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The Historical Region of al-Bahrayn and the Italian City-States at the Turn of the 15th Century AD: Interactions beyond Trade

Elena Maestri

Introduction

The fall of Constantinople (29th May, 1453) put the final seal on the undisputed centrality of Byzantium as the traditional intermediary between East and West, and re-shaped the build-up of a new order characterised by new actors, new riches and new cultural values. Curiosity, fascination with exotic details, enchanted worlds crept in and cultural elements circulated giving fresh images of the Oriental and European courts and their style of life. Something had changed: the role of the Italian City-States as major international carriers of luxury goods still stood unchallenged, but these same potentates had also become leading producers and redistribution markets of precious goods as textiles, ceramics, leather, glass, lacquer…

The Italian City-States, namely Genoa, Venice, Milan, Rome and Florence, were de facto and de jure the first European potentates to engage directly in this trade, to go to the roots of these civilisations and to deal with their peoples and rulers. This article deals with these interactions, with special reference to the historical region of al-Bahrayn at the turn of the fifteenth century AD.

Genoese mercantile power was on the wane, its bases along the Black Sea swept away by the victorious armies of Mehmet “The Fāṭih” – Mehmet the Conqueror – of the House of ‘Uthmān. Despite Aragonese competition, Venice had emerged as unrivalled economic power in the East and as a bridge between the East and the Northern European courts. After the signature of the Peace of Lodi with the Sforza Dukedom of Milan in 1454, Venice’s role was somehow extended to Rome (prominent and renowned for the spetiarii’s medical and pharmaceutical art and crafts) and Milan, which initiated its own direct political relations with the East, as attested also by visits of Eastern ambassadors, promptly recorded in Milan’s State Archive - Sforza Fund. All that certainly contributed to enhancing Venetian interests in the Gulf, and it is not by chance that the merchant Niccolò dei Conti had left Damascus in 1474 and reached Hormuz, by navigating along the Gulf coasts. We can also add the seductive
reports by Josafat Barbaro, Caterino Zeno, Ambrogio Contarini, Gasparo Balbi, and Andrea Corsali from Florence amongst the many ones. The cartographic evidence so far explored clearly confirms this trend at the time.

The dispatches I am dealing with below are in the State Archive of Milan (Italy) - Sforza Fund, Venice and Rome. The missives refer to major and minor episodes. They are of notable relevance for the purpose of this study. One can readily picture the significance of the volume and variety of the mercantile trade between East and West, its network and stages along the main maritime and land routes, the mixed cosmopolitan population animating it, the items in demand and to be found, challenges, fortunes and misfortunes … and the role played by the historical region of *Al-Bahrayn* within the cultural context of the time, allowing a significant historical parallel.\(^1\)

Venice’ State Archives and private collections of Manuscripts (like the *Bibliotheca Marciana* in Venice and the *Bibliotheca Ambrosiana* in Milan) minutely depict this new puzzling world and the splendour of its courts, “whose magnificence and tradition of hospitality rivalled – if not surpassed – the most celebrated European courts of the same time”. All along the Arabian coastal region of the Gulf, they describe striking landscapes, a cosmopolitan humanity, notable buildings, mosques, gardens, alluring picturesque costumes. Interregional and international trade was active. It was possible to see the annual gathering of pilgrims making their *hajj* to Mecca. There, oases and the cultivation of date palms prospered. Dhows-building and seafaring, pearling, horse rearing, the art of falconry were largely practised. Crafts were practised, too, like jewellery and carpet weaving.

Once again, in these accounts, the historical region of Al-Bahrain comes out authoritatively. Venetian dispatches allow us to discern the flavour of the Orient and an unprecedented significance and centrality. *Al-Bahrayn* was the arrival and meeting point of travellers, merchants, caravans – and goods – from Anatolia, central-eastern Europe and the Mediterranean Sea. A network of land and sea routes linked *Al-Bahrayn* with – to the north-west – Baghdad and Aleppo, and Alexandria of Egypt, and, to the east, with the island of Jarūn and its Arab and non-Arab territories. Then,

\(^1\) ASMi - FS / Fondo Ducale Sforzesco, Carteggio “Potenze Estere”: “Carteggio Venezia”. ASVe: Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreti; Senato Mar; Consiglio dei Dieci et alia; Bibliotheca Marciana, Civico Museo Correr. I had access to this correspondence and charts through the kindness of A. Corongiu, B. Baldi and M. Milanesi, who brought to my attention some significant documents and maritime charts, within an international research project I coordinated under the direction of Valeria Fiorani Piacentini, to whom I express my gratitude. This research project was promoted by the National Center for Documentation and Research of Abu Dhabi, Ministry for Presidential Affairs, UAE, and by the Research Centre on the Southern System and Wider Mediterranean (CRiSSMA), UCSC, on the topic “Arabian Material Culture through Italian Archives (14th-16th Centuries)” (years: 2007-2008). To them my sincere thanks.
crossing the Arabian Peninsula, Hejaz was there, with its Holy cities.

