspective,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Autumn 2003), pp. 627-645; and Thomas R. Mattair, *The Three Occupied UAE Islands: The Tunbs and Abu Musa* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2005).

43. J.E. Peterson, *Defense and Regional Security in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf States, 1973-2004: An Annotated Bibliography* (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2006). I will also use the author’s prerogative to mention my historical overview of the subject in “The Historical Pattern of Gulf Security.” In Lawrence G. Potter, and Gary G. Sick, eds., *Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles and the Search for Consensus* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 7-31.

44. Jerzy Zdanowski, “Military Organization of the Wahhabi Amirates (1750-1932),” in R.L. Bidwell, G. Rex Smith, and J.R. Smart, eds., *New Arabian Studies*, Vol. 2 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), pp. 130-139; Peter Clayton, *Two Alpha Lima: The First Ten Years of the Trucial Oman Levies and Trucial Oman Scouts (1950 to 1960)* (London: Janus Publishing, 1994); Michael Mann, *The Trucial Oman Scouts: The Story of a Bedouin Force*

## Economic, Social, and Cultural History

*Economic History.* An encouraging sign of diversification and intensification of efforts is the growing literature on economic, social, and cultural history, to a degree unthinkable before 1990. Whereas the story of oil exploration was a prominent feature of earlier writings, post-1990 literature has produced Anthony Cave Brown's sweeping history of ARAMCO (the Arabian American Oil Company) while Robert Vitalis has challenged conventional history of ARAMCO and the American impact on Saudi Arabia.<sup>45</sup>

The Peninsula has experienced two distinct types of economic development or change. The six members of the GCC have all experienced high income from oil exports (and some, more latterly, from gas exports). Their state-directed income distribution, small populations and lack of other natural resources have driven what some have termed rentier economies that benefit certain sectors of the population more than others, as Rayed Krimly and Steffen Hertog demonstrate. The other type of economy is that of Yemen, similar to many Third World countries and characterized by limited and dwindling oil production, exploding population, persistent poverty, and growing water scarcity, as Ali al-Hagari has outlined.<sup>46</sup>

A key element of economic history regarding the Peninsula has been that of trade. Rather than constituting a destination, the Peninsula served as a focal point for transit from East to West and West to East. Overland routes have been of key importance for millennia but Arabia also boasts a variety of ports with long and storied histories, as Mohamed El Amrousi and Willem Floor delineate. More attention has been paid to the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, as shown in the works by Colette Dubois, Michel Tuchscherer, Roxani Margariti, Hasan Shihab, C.G. Brower, Giancarlo Casale, Guido Steinberg, and André Raymond.<sup>47</sup>

---

(Wilby, Norwich, UK: Michael Russell, 1994); Cliff Lord and David Birtles, *The Armed Forces of Aden 1839-1967* (Solihull, West Midlands, UK: Helion, 2000); Frank Edwards, *The Gaysh: A History of the Aden Protectorate Levies 1927-61 and the Federal Regular Army of South Arabia 1963-67* (Solihull, UK: Helion, 2004); Jonathan Walker, *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in South Arabia 1962-1967* (Staplehurst, UK: Spellmount, 2005); Tom Walcot, "The Trucial Oman Scouts 1955 to 1971: An Overview," *Asian Affairs* (London), Vol. 37, No. 1 (March 2006), pp. 1730; J.E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies* (London: Saqi, 2007).

45. Anthony Cave Brown, *Oil, God and Gold: The Story of ARAMCO and the Saudi Kings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); *ibid.*, "Aramco World: Business and Culture on the Arabian Oil Frontier," in Karen Merrill, ed., *The Modern Worlds of Business and Industry: Cultures, Technology, Labor* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1999), pp. 3-25; *ibid.*, "Aramco World: Business and Culture on the Arabian Oil Frontier," in Robert Vitalis and Madawi al-Rasheed, eds., *Counter-Narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 151-182.

46. Ali Saleh al-Hagari "A Comparative Study of the Economies of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (1970-1988)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1992); Rayed Khalid Krimly, "The Political Economy of Rentier States: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia in the Oil Era, 1950-1990" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1993); Steffen Hertog, "Segmented Clientalism: The Politics of Economic Reforms in Saudi Arabia," Ph.D. thesis, St. Antony's College, Oxford, 2006; *ibid.*, "Shaping the Saudi State: Human Agency's Shifting Role in Rentier-State Formation," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (November 2007), pp. 539-563.

47. Hassan Saleh Shihab, "Aden in Pre-Turkish Times (1232-1538): The Arabian Entrepot of the Western Asian Seas," in Frank, Broeze, ed., *Gateways of Asia: Port Cities of Asia in the 13th-20th Centuries* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1997), pp. 17-32; Mohamed Mohamed El Amrousi, "Beyond Muslim Space: Jeddah, Muscat, Aden and Port Said" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2001); André Raymond, "A Divided Sea:

*Culture and Social History.* Much of the emergence of Arabian social history deals with the role of elites and leadership. This was a central focus in Khaldoun al-Naqeeb's seminal study of society and state. Yemen has been the most studied area, as seen by the works of Isa Blumi, Gabriele vom Bruck, Paul Dresch, Aharon Gaimani, and A. Sayyad, which range from society in Ottoman times to the resistance of the Yemeni *sayyids* to Wahhabi penetration to ideological elites in South Yemen. On the other side of the Peninsula, historian James Onley and anthropologist Sulayman Khalaf look at leadership in the Gulf, Fatma al-Sayegh examines the role of merchant families in Dubai, and I draw conclusions about the role of ruling, merchant, and shaykhly families in recent Gulf history.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps the most pervasive form of social organization in the Peninsula is the tribe, although Donald Cole and Soraya Altorki question that assumption, and much of Arabian history has been seen as a perpetual struggle in political, economic, and social terms between the *badu* (bedouin, nomads) and the *hadr* (settled, townspeople), a conflict that Anh Nga Longva examines in relation to Kuwait. The tribes undoubtedly remain most powerful in Yemen and the tribes of northern Yemen are dominated by the Hashid and Bakil confederations, as explained by Paul Dresch.<sup>49</sup>

---

The Cairo Coffee Trade in the Red Sea Area During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Leila Fawaz and C.A. Bayly, eds., with the collaboration of Robert Ilbert, *European Modernity and Cultural Difference From the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Colette Dubois, "The Red Sea Ports During the Revolution in Transportation," in Fawaz and Bayly, eds., *European Modernity and Cultural Difference*; Michel Tuchscherer, "Trade and Port Cities in the Red Sea-Gulf of Aden Region in the Sixteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in Fawaz and Bayly, eds., *European Modernity and Cultural Difference*; C.G. Brower, "Pepper Merchants in the Booming Port of al-Mukha: Dutch Evidence for an Oceanwide Trading Network," *Die Welt Des Islams*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2004), pp. 214-280; Guido Steinberg, "Ecology, Knowledge, and Trade in Central Arabia (Najd) During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in Robert Vitalis and Madawi al-Rasheed, eds., *Counter-Narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 77-102; Willem Floor, *The Persian Gulf: The Economic and Political History of Five Port Cities, 1500-1730* (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2006); Giancarlo Casale, "The Ottoman Administration of the Spice Trade in the Sixteenth-century Red Sea and Persian Gulf," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (June 2006), pp. 170-198; Roxani Eleni Margariti, *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Two more local studies of trade are Paul Dresch, "Guaranty of the Market at Huth," in R.B. Serjeant and R.L. Bidwell, eds., *Arabian Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 63-91; and R.T. Mortel, "Taxation in the Amirate of Mecca During the Medieval Period," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (1995), pp. 1-16.

48. Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb, *Society and State in the Gulf and Arab Peninsula* (tr. from Arabic by L.M. Kenny; London: Routledge; Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1990); A. Sayyad, "La formation de la société yéménite à la veille de la révolution," *Cahiers du GREMAMO*, Vol. 10 (1991), pp. 179-193; Fatma al-Sayegh, "Merchants' Role in a Changing Society: The Case of Dubai, 1900-90," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1998), pp. 87-102; Gabriele vom Bruck, "Disputing Descent-Based Authority in the Idiom of Religion: The Case of the Republic of Yemen," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (July 1998), pp. 149-191; Paul Dresch, "Colonialistes, communistes et féodaux: rhétoriques de l'ordre au Sud-Yemen," in Pierre Bonte, Édouard Conte, and Paul Dresch, eds., *Émirats et présidents: Figures de la parenté et du politique dans le monde arabe* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2001), pp. 219-246; Isa Blumi, "Shifting Loyalties and Failed Empire: A New Look at the Social History of Late Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1918," in Robert Vitalis and Madawi al-Rasheed, eds., *Counter-Narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 103-118; Aharon Gaimani, "The 'Orphans' Decree' in Yemen – Two New Episodes," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (July 2004), pp. 171-184; James Onley and Sulayman Khalaf, "Shaikhly Authority in the Pre-oil Gulf: An Historical-Anthropological Study," *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (September 2006), pp. 189-208; J.E. Peterson, "Rulers, Merchants and Shaikhs in Gulf Politics," in Alanoud Alsharekh, ed., *The Gulf Family: Kinship Policies and Modernity* (London: Saqi, 2007), pp. 21-36.

49. Paul Dresch, "The Tribes of Hashid wa-Bakil as Historical and Geographical Entities," in Alan Jones, ed.,

Other social histories deal with more specific topics. Aspects of women's lives and restricted roles in society have been studied by Eleanor Doumato in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, Sophia Pandy in Bahrain, and Ulrike Freitag and Hanne Schönig in South Yemen. Another approach is Penelope Tuson's look at Western women in Arabia.<sup>50</sup> Although the people of the Peninsula are predominantly Arab and Muslim, it should not be forgotten that the region is also home to an intriguing variety of religious, social, and/or ethnic minorities and communities who, in many cases, have been in the Peninsula for centuries. Some of these, such as the *hawwalah* (Arabs from the Persian coast who resettled on the Arab littoral of the Gulf) and the Baluch (originally from the Pakistani and Iranian coast) have received little attention (except for Beatrice Nicolini's article). Fortunately, however, Nelida Fuccaro has looked at Persians in Bahrain, Anie Montigny at Africans in Qatar (as well as Arabs in Iran), and Marc Valeri at "Zanzibaris" in Oman.<sup>51</sup> The role of Western medical missionaries in the Peninsula from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on remains a fascinating topic, attracting the attention of Eleanor Doumato for the Gulf, Fatma al-Sayegh for American missionaries in the UAE, Paul Armerding for American missionaries in Saudi Arabia, Lucile Fevrier for French missionaries in Yemen, and J.H. Proctor for Scottish missionaries in South Arabia.<sup>52</sup>

More cultural contributions include Nicolas Gavrielides on historical memory in Iraq and Kuwait, Nadia Rahman on the memory of UAE elders, Ulrike Freitage on the press in Yemen's Hadramawt, and Bernard Haykel on legal proceedings in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Yemen.<sup>53</sup> Architectural

---

*Arabicus Felix: Luminosus Britannicus; Essays in Honour of A.F.L. Beeston on his Eightieth Birthday* (Oxford: Ithaca Press, 1991), pp. 8-24; Donald P. Cole and Soraya Altorki, "Was Arabia Tribal? A Reinterpretation of the Pre-Oil Society," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (1992), pp. 71-87; Donald P. Cole, "Where have the Bedouin Gone?" *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (Spring 2003), pp. 235-267; Anh Nga Longva, "Nationalism in Pre-Modern Guise: The Discourse on Hadhar and Badu in Kuwait," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (May 2006), pp. 171-187.

50. Ulrike Freitag and Hanne Schönig, "Wise Men Control Wasteful Women: Documents on 'Customs and Tradition' in the Kathiri State Archive, Say'un," *New Arabian Studies*, Vol. 5 (2000), pp. 67-96; Eleanor Abdella Doumato, *Getting God's Ear: Women, Islam, and Healing in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Penelope Tuson, *Playing the Game: The Story of Western Women in Arabia, 1892-1939* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003); Sophia Pandy, "Muslim Women's Changing Religious Practices in Bahrain: The Impact of Modern Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, June 2006).

51. Anie Montigny, "Les Arabes de l'autre rive," *CEMOTI (Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turcoiranien)*, No. 22 (July-December 1996), pp. 51-81; *ibid.*, "L'Afrique oubliée des noirs du Qatar," *Journal des Africanistes*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (2002), pp. 213-225; Nelida Fuccaro, "Mapping the Transnational Community: Persians and the Space of the City in Bahrain, c.1869-1937," in Madawi Al-Rasheed, ed., *Transnational Connections and the Arab Gulf* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), pp. 38-58; Marc Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman Since 1970: The Swahili-Speaking Omani in Search of Identity," *African Affairs*, Vol. 106, No. 424 (July 2007), pp. 479-496; Beatrice Nicolini, "The Baluch Role in the Persian Gulf During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2007), pp. 384-395.

52. Fatma al-Sayegh, "American Missionaries in the UAE Region in the Twentieth Century," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 1996), pp. 120-139; Lucile Fevrier, *Yemen: Événements vécus: Médecine coopérative française sur fond de révolution* (Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium: Les Editions de la Dyle, 2002); Eleanor Abdella Doumato, "An 'Extra Legible Illustration' of the Christian Faith: Medicine, Medical Ethics and Missionaries in the Arabian Gulf," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (October 2002), pp. 377-390; Paul Armerding, *Doctors for the Kingdom: The Work of the American Mission Hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1913-1955* (Grand Rapids, MI: Erdmans, 2003); J.H. Proctor, "Scottish Medical Missionaries in South Arabia, 1886-1979," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (January 2006), pp. 103-121.

