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NEWS

Statement on Current Situation on Soqotra Friends of Soqotra Committee

What we have all been reading about Soqotra in the news and on social media over the last few months is confusing, often contradictory and sometimes disturbing. The Friends of Soqotra was established with two principal aims: supporting the islanders in their conservation of the rich marine and terrestrial biodiversity on which they will ultimately depend for their long-term survival, and lending any support we can to their efforts to sustain and develop their equally unique cultural heritage. The constitution of the Friends of Soqotra focusses on these areas of concern, and takes no political position. However, we hope that the ability of Soqotrans to sustain themselves in the years to come, for example through fishing, stock breeding or ecotourism, is being adequately protected in all current projects or activities. It is the wish of us all that the Soqotrans will be able to discuss and peacefully determine their future and that of their islands with minimal interference or pressure from any outside agency.

Abdalgamil Abdullah Ali Mohammed PhD

Miranda Morris and Abdalgamil Abdullah, May 2017

It is excellent news that Abdalgamil Abdullah Ali Mohammed, the *Deputy Governor of Socotra for Environment and Development Affairs*, has arrived in the UK to work towards a doctorate in 'Biodiversity Management'. The current title of his study is: '*The impacts of community-based ecotourism on communities' attitudes towards conservation: Case Study from Socotra Archipelago, Yemen*'. He will be working at Kent University for four years. Abdalgamil was previously awarded a Chevening Scholarship, which enabled him to study at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, where he was awarded an MSc in Environment and International Development, with merit. I asked him for his views on the educational system in the UK and how he had found living there. He said: "The UK is an amazing, multi-cultural place and its people are very friendly and respectful. Its teaching methods are among the best in the world. It focuses on developing critical thinking skills."



I asked Abdalgamil how he hoped to make use of his studies on his return to Soqotra, and what he saw as his priorities for the conservation of the biodiversity and the cultural heritage of the island. He replied that one aim of his further studies was to provide him with the expertise to enable him to guide and inform policy-makers in the archipelago, and to help direct the strategic development of ecotourism on the islands. He said: "I think priority should be given to developing a strong link between environment protection and the livelihoods of local communities. Tackling poverty through activities of biodiversity conservation, with the active participation of local communities in planning and managing these activities, is a very strong instrument for achieving the aim of sustainable development."

We wish Abdalgamil all the best during his time in the UK and hope to see him at the Friends of Soqotra Annual General Meetings during his time with us here in Europe.

If anyone wishes to know more details about his studies, Abdalgamil has kindly provided a website address: https://www.kent.ac.uk/sac/current-students/research-students/dice/k-o/mohammed_abdalgamil.html

Editor Required for **TAYF**

A new editor is required for the *Tayf* Newsletter. I have been Editor since the beginning, and am now so out of touch with events on the island that I am no longer in a position to edit the newsletter. Those interested please contact me, or make yourself known to Julian or Kay at the AGM.

Flights to Socotra

Abu Dhabi-based airline Rotana Jet has resumed chartered flights to the Socotra, helping to sow the seeds of a tourism economy in the beguiling Yemeni island. Gulf airline Rotana Jet is running a twice-weekly service on Saturdays and Wednesdays from Abu Dhabi Terminal 2, said Adnan Abbas, a travel agent working for Al Ketbi Travel, a travel agent based in Abu Dhabi.

The two-hour flights are for regional, international, and medical tourists flying between Yemen and the UAE. Abbas said that tourists can purchase a visa on arrival. "For most flights, it's visa on arrival for everyone. I think they're charging \$100 at Socotra airport," Abbas said.

Whale Stranding

In mid July 2017 nearly 50 whales stranded on Soqatra and died. Although some were alive when stranded, they were not able to be refloated; apparently one fisherman tried to take one back out to sea but it returned to the shore. Some of the meat from the animals was consumed.

This is unfortunately a common occurrence across the world with around 2,000 whales beaching each year. Nobody is sure why they strand—they may be following their leader who strands and they all follow, or chasing prey too close to shore, it could be disorientation from sounds, weather or magnetic fields, or difficulties with echolocation when close to shore. Once stranded, the animals are so heavy that they are unable to refloat themselves. Recent work in Germany suggests that large disruptions to the Earth's magnetic field caused by solar storms could be a contributing factor by disrupting the animals' ability to navigate.

If whales are stranded the only help people can give (unless towing out to sea is an option) is to keep the whales' skin moist until they can be refloated when the tide comes in. Frustratingly, sometimes whales refloated will reground. This may be connected to the strong social bonds within the whale pods.

Most strandings are of toothed whales, and while the exact species of those stranded on Soqatra is unclear (they may have been False Killer Whales) they were small toothed whales, the type most commonly seen stranded.

Photos by Ahmed Saeed Suleiman



**Cover Photo of art on cave wall by
Daniel Britton**

NEWS

Friends of Soqatra

أصدقاء سقطري



Belgium, 5 April 2017

From: Friends of Soqatra, UK Charity #1097546

On the Destruction of Cultural Heritage on the Soqatra Archipelago UNESCO World Heritage Site

To whom it may concern,

On April 5, 2017, social media reported on the imminent destruction at an important archaeological site on the Soqatra Archipelago, the Hill Fort at Jebel Hawari, on the Northern coast. This news followed a series of earlier reports on social media, emerging from Soqatra about land changes and recent threats to the Archipelago, and concern from local inhabitants. These changes, as part of recent developments, are not beneficial to local inhabitants and have generated a large emotional reaction from the Soqotri people.

We ask for the immediate cessation of the deliberate destruction of the cultural heritage of Soqatra, and we ask for support to the local authorities in their efforts to help safeguard the UNESCO WH Site. Once heritage is lost, it is gone forever. Soqatra is unique in the world, but only remains unique because of its cultural and natural heritage, which needs protection. The Hill Fort of Jebel Hawari is an example of Soqatra's exceptional and important cultural heritage which is in need of protection.

The Hill Fort of Jebel Hawari is of fundamental cultural importance to Soqatra, as it is one of the only surviving forts that were established by the Mahra rulers **to defend Soqatra against foreign invaders**. According to historical accounts this fort is believed to have been established in 1481 by 'Amir bin ' Afrar, the Sultan of Mahra. Moreover, this fort is the site **of a famous battle** that was fought between the Mahri garrison under Sultan Ibrahim (son of the Sultan of Mahra) and the invading Portuguese under the command of Tristan De Cunha and Alfonso Albuquerque in April 1507. This long and fierce fight was eventually won by the Portuguese, who stationed a garrison of 100 men at the fort under Don Afonso de Noronha (nephew of Alfonso Albuquerque). However, in 1510 the fort was attacked by the Mahra, leaving the garrison so weak that it was eventually abandoned in 1511. Soqatra had freed itself of its invaders. While the battle and the fort are well attested to in both Arabic and Portuguese sources, there has been little archaeological work undertaken to allow for a better understanding of this period in Soqatra's past. According to archaeologists who have undertaken some preliminary surveys of Jebel Hawari there are also a large number of graves on the lower slopes of Jebel Hawari, several of which were destroyed during previous roadworks.