Bahrain was a geographical and cultural region, unanimously depicted as a land of wonders and marvels, celebrated for the beauty and the wealth of the merchandise that could be found there and bought, for its pearl fisheries, fresh water, vegetables and fruit supplies (dates, pomegranates, figs, oranges, limes), horses, and other precious goods.

Here, namely, we refer to reports and dispatches by Venetian envoys, Florentine merchants, Genoese bankers and travellers and Milanese ambassadors, and, for a later period, Hispanic-Portuguese officials, who visited the region during the fifteenth – early sixteenth century. All of them unanimously designate a well-defined geographical, political and cultural region, no longer to be interpreted as the mythical dominion of some legendary ruler or an islet lost in the Gulf.

The geographical region in Eastern Arabia

It is well known that medieval Arab scholars, such as Yāqūt\(^2\), use the term al-Bahrain for that historical region which, in eastern Arabia, occupies the territories from Basra in the north to the Sāhil ‘Umān al-Shamālī and Oman in the south and from al-Yamāmah in the west to the Gulf in the east. The region included a group of towns-oases, often mentioned in the sources, such as Hajar, al-Qatīf, Juwāthah, Ahsa, al-Zārah and the island of Awāl (present Bahrain). The so-called ‘al-Yamāmah routes’, the two main routes which converged with the Hajar or al-Bahrain route\(^3\), represented one of the most important east-west terrestrial axes of communications in Arabia, both for the pilgrims travelling from the east to Mecca and Medina, and for the transit of goods. Such routes were the alternative to the maritime routes, and/or the continuation of these latters. Travellers and commodities coming from the sea, the Arabian seaboard and Iraq would meet here, an aspect which, necessarily, must have made the area particularly sensitive to the ability or inability of the local powers to guarantee safety and security to the merchants and their trading activities.

\(^2\) Scholar of the 13\(^{th}\) century.

Archaeological Islamic sites, such as, for instance the oasis of Kharj in present Saudi Arabia, seem to confirm substantial continuity in trade relations between eastern Arabia – al-Ahsa and the Gulf (al-Bahrayn) – on the one hand, and Central Arabia (al-Yamāmah and Najd) and south Arabia (Najran and Yemen) on the other hand, during different periods of the Islamic era. Within this framework, successive settlements emerge in central Arabia. In each of them the systemic-structural traits seem to be quite similar on the political, social and economic level, being founded at one and the same time on the oasis and the caravan routes, on the strength or weakness of existing tribal alliances, which were able or unable to guarantee security, on the interaction between the sedentaries (hadhar) and the beduins (bedu), on the activity of the merchants and on the performance of agriculture. When focusing on the 15th century, central Arabia was most probably extensively re-settled, and some inland Arabian tribes started developing growing interaction with the historical region of al-Bahrayn and the Gulf. That “liquid space” created new links among local and non-local actors there.

**Italy and the East: Genoa’s Primacy at Sea and on the Seas**

The State Archives of Genoa give a clear perception that, in the latter half of the 13th Century, direct trade between Genoese bases and the East was already well established and was taking place on a regular base.

Setting off from Genoa, Genoese galleys (galerae) sailed to Rhodes, Cyprus,

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Constantinople (where Galata and Pera stood, grim symbol of Genoa’s power and strength). Thence, imposing and well equipped ships sailed eastwards coasting the southern shores of the Black Sea to Caffa and Tana – Genoese commercial eastward outposts in the Crimean Peninsula. There, they would anchor with their cargos. Caravans, following frequented overland routes, crossed the southern valleys and mountains of the Taurus, cut to the north through the vastness of the steppes pushing eastwards and eastwards to the rich markets of Inner-Central Asia, or, from Trebizond and Van, crossed the steep ranges rimming to the south the Black Sea, and set up for Persia. Tabriz was the principal market of north-west Persia by reason of its strategic position along the main north-south / west-east routes from and to the Black Sea.