53. Nicolas Gavrielides, "State Formation, Historical Memory and Popular Culture in Iraq and Kuwait," in Eric

history forms the basis of John Alexander Smith's study of Islamic gardens in Oman while Lealan Swanson regards historical houses in Yemen and Nancy Um concentrates on architecture in al-Mukha (Mocha).<sup>54</sup>

## Diplomatic History

*The International Relations and Foreign Policies of Regional States.* Diplomatic history has continued to capture the attention of the largest number of scholars. Historical relations between states and powers within Arabia has been explored with regard to Saudi Arabia by Elie Podeh, to Kuwait by Uzi Rabi, to Yemen by Paul Dresch, and to Oman by Christopher Hedigan and Raghid El Solh's reprinting of a half-century old ARAMCO work.<sup>55</sup> The history of Omani foreign policy has been studied by Joseph Kechichian and Majid al-Khalili while Faisal bin Salman al-Saud has dissected the pivotal period in Saudi-Iranian relations immediately prior to British withdrawal.<sup>56</sup>

*The Role of Foreign Powers.* But the greatest volume of diplomatic history chronicles the involvement of foreign powers with Arabia. Most attention is given over to the ingress of European powers into the region although a welcome development has been the attention given to the Ottoman presence. The lion's share of studies of the Ottomans in Arabia covers Yemen, where Istanbul was dominant in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and then again in the late

---

Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides, eds., *Statecraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991); Bernard Haykel, "Dissembling Descent, or how the Barber Lost his Turban: Identity and Evidence in Eighteenth-Century Zaydi Yemen," *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2002), pp. 194-230; Nadia Rahman, "Place and Space in the Memory of United Arab Emirates Elders," in Alanoud Alsharekh and Robert Springborg, eds., *Popular Culture and Political Identity in the Arab Gulf States* (London: Saqi, 2008), pp. 31-39.

54. John Alexander Smith, "The Islamic Garden in Oman: Sanctuary and Paradise." *Garden History: The Journal of the Garden History Society* (Autumn 1991), pp. 187-208; Lealan Anderson Nunn Swanson, "Historical Considerations in Yemeni Vernacular Architecture: Houses from the Sulayid Dynasty (439/1047) to the Modern Period" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1997); Nancy Ajung Um, "A Red Sea Society in Yemen: Architecture, Urban Form and Cultural Dynamics in the Eighteenth-century Port City of Al-Mukha" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2001).

55. Elie Podeh, "Ending an Age-Old Rivalry: The Rapprochement Between the Hashemites and the Saudis, 1956-1958," in Asher Susser and Aryeh Shmuelevitz, eds., *The Hashemites in the Modern Arab World: A Festschrift in Honour of the Late Professor Uriel Dann* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), pp. 85-108; Paul Dresch, "A Letter from Imam Yahya Concerning the Idrisi," in G. Rex Smith, J.R. Smart, and B.R. Pridham, eds., *New Arabian Studies*, Vol. 3 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), pp. 58-68; Raghid El Solh, ed. *Oman and the South-Eastern Shore of Arabia* (London: Ithaca Press, 1997; a reprint of Arabian American Oil Company, Relations Department, Research Division, *Oman and the Southern Shore of the Persian Gulf* [Cairo, 1952]); Uzi Rabi, "Kuwait's Changing Strategic Posture: Historical Patterns," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Summer 2004), pp. 52-65; Christopher J. Hedigan, "Oman, Pakistan and Gwadar 1948-1958," in Andrzej Kapiszewski, Abdulrahman al-Salimi, and Andrzej Pikulski, eds., *Modern Oman: Studies on Politics, Economy, Environment, and Culture of the Sultanate* (Krakow: Ksiegarnia Akademicka, 2006), pp. 88-98.

56. Joseph A. Kechichian, *Oman and the World: The Emergence of an Independent Foreign Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1995); Faisal bin Salman al-Saud, *Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf: Power Politics in Transition 1968-1971* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Majid al-Khalili, "Oman's Foreign Policy: Foundations and Practice" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida International University, 2005).

19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Manfred Kropp, S. Özbaran, and Frédérique Soudan have dealt with the earlier period while Caesar Farah, Thomas Kühn, Vincent Wilhite, and A.R. Yaccob have studied the more recent episode.<sup>57</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi and Syed Tanvir Wasti have both written on the Ottoman presence in al-Hijaz, where they at least nominally controlled the holy places of Islam until defeated by the end of the First World War.<sup>58</sup> But it is in the Gulf that a small outpouring of Ottomanist work has first appeared in recent years, led principally by Frederick Anscombe and Zakariya Kurşun.<sup>59</sup> Persian relations with Arabia have been covered by Mohammad Al Muqadam, Mohammad Vosoughi, and J.F. Standish while R.T. Mortel has written on Mamluk-Hijazi ties.<sup>60</sup>

Beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, various European powers vied for power and influence in the Gulf. The earliest of these were the Portuguese, who literally blazed a trail up East Africa and along the Arabian coast and into the Gulf, as described by João Teles e Cunha, whose work is

---

57. Manfred Kropp, "The Realm of Evil: the Struggle of Ottomans and Zaidis in the 16th-17th Centuries as Reflected in Historiography," in Bengt Knutsson et al., eds., *Yemen-Present and Past* (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1994), pp. 87-96; S. Özbaran, "The Ottoman Budgets of Yemen in the 16th Century," in H.G.M. and R. Motika, eds., *Türkische Wirtschafts und Sozialgeschichte* (Wiesbaden, 1995), pp. 231-239; A.R.B. Yaccob, "Anglo-Ottoman Rivalries in South West Arabia Prior to and During the First World War" (Ph.D. thesis, University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1996?); Frédérique Soudan, *Le Yémen ottoman d'après la chronique d'al-Mawza'I* (Cairo: Institut Français d'archéologie orientale, 1999); Caesar E. Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen: 19th Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002); *ibid.*, "Anglo-Ottoman Confrontation in the Yemen, 1840-9," in R.B. Serjeant and R.L. Bidwell, eds., *Arabian Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 137-169; *ibid.*, "Smuggling and International Politics in the Red Sea in the Late Ottoman Period," *New Arabian Studies*, Vol. 5 (2000), pp. 47-66; Vincent Steven Wilhite, "Guerrilla War, Counterinsurgency, and State Formation in Ottoman Yemen" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 2003); Thomas Kühn, "Shaping Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1872-1919" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 2005); *ibid.*, "An Imperial Borderland as Colony: Knowledge Production and the Elaboration of Difference in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1918," *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3 (Spring 2003), pp. 5-17; *ibid.*, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism: Contesting Boundaries of Difference and Integration in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1919," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2007), pp. 315-331.

58. Syed Tanvir Wasti, "The Defence of Medina, 1916-19," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (October 1991), pp. 642-653; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj Under the Ottomans* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994).

59. Frederick F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); *ibid.*, "An Anational Society: Eastern Arabia in the Ottoman Period," in Madawi Al-Rasheed, ed., *Transnational Connections and the Arab Gulf* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), pp. 21-38; *ibid.*, "The Ottoman Empire in Recent International Politics-I: The Case of Kuwait," *International History Review* (September 2006); "The Ottoman Role in the Gulf," in Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 261-276; Zakariya Kurşun, *The Ottomans in Qatar: A History of Anglo-Ottoman Conflicts in the Persian Gulf* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2002). Another relevant article should be noted: Mohammed al-Zulfa, "Omani-Ottoman Relations During the Reign of Imam Ahmad b. Sa'id, 1741-83, in the Light of a Recently Discovered Exchange of Letters Between the Imam and the Ottoman Sultan," in R.B. Serjeant and R.L. Bidwell, eds., *Arabian Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; University of Cambridge, Oriental Publications, No. 42), pp. 93-103.