In addition, this site is home to a considerable number of **endemic animals and plants**, among which populations of important species included in the **IUCN Red List** (e.g., the tree *Grewia milleri*).

The destruction of this Hill Fort will result in an irrecoverable loss of Soqatra's cultural heritage and the destruction of an important part of Arabian history. Furthermore, the **sustainable tourism potential** of this beautiful site will be lost, directly impacting the livelihood of local people.

We therefore urgently request an immediate stop of the destruction of this site and call upon local authorities, with the support from international organisations, to protect Jebel Hawari and its archaeological remains and help stop the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage at the Soqatra Archipelago UNESCO World Heritage Site.

On behalf of the Friends of Soqatra (FoS),

Dr J. Jansen van Rensburg

Dr K. Van Damme



Report on FOS Support Following Cyclones Chapala and Megh Hugh Morris, FOS Treasurer

At the beginning of November 2015, just six weeks after the 14th AGM of *FoS*, Cyclone Chapala struck Soqotra. One week later it was followed by a second, Cyclone Megh, which was equally severe. *FoS* was made aware of the first (and of the second) before they made landfall on Soqotra. Even before the first cyclone had struck, members of the *FoS* Committee (and others) were involved in email discussions about what *FoS* might be able to do to help. The conclusion was that *FoS* should alert its membership to what had happened, that it should collect donations, and that £500 of *FoS*'s own reserves should be made available to help with relief on Soqotra and its archipelago. Discussions followed in which it was further decided that *FoS* should seek help to determine: (a) how to transfer money to the island safely and accountably; (b) how to respond to the most pressing needs (identified in conjunction with local advice); (c) how to monitor the distribution of the money sent by *FoS*; and (d) how to establish mechanisms for ensuring that it was being used wisely and effectively.

The first of many generous donations was received on the 3rd of November. Individual donations were made either directly or by cheque into the *FoS* bank account with the Royal Bank of Scotland; or via PayPal (using the *FoS* website); or (from the 11th of November) to *GoGetFunding* - a special fundraising site set up by Lisa Banfield. The final (net) sums received by *FoS* were: £2142.47 directly into the bank account; £813.44 via PayPal; and £8123.87 from donations to *GoGetFunding*. Together with the pledged £500, from the *FoS* reserves, this raised a total of £11579.78. In all a total of 63 individuals made contributions which ranged from a few dollars to several thousand pounds.

The whole process involved a significant amount of activity on the part of *FoS*, as reflected in the following figures: the general file relating to the project currently has 334 emails in it; the file of correspondence with donors (acknowledging their donations and sending up-dates) has 252 emails in it; and the file relating to the money transfers has 113 emails in it!

The first transfer of money to Soqotra was made on the 12th of November 2015 and the second on the 21st of December 2015 (of £1000 and £1356.75 respectively) – in fact both these sums, which involved *Western Union* - were sent *on behalf of FoS* and were not reimbursed by *FoS* until the beginning of 2016 (hence they do not feature in the 2015 accounts). Subsequent payments to Soqotra were able to be made by direct bank transfers, in January, March and April 2016. The total that has been sent to Soqotra, at the time of the AGM 2016, amounts to £9661.75 – thus, there is a further £1918.03 still in the *FoS* bank account waiting to be sent. Of the sums that have been sent to Soqotra, approximately £3000 is still to be used.

The mechanism for sending money has depended upon the good offices of Abdullah Ali Ahmed Salman (at the suggestion of Katja Setzkorn, GIZ) who received the money, and recorded doing so (both by a confirming email and through cooperation with the GIZ office on Soqotra), before passing it on to Ismael Mohamed Ahmed Salem. Ismael had kindly agreed to be the person who would distribute the donated money. Ismael confirmed that he had received the money and created receipts which have subsequently been used to record how the money has been 'spent'. Thus the money has been able to reach Ismael and to be distributed in a manner that was both secure and demonstrative of good practice.

Ismael travelled to the areas which had sustained damage in the cyclones, and also took advice from others, before recommending those projects which should be given priority. This he did through discussions with Kay - involving many telephone conversations - and Kay, in turn, involved the committee (and others) before confirming to Ismael that each project had the approval of *FoS*.

A consequence of this process was that it was Soqotrans themselves who chose which projects should receive *FoS* funding and in what order. The **first project** took place in late November and involved taking a skilled boat-repairer to the island of Samha. In all 18 people – mainly fishermen - were helped (with benefits beyond the individuals concerned). 13 had damaged boats repaired, two had their boats repaired as well as their engines, two had help with damage to housing and one had compensation for the loss of his boat. 300,000 YR was distributed (using the initial £1000). *FoS* was particularly pleased with this project for, not only did it help those in need and provide practical training, but it seems likely that it may serve as a model for an on-going boat repair service funded by GIZ.



The regeneration plot in Momi on 8 July 19 species of plants have returned to the site, some endemic or threatened species. The plot was quite green in comparison to surrounding areas. Photos by Ismael Salem.

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The **second project** involved helping rebuild a remote Hagher house in late January and a **third project** helped repair several kareefs (water catchments) in the area of Riyed d-il-Kishin in April and May. Ismael was able to source materials at a favourable rate, to organise a friend to transport them to the project sites, and to find and pay a local skilled builder. Local villagers helped in the work and thus they learned the techniques in much the same manner that the boat repair work had provided an educational experience in Samha. These two projects cost approximately 830,000 YR.

One of our members, who had spent time living in Homhil and who wished to return something for the hospitality received at that time, had donated the large sum of 1,000,000 YR to the fund-raising. After some discussion as to whether it was indeed appropriate for *FoS* to be accepting money for a single area it was agreed that this was acceptable provided it was made clear that *FoS* was simply acting as the mechanism for the distribution of this sum on behalf of the donor. Ismael reported that he distributed the money, for this **fourth project**, as follows: to each of five families, whose houses had been destroyed by the second cyclone, he gave 130,000 YR (= 650,000 YR); to each of three families, whose houses were partially destroyed, he gave 33,000 YR (= 99,000 YR) and to the people that the donor had especially wished to help he gave 250,000 YR.