In their quarters, the Genoese behaved as independent *condottieri* and shrewd merchants retaining freedom of action, sovereigns on distant provinces crucial to the state of affairs of their motherland, with which they maintained regular contacts. They soon learned to negotiate with the rulers of other settled states, and with tribal elements and still unsettled, nomadic/semi-nomadic princes. They gained knowledge of the administrative, traditional techniques practised in those remote lands. They acquired a new ability and political responsibility, adapting themselves in some measure to the local practices and to the Islamic settled models of sovereignty, authority and power. Thence, with their naval superiority and political strength secured, they could push eastwards through the lands of the steppes where these merged into the “lands of the Tatars” and China, or southwards to Tabriz. From Tabriz, they could push to the east, as far as Nishāpur, Herat, Merv, Bukhārā and Samarqand – the “pearls” of the “Silk Route” – or to the very heart of the Iranian plateau: Isfahan, Shiraz, Lār and the Lāristān up to Hormuz as far south as the Gulf itself.

The Liber Gazarie – a register of rules and regulations issued by the Officium Gazarie (which office, based in Genoa, supervised any commercial activity) – is the main source in this respect. Obviously, the markets where such goods could be found,  

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and bought, were kept secret. Nevertheless, these registers – when goods or other business are mentioned – can give a precise picture and excellent information on the expansion of Genoese mercantile economy by the second half of the 13th Century onwards. At the same time, they become precious indicators of the wide range of affairs of Genoese merchants, their main markets, intermediaries and sources.

But, if markets are kept secret, the variety of goods and craft-products mentioned in the *Acta Notoria* reflects a network of inter-regional trade and/or exchange well established between the Genoese communities and regional markets.

In this respect, Genoese sources well match and integrate oriental sources in Persian and Arabic (in particular, I refer to chronicles and geography), providing precious side-views on the Gulf region and historical Bahrain in particular, its world and culture.

Despite internal feuds, banditry, piracy, robbery and an often hostile environment following tribal movements at land, Jurfār, al-Qatīf, al-Hasa and *al-Bahrain* stood out, unchallenged markets along the main international mercantile network of the time, with their impressive walled cities and castles, well protected harbours, glittering mosques, beautiful palaces and gardens surrounded by luxuriant oases where many storehouses could be found and lively cosmopolitan markets. The image of *al-Bahrain* is that of a developed and urbanised society, that was strongly based on agriculture and trade, and control on the main pilgrimage route to Mecca.

All in all, we are confronted with an active community that would reach the zenith of its prosperity by the 14th Century. Contemporary literary sources in Persian and Arabic and Genoese archival records unanimously mirror a lively picture of the busy Eastern world of the time. There, horses and stallions, silks and precious golden fabrics, precious semi/precious stones (like carnelians, lapis lazuli, turquoise, *yāqūt* and “balassi” rubies – i.e. rubies from the Bādakhshān), pearls, amber, dyes, incense and frankincense, perfumes, “girfalchi” falcons, slaves / “giovinetti” and “giovinette” educated in all kinds of crafts (like falconry, weaving, playing the flute), ornamental small objects (like fibulae, bracelets, cameos, mirrors, little chests for jewels …) could be found and bought. All this is minutely listed in the *Acta Notoria*. Only some decades later, the same items are recorded in the *Sforza Fund* (Milan, State Archives), as much wanted by the local court.

Genoa had succeeded in putting into practice a pragmatic policy, which allowed this Republic to build up the most extensive and impressive political-institutional and

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financial-commercial edifice of the time, destined to last up to the end of the fifteenth century.

**Venice Looking towards the Gulf: the Orient…and Arts**

After the collapse of Genoa – its colonial empire in the Black Sea – in the 15th century Venice emerged as unrivalled economic power in the East and at the court of Uzun Hasan, the Aq-Qoyonlu emir, who, in the second half of the 15th century, had included in its dominion all the western and southern Persia down to the littoral of the Gulf, and was being considered by the Venetians as a potential military ally against the Ottoman Sultan. Within such strong trade network Venice was becoming a crucial bridge between the East and northern European courts, directly through the Cadore and Pusteria route (Via Alemagna), and indirectly through the Sforza Dukedom of Milano, which used to receive the precious eastern goods via river Po and Ticino to the river port of Pavia and send them out from there. The Sforza Duke and the Doge of Venice signed a Political and Commercial treaty in 1454 – the Peace of Lodi – which gave them the monopoly of all overseas trading activity and made Milano a major part in such important east-west trade network, also involving direct political relations with the East, as well attested by the visits of ambassadors from there. Within such a crucial East-West trade network the eastern Arabian Peninsula was certainly emerging as an essential part. The Italian records give us a clear picture of the evolving situation in the area, allowing us to argue that, since around 1475 A.D. and for more than one century on, the Arabian Peninsula played an effective and central role for the Italian merchants.