60. R.T. Mortel, "Aspects of Mamluk Relations with Jeddah During the Fifteenth Century: The Case of Timraz al-Mu'ayyadi," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1995), pp. 1-13; Mohammad Saad Al Muqadam, "Oman's Relations with Persia, 1737-1868" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Exeter, 1996); J.F. Standish, *Persia and the Gulf: Retrospect and Prospect* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 1996; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998; including reprints of articles on "Britain and the Gulf" and "Bahrain and the Persian Claim"); Mohammad Bagher Vosoughi, "The Kings of Hormuz: From the Beginning Until the Arrival of the Portuguese," in Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 89-104. Mention might also be made here of a seemingly unusual subject: Guy F. Isitt, "Vikings in the Persian Gulf," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, Vol. 17, No. 4 (2007), pp. 389-406.

supplemented by Joseph Chelhod's examination of the Portuguese in Yemen and by Dejanirah Silva Couto's look at Portuguese maps, followed closely by the Dutch as Willem Floor outlines.<sup>61</sup> The French arrived shortly afterwards and were engaged in a continuous but losing struggle with the British until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Surveys of French relations with Oman have been published by Sultan al-Qasimi and Robert Oddos, while C. Veillon and Roger Joint Dagenet relate incidents involving the French in Yemen.<sup>62</sup> Other European challengers to Britain's predominance appeared late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among them were Russia, chronicled by Efim Rezvan and Grigori Bondarevsky with a later look at Soviet policy in the Gulf by Mishel Al Mosaed. German interests emerged at roughly the same time but the recent literature by Helmut Mejcher and Fahd al-Semmari concentrates on 20<sup>th</sup>-century German relations with Saudi Arabia. The Italian interest in the Red Sea and its favored position in pre-revolutionary Yemen are the subjects of R. Rainero's article.<sup>63</sup>

As befits the victors in the European rivalry in Arabia and the Gulf, the literature on the wide span of British interests, influence, and interference is voluminous, even considering just the last two decades. More general studies include the surveys of Britain's role in the Gulf by Uzi Rabi and myself, Robert Dalziel's study of maritime contacts, Rabi's overview of British possessions in the region, and Harry Wieschhoff's view of the role of economics in the formulation of British policy towards the region.<sup>64</sup>

---

61. Joseph Chelhod, "Les Portugais au Yémen, d'après les sources arabes," *Journal Asiatique* (1995), pp. 1-18; Dejanirah Silva Couto, "Le Golfe dans la cartographie portugaise de la première moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Atlas Historique du Golfe Persique, XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006); João Teles e Cunha, "The Portuguese Presence in the Persian Gulf," in Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 207-234; Willem Floor, "Dutch Relations with the Persian Gulf," in Potter, *The Persian Gulf in History*, pp. 235-259. Also relevant is Floor's *The Persian Gulf: The Economic and Political History of Five Port Cities, 1500-1730* (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2006).

62. C. Veillon, "L'affaire de Cheikh Said (1868-1914): Une tentative d'implantation française au Yémen," *Cahiers du GREMAMO*, Vol. 10 (1991), pp. 39-51; Roger Joint Dagenet, "Le Meurtre d'Henry Lambert, Agent Consulaire de France à Aden (1855-1865)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd Series, Vol. 2, Part 2 (July 1992), pp. 175-190; Sultan b. Muhammad al-Qasimi, *Les Relations entre Oman et la France (1715-1905)* (Tr. by Abdeljelil and Mireille Temimi; Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995; also published in English as *Omani-French Relations, 1715-1900* [tr. by B.R. Pridham; Exeter?: Forest Row, 1996]); Robert Oddos, "Deux siècles de relations franco-omanaises (1735-1920)," *Revue historique*, No. 599 (July-September 1996), pp. 83-123.

63. Fahd Abdullah al-Semmari, "Saudi Arabian-German Political and Economic Relations 1926-1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 1989); Mishel Abdullah Al Mosaed, "USSR-Gulf States Relations since the British Withdrawal from East of Suez in 1971" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Denver, 1990); R. Rainero, "Les ouvertures commerciales de l'Italie fasciste au Yemen: enjeux et réalités (1926-1936)," *Cahiers du GREMAMO*, Vol. 10 (1991), pp. 53-61; Efim Rezvan, *Russian Ships in the Gulf, 1899-1903* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1993); Helmut Mejcher, "Die Wiederaufnahme der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Saudi-Arabien nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg." *Orient*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (September 2001), pp. 469-484; Grigori Bondarevsky, "Mubarak's Kuwait in Russian and German Policy," in Ben J. Slot, ed., *Kuwait: The Growth of a Historic Identity* (London: Arabian Publishing, 2003), pp. 49-57.

64. Nigel Robert Dalziel, "British Maritime Contacts with the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, 1850-1900" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Lancaster, 1989); K. Harry Wieschhoff, "The Salience of Economics in the Formulation of United Kingdom Foreign Policy: The Persian Gulf, 1945-1955" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex, 1990); J.E. Peterson, "Britain and the Gulf: At the Periphery of Empire." In Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 277-293; Uzi Rabi, "Britain's 'Special Position' in the Gulf: Its Origins, Dynamics and Legacy," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (May 2006), pp. 351-364; *ibid.*, "British Possessions in the Persian Gulf and Southwest Arabia: The Last Abandoned in the Middle East," in Zoch Levey and Elie Podeh, eds., *Britain and the Middle East: From Imperial Power to Junior Partner* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), pp. 264-281. Sarah A. Kaiksow has also published an unusual case study of the psyche of a British soldier in

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Britain had established a crown colony in Aden and protectorates over its hinterland, gathered the small Gulf states into *de jure* or *de facto* protected status, and effectively checked Saudi expansion. This required an administrative apparatus that was exceedingly modest given the vast territory under British control. Earlier works have concentrated on arrangements in Aden – although Simon Smith has made a more recent contribution – but Omer al-Omery and James Onley have written on the residency system in the Gulf and former ambassadors Richard Muir and Terence Clark have traced the history of British missions in Kuwait and Oman respectively. Onley also treats the role of the Gulf in the British Empire, focusing on the reach of British India, while Robert Blyth discusses the struggle between British India and London for control in the Gulf. John Willis looks at the role of British India in Yemen while Christian Lekon narrows the subject to the British role in the Hadramawt.<sup>65</sup>

The somewhat wider subject of British relations with regional states and British activities has attracted a plethora of authors who have examined most aspects of the British presence. Shafi Aldamer looks at Anglo-Saudi relations around the period of World War II while relations with Kuwait in the pre-1961 period 1961 have been studied by Simon Smith, Andrew Loewenstein, and Miriam Joyce. Smith and Joyce also contribute studies of relations with Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, and an article on British relations with Yemen. Christopher Davidson also looks at Britain and the Trucial States (as does Miriam Joyce) while Hussain al-Mousawi, Lawrence Timpe, and Miriam Joyce Haron examine aspects of the several centuries of the British-Omani relationship. Timothy Paris studies the British role in al-Hijaz, where the Hashimis were eventually defeated by the Al Sa'ud and forced to accept the British offer of thrones in Syria, Iraq, and Transjordan.<sup>66</sup> The gradual British drawdown from its East of

---

the region: "Subjectivity and Imperial Masculinity: A British Soldier in Dhofar (1968-1970)," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring 2008), pp. 60-80.