Other projects that have been discussed and for which Ismael has been given authorisation are: (1) to use the *FoS* funding for the purchase of mosquito nets, (2) to use it for the replanting of trees in areas where there has been significant damage to stands of *Dracaena* and *Boswellia*, and (3) to use it to assist the African fishing community in Hadibo, who have suffered damage to boats, nets, and houses in the cyclones and who have, hitherto, been partially excluded from relief aid.

Ismael has been tireless in working to assist *FoS* in helping those in need on Soqatra as a result of the two cyclones. He has been giving his time and energy and expertise freely and *FoS* is well aware of how indebted it is to him for his advice, his hard work and his professionalism. It should also be recorded that Kay, Chairman of *Friends of Soqatra*, has spent many, many hours liaising with Ismael and others on Soqatra and in keeping the committee informed and in making sure that decisions were taken with the fullest consultation possible.

The damage caused by the cyclones was extensive and, in response, help has reached Soqatra from other countries and from other organisations much larger than *FoS*. Also Yemen, itself, is a country which is currently facing very significant problems that are not solely the result of natural calamities. The potential for *Friends of Soqatra* to make a big difference is recognised to be limited, despite the understandable wish of its members to help Soqatra as much as possible. The fund-raising project, in response to these two devastating cyclones, is unfinished and we intend to continue to provide help. The committee of *FoS* has been greatly impressed by the generosity of those who have contributed to the fund and has felt a responsibility to take decisions, and to disburse the donated funds, as wisely as possible through the use of local advice and local expertise. Inevitably this has meant that decisions and actions have required time in order for them to be implemented carefully and effectively.



Photos of the Momi plots.

The children are checking the growth of these trees constantly, and are very enthusiastic. Other pictures show aspects of the project.



A Letter from Friends Len and Wendy Pearce

Thanks Julian for gathering us in. We are now living just outside Melbourne where (at 75) we are still trying to re-tire...getting more and more creaky and leaky! You will know that some teaching work is still going on Socotra with Matt Byrne leading "the team". In the end we helped Mamoun set up his own school and gave him all the equipment. Matt works with him and teaches the teachers. Mamoun is a dedicated young man and only pays himself if he has money left over after paying his local teachers who are all our former students. Isn't it the aim of us all to turn foreign work into indigenous work? We have just purchased him a new more powerful generator from Dubai. We gave our workers, month by month, more than a year of generous redundancy pay, and Eisa some extra to help pay for his wedding, while we hoped they could all find other work. Ali Maqaddam took our Hilux as a gift, and we hoped he might get taxi work and maybe some freight from the port. But we know all are suffering because of the shut-down associated with the war. We got Foxtel so we could keep up with overseas news on Al Jazeera and BBC etc. so we hear something of what is happening in Yemen. You will know it all. It reduces us to tears for these beautiful people, and sometimes it's like a knife in the belly. At least the authorities on Socotra have taken the bit between their teeth and started running their own affairs and issuing their own visas. We heard some time back that UAE had paid for a 99 year lease of the island.

We have also paid for all the equipment for a local chap under Matt's guidance to set up a gymnasium. I think there might be a will to give the ladies a go at some surreptitious time, and so to get on with secret ladies business! Another couple are trying to do something with the disabled, and so to bring them out of their hiding places. The Dutch couple are still doctor and nurse at the hospital.

All the best for your conference and greetings to the friends we know, especially Miranda. We are hoping to visit Wendy's friends and family in the South West (Bristol area) about May June next year so our savings are going into that right now. Also one of our sons who flew Cessnas in Africa for 15 years was home with his family of four children for all of last year; they have just now moved to Alice Springs where he obtained work as a pilot with Royal Flying Doctor Service, flying the Pilatus PC12. They save lives every day. What a job! Must away. Greetings again to everyone.

Sincerely, Len and Wendy Pearce

John G. T. Shipman 1939-2016

Obituary by Thanos Petouris

John Shiipman, who died on 3 November 2016 age 77 years, belonged to a rapidly vanishing breed of British men who experienced first-hand the post-war dismantling of the Empire and dedicated their lives to the study and understanding of the peoples amongst whom they had served. An erudite Arabist, he took pleasure in collecting rare Arabic words and proverbs: 'Choose your companion before the path' he used to say with relish, and this is something he ultimately practiced during his own lifetime. John was born on 7 July 1939 in Twickenham, Middlesex. His father was a British Army doctor and John spent his childhood in Egypt, beginning a life-long association with the region and the Arab world in general. He joined the Civil Service after University at Trinity, Dublin and took up the post of Assistant Advisor in Aden at only 23 years of age. After a turbulent history in the region he left Aden and became Consul, later First Secretary, in Oman, again during a time of great change. His last overseas assignment was at the British Embassy in Abu Dhabi (1984-87). He then returned to the UK as an inexhaustible source of information on the Middle East.

John will be remembered for his singular personality, steadfast adherence to his moral principles, constancy to his friends and scholarly erudition. But above all as a true gentleman, who would often sum up his own experiences by using Doreen Ingrams's words in *A Time in Arabia*: 'when you break bread with people and share their troubles and joys, the barriers of language, of politics and of religion soon vanish'.

For the full obituary see *Asian Affairs*, 2017; Vol XLVIII no 11: 351-355. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2017.1313594>



LIFE ON THE ISLAND

Floods at Halah and Erher

Ahmed Saeed Suleiman, Fouad Naseeb and Abdulwahab Saeed*

***Socotra Team UNEP/GEF/SGN Project #5347 “Support to the Integrated Program for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Socotra Archipelago”**

In the first weeks of Ramadan 2017, heavy rains on Socotra had a significant impact on the eastern highlands (Momi) and on the eastern coastal lowlands (Hala area and Erher) of Soqatra. The UNEP/GEF Project Team assessed the situation, reporting on damage to palm plantations in wadis on Momi, severe soil erosion in vallies, and smaller landslides along the coast. The impacts changed the view of some areas for the time being and cut off access at some places along the Hala road for a while because of displacements of sand. As a result, and as an example of the rains, a new (temporary?) lagoon formed at Erher, a frequently visited spot along the north eastern coast. Photos taken July 19th 2017 by A. S. Suleiman show that this lagoon was still present one month after the initial events.

Photo 1. Hala Road with sand blocking the road

Photo 2. Erher and newly formed lagoon, photo towards south

Photo 3. Erher and newly formed lagoon, photo towards north



Integrating cultural heritage into conservation and development planning on Soqatra

Julian Jansen van Rensburg

The island of Socotra has often been dubbed the forgotten island, a moniker that bears direct relevance to the islands rich and unique cultural heritage. Despite numerous archaeological expeditions over the course of the last decade there is no cultural heritage database available on the island, and Soqatra was not included in the 2002 Inventory of Cultural Heritage Priority Sites for Yemen. This has meant that many of the cultural heritage sites on Soqatra remain unrecorded.