65. Omer Saleh al-Omery, "The Resident in the Gulf: British Power in Transition, 1858-1872" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex, 1989); Simon C. Smith, "Rulers and Residents: British Relations with the Aden Protectorate, 1937-1959," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1995), pp. 509-523; Christian Lekon, "The British and Hadramaut (Yemen), 1863-1967: A Contribution to Robinson's Multicausal Theory of Imperialism" (Ph.D. thesis, London School of Economics, 2000); Robert J. Blyth, "Britain Versus India in the Persian Gulf: The Struggle for Political Control, c.1928-48," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Affairs*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2000), pp. 901-11; James Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007; adapted from his "The Infrastructure of Informal Empire: A Study of Britain's Native Agency in Bahrain, c.1816-1900" (DPhil thesis, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, 2001); *ibid.*, "The Politics of Protection in the Gulf: The Arab Rulers and the British Resident in the Nineteenth Century." *New Arabian Studies*, Vol. 6 (2004), pp. 30-92; *ibid.*, "Britain's Native Agents in Arabia and Persia in the Nineteenth Century," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2004), pp. 131-139; Richard Muir, "Kuwait," in Hugh Arbuthnott, Terence Clark, and Richard Muir, *British Missions Around the Gulf, 1575-2005: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman* (Folkestone, Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2008), pp. 169-226; Terence Clark, "Oman," in *British Missions Around the Gulf*, pp. 229-253; John M. Willis, "Making Yemen Indian: Rewriting the Boundaries of Imperial Arabia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (February 2009), pp. 23-38.

66. Shafi Aldamer, *Saudi Arabia and Britain: Changing Relations, 1939-1953* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2003); Hussain Ben Al-Seyed Yousuf Hashim al-Mousawi, "A History of Omani-British Relations, with Special Reference to the Period 1888-1920" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1990); G. Lawrence Timpe, "British Foreign Policy Toward the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, 1954-1959" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Exeter, July 1991); Miriam Joyce, *Kuwait, 1945-1996: An Anglo-American Perspective* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); *ibid.*, *Ruling Shaikhs and Her Majesty's Government, 1960-1969* (London: Frank Cass, 2003); *ibid.* (Miriam Joyce Haron), "Britain and the Sultan of Muscat and Oman and Dependencies, 1958-59," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (March 1993),

Suez prominence, culminating in official withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971, received considerable attention in pre-1990 works to which John Darwin contributes another study. At the other end of the microscope, Suliman Shahvar looks at the impact of the Indo-European Telegraph Line and P.J.L. Frankl and Christopher Gandy have written about specific British initiatives in Saudi Arabia and Yemen respectively.<sup>67</sup>

It should of course be remembered that the British presence in Arabia was not always harmonious and accepted by regional political entities or their neighbors. In some ways, the British need to take military action to secure the interests of themselves and their clients rivaled their efforts to maintain their position through quiet and administration and diplomacy. This was certainly true in Aden and the Protectorate when rising Arab nationalism in the 1960s forced the British out of their last military redoubt in the Middle East, as Spencer Mawby, Peter Hinchcliffe, John Ducker, and Maria Holt make clear. But Britain also saw Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir's intervention in the North Yemen civil war of the same period as the fundamental threat behind the unrest in both north and south, as Clive Jones writes.<sup>68</sup>

British military action had an even longer pedigree on the Gulf side of the Peninsula, beginning with the campaigns against the Qawasim of what the British then termed the "Pirate

---

pp. 90-102; *ibid.*, "On the Road Towards Unity: The Trucial States from a British Perspective, 1960-66," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (April 1999), pp. 45-60; Andrew B. Loewenstein, "'The Veiled Protectorate of Kuwait': Liberalized Imperialism and British Efforts to Influence Kuwaiti Domestic Policy During the Reign of Sheikh Ahmad al-Jaber, 1938-50," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (April 2000), pp. 103-123; Simon C. Smith, *Kuwait, 1950-1965: Britain, the al-Sabah, and Oil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1999); *ibid.*, *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, 1950-71* (London: Routledge, 2004); *ibid.*, "Revolution and Reaction: South Arabia in the Aftermath of the Yemeni Revolution," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2000), pp. 193-208; *ibid.*, "The Making of a Neo-Colony? Anglo-Kuwaiti Relations in the Era of Decolonization," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37, No.1 (January 2001), pp. 159-172; Timothy J. Paris, *Britain, the Hashemites and Arab Rule 1920-1925: The Sherifian Solution* (London: Frank Cass, 2003); Christopher M. Davidson, "Alternative Imperial Control: Economic Dependency and the Trucial States," in Christopher K. Brown and Jane Bristol-Rhys, *Alternative Imperialism* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006); *ibid.*, "Arab Nationalism and British Opposition in Dubai, 1920-66," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (November 2007), pp. 879-892.

67. John Darwin, "Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez," in Carl Bridge, ed., *Munich to Vietnam: Australia's Relations with Britain and the United States Since the 1930s* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1991); P.J.L. Frankl, "Lieutenant Jopp's Report on a Visit to Hufuf, 1257/1841," in R.B. Serjeant, R.L. Bidwell, and G. Rex Smith, eds., *New Arabian Studies*, Vol. 1 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993), pp. 215-227; Suliman Shahvar, "The Formation of the Indo-European Telegraph Line: Britain, the Ottoman Empire and Persia, 1855-1865," (Ph.D. thesis, University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1998); Christopher Gandy, "A Mission to Yemen: August 1962-January 1963," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (November 1998), pp. 247-274.

68. Clive Jones, *Britain and the Yemen Civil War, 1962-1965: Ministers, Mercenaries and Mandarins; Foreign Policy and the Limits of Covert Action* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2004); *ibid.*, "'Among Ministers, Mavericks and Mandarins': Britain, Covert Action and the Yemen Civil War, 1962-64," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (January 2004), pp. 99-126; *ibid.*, "Britain, Covert Action and the Yemen Civil War, 1962-1967," in Zoch Levey and Elie Podeh, eds., *Britain and the Middle East: From Imperial Power to Junior Partner* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), pp. 248-263; Spencer Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates, 1955-67* (London: Routledge, 2005); *ibid.*, "Britain's Last Imperial Frontier: The Aden Protectorates, 1952-59," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (May 2001), pp. 75-100; *ibid.*, "A Crisis of Empire: The Anglo-Ottoman Dispute Over the Aden Frontier, 1901-1905," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (March 2007), pp. 27-52; *ibid.*, "The Clandestine Defence of Empire: British Special Operations in Yemen, 1951-1964," *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Autumn 2002), pp. 105-130; Peter Hinchcliffe, John T. Ducker, and Maria Holt, *Without Glory in Arabia: The British Retreat from Aden* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

Coast” (and which later became known as the Trucial Coast). This subject was covered in earlier years but Mubarak al-Otobi and Charles E. Davies add new light. British activity in Saudi Arabia fell into the category of military assistance, which Joseph Kostiner examines for the period of the 1930s and Nikolas Gardner discusses for the period of the 1960s-1970s. The insertion of British troops into Kuwait when Iraq seemed to threaten that country upon its independence in 1961 has been treated in the past but Nigel Ashton reviews the topic. Another side of British security concerns involved internal developments in the Gulf states and the emergence of opposition movements perceived as radical threats, as Miriam Joyce describes in the case of Bahrain in the 1950s.<sup>69</sup> A few studies look at the security scene from a broader point of view: Rod Thornton describes British strategy in countering Arab insurgencies and William Roger Lewis adds what must be hoped is the final coda on British withdrawal.<sup>70</sup>

It was, after all, British withdrawal in 1971 that sparked American interest in “protecting” the Gulf, even if that interest did not translate into direct action for a decade or more to come. Certainly, the United States had official interests well before 1971, as Moira de Moraes Ruehsen, William Fain, Reuven Hollo, Michael Palmer, and Gary Sick demonstrate, while Fred Lawson discusses the US position vis-à-vis opposition movements in the region.<sup>71</sup> But the transition from a British umbrella to an American one was not smooth and the two powers clashed discreetly over al-Buraymi Oasis and Kennedy’s recognition of the Yemen Arab Republic in 1962, among other points of tension. The intertwining of Anglo-American interests in the Gulf during the 1940s through the 1960s has been studied by Simon Davis, Taylor Fain, Tore Tingvold Petersen, and Miriam Joyce.<sup>72</sup>

---

69. Mubarak al-Otobi, “The Qawasim and British Control of the Arabian Gulf” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Salford, 1989); Charles E. Davies, *The Blood-Red Flag: An Investigation into Qasimi Piracy, 1797-1820* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 1997); *ibid.*, “Britain, Trade and Piracy: The British Expeditions Against Ra’s al-Khaima of 1809-10 and 1819-20” in Charles E. Davies, ed., *Global Interests in the Arab Gulf* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992), pp. 29-66; Joseph Kostiner, “Britain and the Challenge of the Axis Powers in Arabia: The Decline of British-Saudi Cooperation in the 1930s,” in Michael J. Cohen and Martin Kolinsky, eds., *Britain and the Middle East in the 1930s: Security Problems, 1935-39* (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 128-143; Nigel Ashton, “A Microcosm of Decline: British Loss of Nerve and Military Intervention in Jordan and Kuwait, 1957 and 1961,” *Historical Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (1997), pp. 1069-1083; Miriam Joyce, “The Bahraini Three on St. Helena, 1956-1961,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Autumn 2000), pp. 613-623; Nikolas Gardner, “The Harold Wilson Government, Airwork Services Limited, and the Saudi Arabian Air Defence Scheme, 1965-73,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (April 2007), pp. 345-363.

70. William Roger Lewis, “The British Withdrawal from the Gulf, 1967-71,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2003), pp. 83-108; Rod Thornton, “Countering Arab Insurgencies: The British Experience,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (April 2007), pp. 7-27.

71. Moira de Moraes Ruehsen, “The Advent of American Hegemony in the Persian Gulf, 1953-1956” (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University SAIS, 1992); Fred H. Lawson, *Opposition Movements and U.S. Policy Toward the Arab Gulf States* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992); Michael A. Palmer, *Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America’s Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992* (New York: Free Press, 1992); Reuven Hollo, “Oil and American Foreign Policy in the Persian Gulf (1947-1991)” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1995); William Taylor Fain, III, “Toll-Gates and Barbicans of Empire: The United States, Great Britain, and the Persian Gulf Region, 1950-1968” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 2002); Gary Sick, “The United States and the Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century,” in Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 295-310. For more on dissidence in the Peninsula, see Joseph A. Kechichian, *Extremism and Opposition Movements on the Arabian Peninsula* (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2006).

72. Tore Tingvold Petersen, “Anglo-American Rivalry in the Middle East”; Simon Davis, “Keeping the Americans in Line? Britain, the United States, and Saudi Arabia, 1939-1945: Inter-Allied Rivalry in the Middle East

Washington's closest bilateral relationship was with Saudi Arabia, in large part because of the kingdom's gigantic oil reserves but also because of American involvement in that country's development and Riyadh's emerging role on the Arab stage. Rachel Bronson has published one of the latest overviews of US-Saudi relations while a former ambassador, Parker Hart, wrote about the early years of the relationship, as have Nathan Citino, Fahad al-Nafjan, Bruce Nardulli, Abdulmuhsin Ruwaithy, David Lesch, and Helmut Mejcher. Fawaz Gerges builds upon earlier works dissecting American-Saudi cooperation in countering the Yemen revolution in the 1960s.<sup>73</sup> The story of American relations with Oman (which was the second Arab state to enter into diplomatic relations with Washington and the first to send an envoy to the US) is covered by Miriam Joyce and Mohammed al-Khudhairi.<sup>74</sup>

## Islam and Islamism

*Wahhabism.* The attacks of September 11, 2001 and the emergence of al-Qa'idah and like-minded groups on the global stage have created a cottage industry of publications on Islamism, Islamist extremism, and terrorism. Most of these works fall outside the scope of this survey but it should be noted that Wahhabism – the conservative Salafi interpretation of Sunni Islam prevailing in Saudi Arabia – has received increased critical attention as well. The historical linkages between the religious reformer Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab (and his descendants, known as the Al al-Shaykh) and the holders of political power Al Sa'ud, as well as the historical, theological, and social context in which the movement emerged in Najd has been explained by

---

Revisited," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 1997), pp. 96-136; Miriam Joyce, *Kuwait, 1945-1996: An Anglo-American Perspective* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); *ibid.*, "Preserving the Sheikhdome: London, Washington, Iraq and Kuwait, 1958-61," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April 1995), pp. 281-292; W. Taylor Fain, "John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan: Managing the 'Special Relationship' in the Persian Gulf Region, 1961-63," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (October 2002), pp. 95-122; *ibid.*, "'Unfortunate Arabia': The United States, Great Britain and Yemen, 1955-63," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 2001), pp. 125-152.

73. Fahad Mohammed al-Nafjan, "The Origins of Saudi-American Relations: From Recognition to Diplomatic Representation (1931-1943)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1989); Abdulmuhsin Rajallah al-Ruwaithy, "American and British Aid to Saudi Arabia, 1928-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1990); David W. Lesch, "The Saudi Role in the American-Syrian Crisis of 1957," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1992), pp. 33-48; Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen: Coopting Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 292-311; Parker T. Hart, *Saudi Arabia and the United States: Birth of a Security Partnership* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998); Nathan J. Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ud, and the Making of U.S. Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002; a reworking of the author's "Eisenhower, King Sa'ud, and the Politics of Arab Nationalism: United States-Saudi Relations, 1952-1960" [Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1999]); Bruce R. Nardulli, "Dance of Swords: United States Military Assistance to Saudi Arabia, 1942-1964" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 2002); Helmut Mejcher, "King Faisal ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud in the Arena of World Politics: A Glimpse from Washington, 1950-1971," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (May 2004), pp. 5-25; Rachel Bronson, *Thicker Than Oil: America's Uneasy Relationship with Saudi Arabia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

74. Mohammed Sulaiman al-Khudhairi, "The Sultanate of Muscat and the United States: A Study of Mutual Cooperation Between Sultan Said and the American Merchants" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex, 1989); Miriam Joyce, "Washington and Treaty-Making with the Sultan of Muscat and Oman," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (January 1994), pp. 145-154.