The dangers of this is that with the conflict in mainland Yemen there has been an increasing demand placed on Soqatra in the form of development which is putting this heritage at risk. The arrival of large numbers of newcomers with little affinity to local heritage has also led to direct damage, including graffiti on rock art panels. The endangered Soqotri language is also further threatened as the proportion of residents on the island who speak it diminishes.

To address this the British Council has brought together experts based in the UK and Germany, who will work together with Yemenis in the creation of an open-source, geospatially-enabled software platform for cultural heritage inventory and management database of Soqotri heritage. Training will also be provided on how to maintain and work with this new resource. This training will be used to generate threat assessments and the use of the database will be integrated into holistic approaches for the maintenance of tangible and intangible cultural heritage on Soqatra. In addition to this, poetry competitions will be held to celebrate the Soqotri language and local school pupils will be invited to visit newly recorded, local cultural heritage sites and participate in workshops.

Stones with Gujerati script



L I F E O N T H E I S L A N D

Soqotra and Soqotri at the end of the 20th century and early 21st century. After the end of the French Mission in 1991, Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle continued to make further visits to the island, concentrating on collecting dialectal data. She extended the area of fieldwork, to Jyoʔo in the east and to parts of Diksam. She worked in Mori, on the north coast, and went back to Qadhub to record new texts and grammatical data. In 1996 and 2001, she worked in Hadiboh recording material with various people visiting the capital who spoke different dialects: from Syʕab on the western coast and from Handaḵ in Noged. She wrote of the dialectology of the island: "So far no specific study of this type has been carried out, and my last survey (2001) pointed to the urgency of such a study, because the process of linguistic change appears to be faster than expected". She has published widely, mainly on linguistics, but she has also published articles on other cultural matters, such as: *Aloe and dragon's blood, some traditional uses on the island of Socotra*; *Magie et pratiques thérapeutiques dans l'île de Soqotra* and *Une version soqotri de la légende de Abu Shawârib*.

What else have we from the 21st century? The Russian researchers: Naumkin continues to write on things Soqotri and Vladimir Agafonov to work on Soqotran stories. In the field of anthropology, Serge Elie has published widely, and Nathalie Peutz (who spent some time living in Homhil, teaching English as well as working with the Biodiversity Office) has also published some of the results of her research. In the field of genetics, in 2009 a team led by Viktor Cerný published *Out of Arabia – The settlement of the Island of Soqotra as revealed by mitochondrial and Y chromosome genetic diversity*. He had approached me to help him with this, and later he and one of his co-authors, Connie Mulligan, approached me again: they were keen to carry out further comparative work on the mainland, particularly with members of the other MSAL speaking peoples in Dhofar. However the Oman government was not keen, and sadly, this never came to anything.

In linguistics, the biggest publishing event has been the appearance in 2014 of the *Corpus of Soqotri Oral Literature*, written by a large team of Russian scholars working with Soqotrans from the Daʕarho area. The team is headed by Vitaly Naumkin, but the principal linguist of the team is Leonid Kogan, who has written several articles on various aspects of Soqotri, as well as on Semitic languages in general. The Soqotri members of the team were all from a family from Daʕarho - many of you here I'm sure know Shaikh Eesa Ahmad Daʕarhi? - and some of them made several trips to Moscow to carry out more detailed linguistic work than was possible in the field. On one trip the young wife of one of them also went, which must be a first.

As a study of the dialect of this valley it is an invaluable work. As an example of teamwork and cooperation between Soqotran and non-Soqotran colleagues, it is exemplary. And, perhaps most important of all, the Soqotrans and Russians between them devised a way of writing Soqotri using modified Arabic characters which was acceptable to their Soqotran colleagues. If it catches on, this is truly exciting. Because, as I am sure you all understand, a language today with no written form will simply not survive.

I thought I might say something here about my experience of studying Soqotri. Because one of the things that has changed is Soqotrans' own interest in their language and their preparedness to think about it as something worth studying. This was not always the case, and particularly with Soqotrans living outside the island. When in 1988 I knew that I was to go with Tony Miller to Soqotra to look at the state of the vegetation for the WorldWide Fund for Nature, I immediately started looking round for a Soqotran to teach me some Soqotri (I was working in southern Oman, at the time). Through Dhofari friends I was taken to meet two possible teachers. Sadly, one was an extremely old woman who seemed absolutely terrified by the whole idea. The other was a rather sad old man who lived alone in a tumbledown hut. Although he didn't appear to be terrified by the idea, he had practically no teeth. This made work impossible in a language where being able to distinguish between the similar sounds is absolutely vital. I was getting rather depressed. But one day I got talking to the Director of Radio and Television (both still in the infancy in Salalah), and when he asked me what I was doing next, I told him about Soqotra and the difficulties I was having finding anyone to teach me some basic, polite Soqotri before I went. He told me he had a driver who was a Soqotri. I asked rather nervously if he was an old man... He said no, and he rang me the next day to say had arranged for him to come and meet me at the Salalah Football Club at 4 o'clock (the only Football Club in Dhofar in those days). I had never been to the Salalah Football Club. No women, of any nationality, went to the Salalah Football Club. I sat and waited for him in a dark, stuffy room, surrounded by men trying politely not to stare, until a man of middle age came up to me, looking as uncomfortable as I was. He said he was the Director's driver, Ahmad. We had a cup of tea while I tried to explain what I wanted. He was most unenthusiastic, but too polite – and perhaps worried about displeasing his boss – to refuse to meet me the next day at the gate to the Palace Guest Quarters, so that I could give him a cup of tea and we could try and start work. He came and I tried again to explain what it was that I was asking him to help me with. Finally I rather desperately said: 'Tell me a very short story, word by word and I'll write it down'. He said: 'You can't write it'. I begged him to please try, and he did. When I read the story back to him (I had taken it down, sound by sound, in the International Phonetic Alphabet, but of course had not understood a word), his jaw literally dropped. Why had I not told him I already spoke Soqotri? And so on, back and forth, more sentences, more writing, more repeating back, until finally he was convinced: (a) that I knew no Soqotri at all; (b) that I could write down and read back to him what he'd said (Ahmad couldn't read or write); (c) that writing it down provided a permanent record; and (d) that I really, really did want to learn Soqotri, and some pretty quickly, enough to enable me to be polite and ask my way around on this, my first visit to Soqotra. Subsequently, Ahmad became a devoted and extremely enthusiastic teacher. He came to stay with us in Scotland five times for work, and once with his wife just for fun – this was a year before he died. He and his large family became very good friends.

To be Continued in Tayf 15

LIFE ON THE ISLAND

Soqotra: People, Language and Culture

A summary of past work, where we are now, and looking to the future

Miranda Morris

Soqotri is one of the six Modern South Arabian Languages (the MSAL). This name, Modern South Arabian Languages, is a rather misleading one, given their age, but it is used to differentiate them from Old South Arabian Languages, the most important of which were Sabaean, Minaeic, Qatabanic and Hadramitic. They are closely related to the Modern South Arabian Languages, but extinct. A key difference between the Old South Arabian Languages and the Modern South Arabian Languages is that the Old South Arabian Languages had their own writing system, the Ancient South Arabian Monumental script. Examples of this can still be seen today, carved into stone in South Arabia and Ethiopia. It is a consonantal alphabet, with 29 graphemes or letter-forms, and derives from the Phoenician alphabet. The last inscription in these languages dates to 554 CE, that is 60 years before Islam. Overall, some 10,000 inscriptions exist: compared with other parts of the ancient world the number of surviving inscriptions is very high. Inscriptions on wooden sticks in another minuscule cursive script have also been discovered. Soqotri is the only MSAL to be spoken exclusively on islands, and it was the first of the to be discovered by western scholars (in 1834 -182 years ago).

Soqotra and Soqotri in the nineteenth century. The first data on Soqotri were collected by Wellsted during his survey of the island in January, 1834, published the following year. He collected toponyms (place names), some tribe and plant names, and writes that he also noted "a copious vocabulary of words in general use among the Bedouins, by which I trust the scholar may be able to proceed in an inquiry that can scarcely fail to lead to most interesting results." The list of 195 items given in the Report (March 1835) was extended to 236 items in the Memoir (April & May 1835). Words are given in Soqotri (using the Arabic alphabet), Latin transliteration, and then translated into Arabic and English. He doesn't specify where or from whom he collected his data. We know that worked with two guides: Hamed, who had a house in Tamarida (Hadiboh), and Suleyman Muscaty, but he says nothing about the mother tongue of his guides and language assistants (does the name Muscaty suggest that Suleyman had Omani connections?). They must have spoken Arabic as well as Soqotri, and maybe English, as Wellsted's Arabic is said to have been weak. Anyway, the contact and influence of Arabic in his material is obvious.

The historical turning point for the knowledge of the MSAL is 1898, with the Südarabische Expedition of the Imperial Academy of Vienna. The three scholars, Müller, Jahn and Hein, made a systematic collection of texts in Mehri, Soqotri, and Jibbāli, and these were then studied grammatically and lexically by Bittner (1908-1917), Jahn (1915), Leslau (1938) and Wagner (1953). Of the three, it was Müller who worked on Soqotri. He recorded texts on the island as well as on the *Gottfried*, the ship of the expedition.

Soqotra and Soqotri in the twentieth century. The towering figure in Soqotri studies in the twentieth century was Wolf Leslau, a scholar of Semitic languages and one of the foremost authorities on the Semitic languages of Ethiopia. He worked on the material of the Vienna Expedition and published his results in the 1930s. In 1938 he published his invaluable *Lexique Soqotri (sudarabique moderne) avec comparaisons et explications étymologiques*.

The Oxford University Expedition of 1956 resulted in some published material, including Douglas Botting's book *The Island of Dragon's Blood*, which brought the island to the attention of a wider public. But their visit was a short one. In 1966 G. H. Brown was sent by the then British Govt. in Aden to survey Soqotra. His report, *Social and Economic Conditions and Possible Development of Socotra*, makes fascinating reading, but of course none of his suggestions were put into practice by the British, as they very soon left Aden. In 1967 there was another British expedition: *the joint services and civilian expedition to Soqotra*. Some of the work done during this appears in the 1992 publication, *Socotra: Island of Tranquillity*, edited by Brian Doe. The expedition members were not there to study the language or the culture, but Tom Johnstone (who otherwise worked on Sheret, Mehri and E arsksi), published on the phonology and morphology of Soqotri as a result, and annotated his own copy of Leslau's *Lexique Soqotri* with many lexical variants. The Soqotri he worked on was essentially that of Hadiboh, Qalansiya and Qadhub.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, the Russian Vitaly Naumkin began his work on the island. In 1977 his book, *Where the Phoenix Rose from the Ashes*, was published in Russian, and later, the Russian linguist Porchimovsky worked on the material Naumkin had collected, and in 1981 they published (again in Russian) *Essays in the Ethnolinguistics of Socotra*. In 1983 the joint Soviet-Yemeni expedition was established, and Naumkin made several trips to the island between 1983 and 1987, undertaking fieldwork in many areas and visiting ʿAbd-al-Kuri. He did a lot of work with informants from the Daʿrho valley behind the Hagher and spent time in the Diksam area. The origin of his informants or the place where the data was collected is not always specified, but linguistics was anyway not Naumkin's primary interest: his real interest was anthropology. In 1988 he published, in Russian, the results of his studies, in a book called simply *The Socotrans*. The English translation of this did not appear until 1993, and now it was called *Island of Phoenix*. An ethnographic study of the people of Socotra.

From 1985 to 1991, the French Mission, whose interests were primarily linguistic, began to work on Soqotra. Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle first worked with Antoine Lonnet (who wrote in more general terms on Semitic languages and the MSAL), and later on her own. They collected data on the Southern as well as on the Northern coast (Qadhub, Hadibo, Siq, ʿIihe and Hawlef). They worked in Maʿnefo in the Hagher foothills; in Ras Mōmi in the east, and in Qalansiya in the west. They took an informant from Qalansiyah back with them to Paris and worked with him there for a time. This resulted in the publication of three articles on the parts of the body, in Soqotri as well as in other MSA languages.

CONFERENCES

Friends of Soqotra AGM and Conference September 2016 Tubingen



C O N F E R E N C E S

16th Conference and Annual General Meeting Friends of Soqotra 27-29 October 2017 Natural History Museum, Bern, Switzerland

The Friends of Soqotra conference and Annual General Meeting presents a great opportunity to meet other members and find out more the results of the latest scientific research, ongoing projects, and share information about the events and activities that the Friends of Soqotra have been involved in over the last year. Both members and non-members are very welcome to attend and participate in the meetings.

This year the conference organisers would like open up the call for papers to as broad an audience as possible and would therefore like to welcome papers on as wide a range of subjects as possible that would include but by no means be limited to studies in malacology, archaeology, ecology, speleology, history, conservation, the marine and terrestrial environment, sociolinguistics, fauna, flora, policies and media.

The Conference is being hosted by Dr Eike Neubert, Naturhistorisches Museum, Bernastrasse 15, CH-3005, Bern, Switzerland. Email: eike.neubert@nmbe.ch, who can provide further information. More information will also be available on the FoS Website.