Khalid al-Dakhil, Michael Cook, Guido Steinberg, Abdulaziz al-Fahad, and David Commins.<sup>75</sup> In addition, Hala Fattah has explored the Wahhabi influence in Iraq, Abdulla Zaid has studied the Ikhwan (the harnessing of the tribes of the Najd as the flying wings of the Saudi expansionism before being crushed by King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz), and Yaroslav Trofimov gives a detailed account of the takeover of the Great Mosque of Makkah in 1979 by descendants of the Ikhwan, also called Neo-Ikhwan.<sup>76</sup>

*Islamic Sects and Minorities.* Other scholars have worked on the Shi‘ah and other Islamic sects. Studies of the Ja‘faris (or Ithna‘asharis; Twelver Shi‘ah) predominate, with Laurence Louër providing a view throughout the Gulf, Guido Steinberg investigating the Shi‘ah of Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province (now numbering perhaps one million), Werner Ende illuminating the little-known Nakhawilah community of al-Madinah, and Fouad Ibrahim tracing the rise of Shi‘ah political opposition in the Eastern Province. Mark Sedgwick also provides a look at Sufism in al-Hijaz earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>77</sup> Amongst other studies of Islamic sects, Gabriele vom Bruck has tackled the centrality of the Zaydi (Fiver Shi‘ah) imamate in Yemen, S. Jiwa discusses Isma‘ilis (Sevener Shi‘ah) in Yemen, and Valerie Hoffman throws light on Ibadism in Oman and Zanzibar.<sup>78</sup>

## Popular Topics

There remains a body of work that might be given, for lack of a better term, the title of “Popular Topics” because of the numbers of studies and scholars devoted to two fields relating

---

75. Michael Cook, “On the Origins of Wahhabism,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd Series, Vol. 2, Pt. 2 (July 1992), pp. 191-202; Khalid S. al-Dakhil, “Social Origins of the Wahhabi Movement” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1998); *ibid.*, “Wahhabism as an Ideology of State Formation,” in Mohammed Ayoob and Hasan Kosebalaban, eds., *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia: Wahhabism and the State* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008), pp. 23-38; Guido Steinberg, *Religion und Staat in Saudi-Arabien: die wahhabitischen Gelehrten 1902-1953* (Würzburg: Ergon 2002); *ibid.*, “The Wahhabi Ulama and the Saudi State: 1745 to the Present,” in Paul Aarts and Gerd Nonneman, eds., *Saudi Arabia in the Balance: Political Economy, Society, Foreign Affairs* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), pp. 11-34; Abdulaziz H. al-Fahad, “From Exclusivism to Accommodation: Doctrinal and Legal Evolution of Wahhabism,” *New York University Law Review*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (May 2004), pp. 485-519; David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

76. Abdulla S. Zaid, “The Ikhwan Movement of Najd, Saudi Arabia, 1908-1930” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1989); Hala Fattah, “‘Wahhabi’ Influences, Salafi responses: Shaikh Mahmud Shukri and the Iraqi Salafi Movement, 1745-1930,” *Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (May 2003), pp. 127-148; Yaroslav Trofimov, *The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam’s Holiest Shrine and The Birth of Al Qaeda* (New York: Doubleday; London: Penguin Books, 2007).

77. Werner Ende, “The Nakhawila: A Shi‘ite Community in Medina, Past and Present,” *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (November 1997), pp. 263-348; Mark J.R. Sedgwick, “Saudi Sufis: Compromise in the Hijaz, 1925-40,” *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (November 1997), pp. 349-368; Guido Steinberg, “The Shi‘ites in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (al-Ahsa’) 1913-1953,” in Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende, eds., *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political Culture* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001), pp. 236-254; Fouad Ibrahim, *The Shi‘is of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi, 2006); Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

78. Gabriele vom Bruck, “Being a Zaydi in the Absence of an Imam: Doctrinal Revisions, Religious Instruction, and the (Re-)Invention of Ritual,” in Rémy Leveau, Franck Mermier, and Udo Steinbach, eds., *Le Yémen Contemporain* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1999), pp. 169-192; S. Jiwa, “The Genesis of Isma‘ili Da‘wa Activities in the Yemen,” *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin*, Vol. 15, Nos. 12 (1988), pp. 50-64; Valerie J. Hoffman, “The Articulation of Ibadī Identity in Modern Oman and Zanzibar,” *Muslim World*, Vol. 94, No. 2 (April 2004), pp. 201-216.

to Yemen, which continues to exhibit the most research and publication of any area of the Arabian Peninsula, and to highlight some works that reach beyond the Peninsula to other areas of the Indian Ocean.

*Indian Ocean Studies.* Holistic treatments of the Indian Ocean littorals have seen a growing attraction in the past two decades, beginning with K.N. Chaudhuri's companion volume on the Indian Ocean as a historical economic whole and complemented by the works of Richard Hall, Patricia Risso, Redha Bhacker, Mandana Limbert, and Kenneth McPherson.<sup>79</sup> Studies with narrower focus include Janet Ewald's elucidation of the slave trade, Giancarlo Casale's exploration of Ottoman influence and Patricia Risso on India's role while Amal Ghazal, Thomas McDow, and Beatrice Nicolini discuss the connections with Africa (and with the Makran Coast in the case of Nicolini).<sup>80</sup>

*The Hadramawt and Its Diaspora.* Since Yemeni unification in 1990, southern Yemen has been opened to development, tourism, and ... scholars. Nowhere in the south has the focus of scholarship prospered more than the Hadramawt, the *wadi* of the eastern part of south Yemen with its storied cities of Shibam, Tarim, and Say'un. Not only is the Hadramawt famous as a center of learning controlled by its *sayyid* families (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad), but for the Hadrami diaspora across the Indian Ocean. The Hadramawt's traditional prosperity depended far more on remittances from abroad than its agriculture. Engseng Ho, Linda Boxberger, and Ulrike Freitag trace the contours of the diaspora<sup>81</sup> and Kazuhiro Arai Ahmed

---

79. K.N. Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Patricia Risso, *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995); Richard Hall, *Empires of the Monsoons: A History of the Indian Ocean and Its Invaders* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1999?); Mandana Limbert, "Personal Memories: Revolutionary States and Indian Ocean Migrations," *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* (Fall 2005), pp. 21-33; Kenneth McPherson, "Port Cities as Nodal Points of Change: The Indian Ocean, 1890s-1920s," in Leila Fawaz and C.A. Bayly, eds., with the collaboration of Robert Ilbert, *European Modernity and Cultural Difference From the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); M. Reda Bhacker, *Trade and Empire in Muscat and Zanzibar: The Roots of British Domination* (London: Routledge, 1992); *ibid.*, "The Cultural Unity of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean: A Longue Durée Historical Perspective," in Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 163-171.