Preliminary Programme

27 October – Afternoon registration and evening meal.

28 October – Conference day.

29 October – FoS Annual General Meeting and afternoon excursion.

30 October – Optional excursions in and around Bern



Pierre De Geest: European Geologist of the Month

This month we talked to Pierre De Geest, member of the Belgian Luxembourg Union of Geologists (BLUG/UBLG). He is currently working as a senior geologist for the Dredging Environmental Marine Engineering-group (DEME), executive committee member of the Friends of Soqotra and obtained the EurGeol title in 2015.

In which country do you currently work? – In Belgium at the Head Office of the DEME-group, but frequently working worldwide project related.

In which field of geology do you work? – Engineering geology, Soil & Rock characterisation, 3D Modelling, Geophysics, Site Investigations, Marine & Resource Geology

What inspired you to become a geologist? – The adventure of discovering our planet at its surface and below fascinated me. The book "A Journey to the Centre of the Earth" from Jules Verne, sparked my interest. Age 12 I started collecting minerals, later fossils and became an active cave explorer age 15. Especially the dimension of time in relation to a changing "living-earth" is mind blowing.

Which field of geology did you study in particular? – I studied micropaleontology during my Master at the University of Ghent to reconstruct paleo environments. Later onwards (2003-2006) I combined my cave explorations with a Ph.D. study at the University of Brussels to reconstruct the Holocene paleoclimate with the use of stable isotopes and geochemical research on speleothems from Soqotra Island (Yemen).

In which sector(s) did/do you work? – After my Master thesis I started working as an environmental geologist in a private company. Here I learned working with different drilling equipment and applying geotechnical site investigation techniques. After returning to the academic world (did not defend my Ph.D.) I ventured into engineering geology at the big land reclamation projects in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Did you already work abroad? If yes, could you tell us about your experiences abroad? – I worked approximately 2 years in the Middle East (UAE and Oman) and around 7 months in Australia as an expat with my family. Regularly I spent some weeks abroad on soil investigations worldwide (all continents except for Antarctica). All these experiences taught me respect, mutual understanding and to put things in perspective.

To know you a little better: What do you like to do in your spare time? – I like to spend my free time outdoors with my family, exploring nature and culture (walking, photography, learning from foreign customs) and doing some gardening. Although cave exploration is becoming less active, investigating cave proxies (archaeological remains, water supplies, sediments, speleothems) remains a fascinating hobby.



RESEARCH

Incense and Imagery Julian Jansen van Rensburg

The island of Socotra is well known in the Indian Ocean trading networks as having been among the principal producers of frankincense, Indian cinnabar (Dragon's blood) and aloes. Claims that Socotra supplied the world with these commodities may be found in the historical texts of Herodotus (c. fifth century BC) in *Histories*, Diodorus Siculus (fl. c. first century BC) in *Bibliotheca Historica*, Pliny the Elder (c. first century AD) in *Historia Naturalis*, and Ptolemy (c. first century AD) in *Geographia*. Archaeological evidence for Socotra's involvement in the Indian Ocean trading networks is exemplified by recent findings in Hoq cave on the north coast of Socotra (Strauch 2012). The large corpus of inscriptions of sea – traders from India, South Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt and Palmyra, dating from the first century BC to the sixth century AD, found within the cave, attest to both the importance of Socotra and the extent of its trading networks (Strauch 2012). However, archaeologists are still attempting to understand the nature and scale of the trade in incense and Dragon's Blood.



Recently, with the help of Dirk van Dorpe, the archaeologists Julian Jansen van Rensburg and Kristen Hopper have begun to map and study the presence of a series of walls spread out across the island using satellite remote sensing. This is the first time that any attempt has been made to map the extensive wall systems on Socotra, and the preliminary results are exciting. Not only have approximately 4460km of wall alignments been identified and traced, but we are also seeing what appear to be agricultural and water management systems that are likely to have been built specifically for the production and harvesting of incense. While this project is still ongoing, our results are finally beginning to shed some light on what has been up until now a poorly understood part of Socotra's very important past.



Cave of Revelations: Indian Ocean Trade in light of the Socotran Graffiti

Kasper Evers

Department of History, The Saxo-Institute, Copenhagen University.

This article is based on two papers given at the workshop 'Rethinking the Greeks in Gandhara' at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, 27th–28th March 2014; and the workshop 'Networks and Interaction: the Red Sea region in history and archaeology' at University of Bergen, 18th September 2014, respectively.

First discovered in 2001, and fully published in 2012, a corpus of more than 200 graffiti from the cave Hoq on ancient Dioscourides, modern Socotra, constitutes an invaluable resource shedding a rare light on trade routes of the ancient Indian Ocean. Whereas more abundant evidence has previously been available to document the activities of Roman merchants, while evidence attesting the role of their Indian counterparts has been comparatively scarce, it now becomes possible to move beyond the traditional bias towards 'Romano-centric' narratives, thus providing a fuller account of ancient long-distance trade in the region. Specifically, the graffiti introduce us to traders and travellers, Buddhist monks and Yavanas, hailing from Roman Egypt, Palmyra, Axum, Hadramawt, Western India, Bactria and Gandhara. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to appraise the importance of the Hoq graffiti for Indian Ocean studies, analyse the import of the evidence for our knowledge about the organisation of trade, and outline the resulting corrigenda to the orthodox picture of 'Indo-Roman trade'.

RESEARCH

Mollusc research on Soqatra, a summary

Eike Neubert

After a longer period of constant publication activity, the series of papers on the Soqotran snails came to an end with the paper on the Pomatidae by Neubert (2009). These enigmatic snails, which have a lid on top of their back to close their shells, form one of the major groups of snails, and are usually well-known to any inhabitant or visitor of the islands. Since then, research did not entirely stop, but was reduced due to other obligations.

Nonetheless, in 2013, E. Neubert and Estée Bochud from the Natural History Museum in Berne (Switzerland) visited Soqatra again in order to fill some of the larger distribution gaps. This visit was very successful, but the analysis of this most recent collecting activity is pending. Still, a small number of ca. 5-6 new species await description, and still there are small patches of very remote areas not yet surveyed. It should be stressed that Abd al-Kuri and Samha urgently need to be checked for additional species, and new discoveries can be expected there.

A large hindrance on the way to a more modern analysis of the phylogenetic relationships of the snails of Soqatra with the rest of the world is the lack of animals. For this reason, one focus of the future work will be to obtain the genetic data of all species we could collect alive so far, to identify the gaps in our records, and develop a targeted programme to fill these gaps in the future. Then, the foundation is prepared for a large and promising scientific work which will discuss the locations of the snails of Soqatra, their endemic status, and their value for nature conservation. Another step will certainly be to initiate an IUCN redlisting process that will highlight the uniqueness and vulnerability of the landsnail species of the Archipelago. With an almost 100% degree of endemism in landsnails, the islands form a remarkable hot spot of biodiversity in the region. These data and activities will hopefully contribute to keeping the standards of an UNESCO World Heritage Site for the islands up to date.



Combining genetic and landscape tools for reserve design on islands: The reptiles of Socotra as a model study

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Including evolutionary processes in conservation plans has been fully acknowledged in scientific literature but rarely implemented in terrestrial systems in a direct way. Distribution of genetic variation may present different patterns than species distribution that should be taken into account to maximize the persistence of conservation units. This work primarily aims to relate genetic and species richness of widespread and restricted range taxa with landscape features and to compare the impact of targeting genetic versus species diversity to guide reserve design, using Socotran reptiles as models.

Socotra has high levels of endemic specific and intraspecific diversity in relation to its area and great conservation interest (UNESCO Natural World Heritage site; within Horn of Africa biodiversity hotspot). Reptiles are the most important vertebrate group and the taxa with the most complete genetic sampling in that archipelago.

I've first predicted the occurrences of all reptile species using ecological niche models and then a new approach to derive maps for each genetic lineage within a species. I've evaluated the differences in the different areas of the zoning plan in protecting the overall and specific diversity of species and lineages and spatially compared the outputs. Results clearly indicate that, even though intraspecific and interspecific richness presented strong spatial correlations, differences reached circa 30% in some areas. Spatial differences were much stronger when considering wide distribution taxa than when considering restricted range taxa. Genetic and specific richness of restricted range taxa presented stronger positive relations with altitude than wide range or total taxa. This work provides an innovative methodological framework for supporting the use of genetic diversity in the design of Protected Areas which can be applied to other island systems with well-known genetic diversity. It can also assist in local-scale conservation planning as Socotra's Protected Areas will soon be re-evaluated. Photographs by Raquel Vasconcelos.



The beauty and the beast: Endemic mutualistic interactions promote community-based conservation on Socotra Island (Yemen)

Cristina García¹, Raquel Vasconcelos^{1,2*}

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The understanding that biodiversity is supported by an entangled network of interactions is fundamental if we are to guarantee the persistence of endemic and restricted-range taxa. When it comes to remote, isolated and rural areas, local human communities play a pivotal role in preserving their native flora and fauna. Locals typically show contrasting aesthetic appreciation for different species, unaware that the fate of highly valued species might be closely linked to the activity of non-charismatic and disregarded species. Therefore, conveying the importance of biotic interactions in sustaining biodiversity is important to incentivise environmental awareness in those areas. The remote Socotra Archipelago (Yemen), a Natural World Heritage, hosts one of the oldest forest ecosystems on Earth and 31 endemic reptile species. The relic dragon's blood tree *Dracaena cinnabari* is classified as Vulnerable and it is highly valued among locals. On the contrary, reptiles are typically persecuted and feared by them, in spite of the fact that they might provide services to *D. cinnabari*. In order to document the role of nocturnal lizards as pollinators of *D. cinnabari*, we conducted a trip to Socotra Island and we examined 11 tree populations at night for the presence of reptiles and whether they carry pollen in their snouts. Our results confirmed that three species of geckos carried pollen grains of *D. cinnabari* and at least seven other unidentified species. This result indicates that these geckos visit *D. cinnabari* flowers, likely to feed upon pollen or nectar, suggesting that they may pollinate this relic tree (**Figure 1**). We point out that by focusing on the need of preserving mutualistic biotic interactions, instead of individual species, environmental awareness would increase and Socotri people would steadily shift their attitude towards an holistic preservation of *D. cinnabari*. Read more here: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jnc.2016.11.005>

Reference: García C & Vasconcelos R (2017). The beauty and the beast: endemic mutualistic interactions promote community-based conservation on Socotra Island (Yemen). *Journal for Nature Conservation*, 35: 20-23.



Evidence of the potential mutualistic pollen dispersal interaction between dragon's blood trees and geckos of Socotra Island, Yemen. The much feared Socotra giant gecko *Haemodracon riebeckii*, carries pollen of the dragon's blood tree on his snout (inset photography), suggesting that it feeds its flowers, therefore potentially acting as a pollinator. Photos by Raquel Vasconcelos.

Rock art from Dahaisi cave, Socotra, Yemen: a preliminary report **Julian Jansen van Rensburg & Peter De Geest**

The island of Socotra is one of the most enigmatic places on earth. Situated at the entrance to the Red Sea it has attracted Indian Ocean seafarers and merchants to its shores from at least the first century BC. Unequivocal evidence for Socotra's importance in this trade was found within Hoq cave on the north coast where inscriptions show that sea-traders from India, South Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Palmyra were visiting Socotra from the first century BC to the sixth century AD. But who were the indigenous inhabitants and what do we know of their social, cultural and religious lives? The discovery of rock art in Dahaisi cave and its ongoing analysis and interpretation is starting to provide us with some answers, and we are slowly beginning to catch our first glimpse of the social, cultural, and religious lives of the ancient interior inhabitants. The presence of a number of different geometric designs and motifs is starting to put together a picture that appears to indicate that the cave had a number of different functions in its past. The geometric representations and their proposed links with ancient wall systems in the vicinity would seem to point to an administrative function, while representations of crosses and antlered people appear to indicate a religious functions. Other motifs of vessels (ships) and abstract imagery of animals also suggest that the cave functioned as an important node within the landscape where the inhabitants sought to record various aspects of what was important in their lives. Further recording and dating with undoubtedly provide a clearer understanding of the obscurities surrounding Socotra's ancient interior population.

Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies 45 (2015): 417-430.

Using High-Tech Photography to Reveal Ancient Rock Art

Julian Jansen van Rensburg

National Geographic Explorers Journal. May 13 2015.

During the second part of our adventure into the dark realms deep within Dahaisi cave where legends say a giant white snake dwells, we discovered and documented an ancient pathway worn smooth by ancient visitors to the cave. However, the main reason we came to Dahaisi was to document the wide array of rock art using the latest photographic techniques. To this end the photographer, Daniel Britton, has been working tirelessly in less than ideal conditions. Here is his story.

By Daniel Britton

The first thing I noticed as I clambered down into Dahaisi cave is the gradual loss of the beautiful light that for me as a photographer defines Socotra. Colors on this amazing island in the Indian Ocean seem brighter and more vivid than usual. In the cave this colour is replaced by a grey gloom. Increasingly dark shadows hang around the edges of my vision as I slowly became accustomed to seeing the world through a narrow cone of light projected from my borrowed headlamp.