80. Janet J. Ewald, "Crossers of the Sea: Slaves, Freedmen, and Other Migrants in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1914," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 105, No. 1 (February 2000), pp. 69-91; Beatrice Nicolini, *Makran, Oman, and Zanzibar: Three-Terminal Cultural Corridor in the Western Indian Ocean (1799-1856)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2004); Giancarlo L. Casale, "The Ottoman Age of Exploration: Spices, Maps and Conquest in the Sixteenth-Century Indian Ocean" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2004); Amal N. Ghazal, "Islam and Arabism in Zanzibar: The Omani Elite, the Arab World and the Making of an Identity, 1880s-1930s" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 2005); *ibid.*, "'The Other Andalus': The Omani Elite in Zanzibar and the Making of an Identity, 1880s-1930s," *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* (Fall 2005), pp. 43-58; Thomas Franklin McDow, "Arabs and Africans: Commerce and Kinship from Oman to the East African Interior, c. 1820-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2008); Patricia Risso, "India and the Gulf: Encounters from the Mid-Sixteenth to the Mid-Twentieth Centuries," in Lawrence G. Potter, ed., *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 189-203;

81. Ulrike Freitag, "Hadrami Migration in the 19th and 20th Centuries," *Journal of the British-Yemeni Society* (December 1999); Linda Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire: Hadramawt, Emigration, and the Indian Ocean, 1880s-1930s* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002); Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); *ibid.*, "Empire Through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (October 2004), pp. 210-237; *ibid.*, "Le don précieux de la généalogie," in Pierre Bonte, Édouard Conte, and Paul

Abushouk zero in on the Hadrami influence in southeast Asia, Friedhelm Hartwig analyzes the Hyderabad connection, Sumit Mandal concentrates on Java, and Natalie Mobini-Kesheh dissects the presence in the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>82</sup> Back at home, Sylvaine Camelin expands on earlier studies of social stratification and Freitag delineates the Hadramawt's religious role.<sup>83</sup>

*The Jews of Yemen.* Another "popular topic" with a burgeoning literature also comes from Yemen. The Yemeni Jewish community has dwindled from a pre-Israel peak of perhaps 50,000 to only a few hundred today (increasingly threatened by both Zaydi and Sunni Islamists). But the relocation of the community to Israel has both sustained scholarly interest in it and made it easier for scholars to study and write about it. Thus, the works of Reuven Ahroni, BatZion Eraqi Klorman, Yehuda Nini, Tudu Parfitt, and Yosef Tobi look at the Jewish community in the modern era, particularly the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, Ahroni, Isaac Hollander, and Renate Meissner train their sights on Jews in southern Yemen and Aden.<sup>85</sup>

## Conclusion

What can be said in conclusion given such a myriad of purposes and expressions in writing? Most obviously (and perhaps equally banally), time marches on. The concerns of scholarly interest, the methodologies, and the persistent range of lacunae – all have changed or evolved over the past several decades. Undeniably, the range of scholarship (in terms of geographic origin as well as topics of examination) and the numbers of scholars has increased. Naturally,

---

Dresch, eds., *Émirs et présidents: Figures de la parenté et du politique dans le monde arabe* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2001), pp. 79-110.

82. Sumit K. Mandal, "Finding Their Place: A History of Arabs in Java Under Dutch Rule, 1800-1924" (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1994); Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University SEAP, 1999); Friedhelm Hartwig, *Hadramaut und das indische Fürstentum von Hyderabad; Hadramitische Sultanatsgründungen und Migration im 19. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg, 2000); Kazuhiro Arai, "Arabs Who Traversed the Indian Ocean: The History of the al-'Attas Family in Hadramawt and Southeast Asia, c. 1600-c. 1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2004); Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk, "Al-Manar and the Hadrami Elite in the Malay-Indonesian World: Challenge and Response," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2007), pp. 301-322.

83. Sylvaine Camelin, "Reflections on the System of Social Stratification in Hadramaut," in Ulrike Freitag and W. Clarence-Smith, eds., *Hadrami Traders, Scholars, & Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 147-156; Ulrike Freitag, "Hadramaut: A Religious Center for the Indian Ocean in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries," *Studia Islamica*, Vol. 89 (1999), pp. 165-183.

84. Reuven Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry: Origins, Culture, and Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); *ibid.*, *Jewish Emigration from the Yemen 1951-98: Carpet Without Magic* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon, 2001); Yehuda Nini, *The Jews of the Yemen, 1800-1914* (New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991); BatZion Eraqi Klorman, *The Jews of Yemen in the Nineteenth Century: A Portrait of a Messianic Community* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993); *ibid.*, "Messiahs and Rabbis: the Yemeni Experience," *Revue des études juives*, Vol. 151, Nos. 12 (1992), pp. 77-94; *ibid.*, "Muslim Supporters of Jewish Messiahs in Yemen," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (1993), pp. 714-725; *ibid.*, "Jewish and Muslim Messianism in Yemen," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (May 1990), pp. 201-228; *ibid.*, "The Forced Conversion of Jewish Orphans in Yemen," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (February 2001), 23-47; Tudu Parfitt, *The Road to Redemption: The Jews of the Yemen, 1900-1950* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996); Yosef Tobi, *The Jews of Yemen: Studies in Their History and Culture* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999).

85. Reuven Ahroni, *The Jews of the British Crown Colony of Aden: History, Culture, and Ethnic Relations* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994); Isaac Hollander, *Jews and Muslims in Lower Yemen: A Study in Protection and Restraint, 1918-1949* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005); Renate Meissner, *Die südjemenitischen Juden: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion ihrer traditionellen Kultur vor dem Exodus* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999).

this is a most welcome development, given that in 1990 the Arabian Peninsula was probably the least-studied part of the Middle East.

It would have been difficult two decades ago to hold the conference at which the papers in this book were presented (let alone to hold it in the Gulf itself). Three decades ago, it would have been virtually impossible. The lesson of the sad fate of the Society for Gulf Arab Studies has been mentioned above; such an initiative today undoubtedly would reach – if not an abundance – certainly a well-rounded community of scholars.

I participated in a conference on the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf at Oxford a few years ago. Looking around at the other participants, I was moved to remark to a colleague of my age that somehow we had become the older generation. This was quite a shock. I had always regarded the older generation to be composed of such stellar names as George Rentz, Bob Serjeant, Bayly Winder, J.B. Kelly, Robert Landen, and Briton Cooper Busch. The torch is being passed yet again.

My experience in the Gulf spans some 35 years. Much has happened in regards to the difficulties and challenges of conducting research in the region. In the early 1970s, visas for most researchers were difficult to come by. There were few institutions able or willing to sponsor scholars and those that existed tended to have no interest in sponsorship or understanding of the purpose of such research.

Significant advances have been made in the last 20 some years. But, by and large, these have been only incremental advances. In many cases, works to date are still scratching the surface, providing the groundwork upon which future scholarship can be built. The subjects still not studied far outweigh those given consideration. Just a few representative areas deserving considerably more study include: the composition of society and social change; the dynamics of policy-making, past and present; and the emergence of new elites and the growth of the middle class.

Nevertheless, the next two decades are distinctly promising, to judge by the accomplishments so far and the quality of younger scholars. I still sense an urgency to document what still exists – or did exist – before it is too late and no record remains. I also look forward to surveying the scene two decades hence and – with any luck – to writing an even more optimistic prognosis.