This is my first experience of caving and when I turn off my headlamp to sample the true darkness that I've been told can only be found deep within a cave, I am not entirely sure if the increase in my heart rate is a sign of exhilaration or a somewhat more primal fear of the darkness. I quickly turn the headlamp back on.

As I pass through increasingly narrow passages I find myself crawling on hands and knees with Dirk van Dorpe, a seasoned caver making reassuring noises and advising me to get lower still as I slowly crawl along with a backpack full of cameras, tripods, and lighting rigs.

Heading deeper into the cave the first pieces of rock art begin to appear around us. Isolated motifs of enigmatic figures briefly acknowledge our passing.

But we are heading even deeper to the final chamber where most of the cave art is found. This is where my work begins. In this final chamber I am faced with a collection of esoteric images.

Horned human figures, quadrupeds and a multitude of cruciform and geometric motifs are spread across five rock panels.



Daniel Britton and Dirk van Dorpe setting up the camera for Infra-red photography (Photo by Julian Jansen van Rensburg)

RESEARCH

Photographing Art

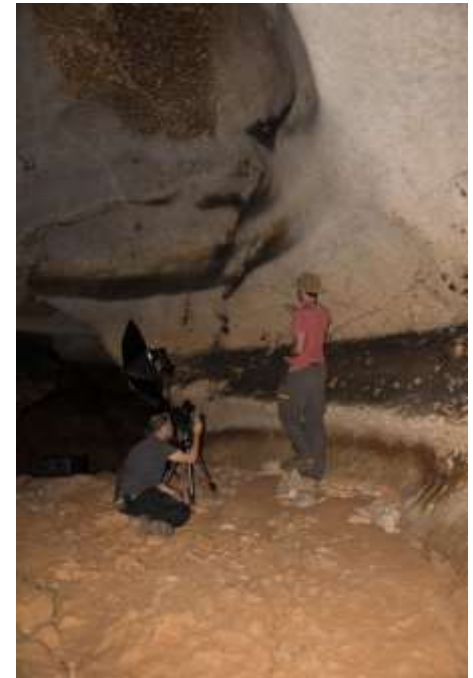
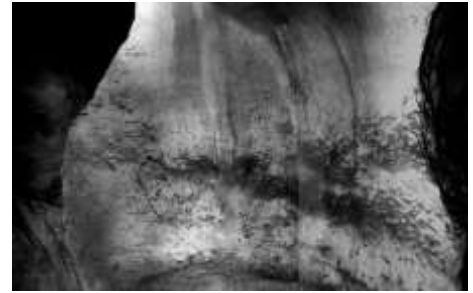
Each panel needs to be photographically documented using standard digital photography and infra-red photography. The visible light photography is fairly straight forward using a standard professional digital camera and battery powered studio lighting. The biggest problem is keeping my sweat, the result of near 90 percent humidity and temperatures of 82°F (28°C), from dripping into the electronics as I set up the lights.

These initial shots are impressive, revealing not only the motifs but the colors and textures of the cave walls.

It suddenly occurs to me that this is the first time the entire panels have been revealed as a single entity. They are all relatively large and it is likely that the lamps and flaming torches used to illuminate the rock surface by people in the past would only ever have shown a small portion of the panel at any one time. I simultaneously feel like an honored guest and intruder, conscious that I am seeing the images out of context and in a way unintended by their creators.

Infra-red

Once the initial documentation has been undertaken I set up my equipment to begin with infra-red photography, using a modified digital camera and infra-red floodlights. We are not using this to see in the dark, but rather to view the spectral images of motifs long since lost to the degradations of time.



Photos from the top:

The hidden motifs of Panel 5 are revealed using infra-red (Photo by Daniel Britton)



The expedition team records Dahaisi cave's final chamber. (Photo by Dirk van Dorpe)

Julian Jansen van Rensburg and Daniel Britton record images using Infra-red photography. (Photo by Dirk van Dorpe)

The Dahaisi cave expedition team from left: Peter De Geest (Geologist/ caver), Daniel Britton (Photographer/ Archaeologist), Julian Jansen van Rensburg (Archaeologist), Dirk van Dorpe (Caver/ Photographer). (Photo courtesy Daniel Britton)

Dirk van Dorpe stands next Panel 5 where more than a hundred motifs were recorded. (Photo by Daniel Britton).



CONTACTS

FRIENDS OF SOQOTRA

Friends of Soqotra (UK Charity Number 1097546) was formed in 2001. Its distinctive rationale is to bring together people with backgrounds in scientific research and those with a more general interest and develops the synergies between them in order to:

- Promote the sustainable use and conservation of the natural environment of the Soqotra island group
- Raise awareness of the archipelago's biodiversity and the unique culture and language of the islanders
- Help improve the quality of life of the island communities and support their traditional land management practices.



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WEBSITES

www.FriendsofSoqotra.org
www.Socotraisland.org/fund

The following websites also provide information on the island:

<http://rbgesun1.rbge.org.uk/Arabia/Soqotra/home/page01.html> Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Plants, panoramas and ethnobotany.

www.unirostock.de/fakult/manafak/biologie/wranik/socotra. University of Rostock (Animals)

www.sogotra.info A personal view by John Farrar.

www.yemen-protectedareas.org

www.socotraproject.org – SGBP website

<http://www.sogotra.com>; <http://www.sogotra.org/int/>

<http://www.sogotra.com/vb/showthread.php?p=39668>

<http://socotra.info/socotra-news.php?start=20>

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TAYF

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If you would like to include an article, research note or notice in future issues please send to:

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Many thanks to all the contributors, whose contact details are listed with their articles or can be obtained from the Editor. Unattributed 'News' articles come from the Yemeni press; full articles without named authors prepared by the Editor from submitted material.

Friends of Soqotra Website

<http://www.friendsofsoqotra.org>

The Friends of Soqotra website is managed by Dana Pietsch. It provides information on completed and ongoing scientific research on the Soqotra archipelago including data, bibliographies and contacts of institutions and research teams. The structure and layout also includes a page in the Arabic language which gives some general information about FOS. If you would like to submit content for the website, please contact Dana:

dana.pietsch@uni-tuebingen.de



FIGURE 2. The southern panel showing the geometric patterns, vessels, and crosses



FIGURE 4. A close-up image of an antlered person or a cross fourchee; note the large three-masted vessel with the lines extending from the deck.



FIGURE 7. A close-up of the Arabian camel and rider.



FIGURE 3. An abstract image of a possible animal or insect.



FIGURE 10. The circular drawing representative of a central 'farmstead' with outlying boundary walls.

Figures illustrating articles on pages 17-18



FIGURE 9. The supposed mulla that live in the vicinity of Di-Bên