Within this framework, Venice confirmed its very special and crucial role of bridge between East and West, an aspect which had a major impact on Venetian artistic and material culture as well. The arts are the best and most appreciated expression of the ability of Venice to assimilate Oriental and

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7 In spite of the Venetians’ support, Uzun Hasan was severely defeated by the Ottomans in 1473 and he did not attack them any more after that. F. Cagnasso – L. Veccia Vaglieri, L’Impero Bizantino dalla fondazione di Costantinopoli. L’Islam da Maometto al secolo XVI, Milano, 1963, pp. 504-505.

8 Venice conquered Cadore in 1420 and that route was the shortest one between the East and Northern Europe.

9 I would like to express special thanks to A. Corongiu for finding in the Sforza Archives and transcribing, among others, this significant letter by Leonardo Botta to Galeazzo Maria Sforza about a visit of an “Ambassador of the Sultan” (“abassadore del Soldano”) in 1476.
Islamic influences and to re-elaborate them, according to a peculiar taste, to master such influences without corrupting them and always respecting their origins in a very intelligent and open-minded way. This artistic attitude was anticipated in Tuscany and it was later expressed very well by the great Venetian painters of the 15th century, such as Gentile Bellini, Vittore Carpaccio, Veronese, Tintoretto, as well as by a number of other painters who, working in Venice for some time, were affected by this cultural trend. The impressive use of pseudo-Arabic characters, on the basis of a special taste for pseudo-kufic decorations already attested in some Italian paintings since the 12th and the 13th centuries, was a very peculiar aspect of re-elaboration by some 15th century’s artists too.

Figure 2 - Pseudo-Kufic motifs in a detail of the stained-glass windows of the Cathedral of Siena, 14th century

Pseudo-Kufic motifs can be seen, for instance, also in in the Cathedral of Siena (see photo by F. Lodovici). See M.V. Fontana, L'influsso dell'arte islamica in Italia, in Eredità dell'Islam. Arte Islamica in Italia, Milano, 1993.
We can argue that the evoked Orient is often more poetic than real, but one can hardly deny that this trend was affected both by material culture exchanges with the east and by the intensive trade and human relations with eastern peoples. More specifically the existing direct contacts with Arab culture and civilisation had apparently their own weight, for instance through a new perception of the relationship between decorative motives and nature in artistic and architectonic forms, as well as in the artistic pieces of the extraordinary Venetian jewellery of the time, so well represented in the paintings too. A selective process, resulting from the meeting with Arab-Islamic traditions, favoured particular motifs over others and created new aesthetic experiences, in which the use of Eastern precious stones and, above all, pearls, had a major alluring part.
The accounts of the Venetian travellers – ambassadors and merchants – although generally well known, are always extremely precious keys to read, re-read and better understand such relations, in all their multifarious components, from the political to the economic, commercial, and, last but not least, human and cultural. The travel journal is a literary genre well represented in Arabic literature as well (the *rihlah*) since the 12th century, and, not differently from well-known previous Arab travellers and pilgrims, such as the famous Ibn Battūta (14th century), Venetians travellers were moved by obvious practical reasons – trade and commercial interests first of all – without, nonetheless, neglecting search for knowledge, the well known concept expressed by the Arabic expression “*al-rihlah talab al-‘ilm*” (travel to pursue knowledge).

The Arabian Peninsula was along the maritime route connecting the west with the east, the so-called ‘spices’ route’, along which the most precious goods of the Gulf and of the Arabian inland – most notably pearls and horses – were actively traded as well. At the end of the 14th century this route had started absorbing most of East-West trade and became the alternative to the northern land routes, by then almost impracticable. All that enhanced the Venetians’ interests for this route and the regions along it. The merchant Niccolò dei Conti left Damascus in 1414 and reached navigated along the Gulf coasts. At the end of the 15th century Venice had to get to grips with the rising Portuguese...
The Historical Region of al-Bahrayn and the Italian City-States at the Turn of the 15th Century

competition, and started sending ambassadors and envoys to its key-markets: the documents and reports related to this period are undoubtedly extremely precious sources for the historical reconstruction of the Gulf region as well\textsuperscript{11} and they complement the cartographic evidence.

As far as cartography is concerned, one can argue that maps can be based on old and out-of-date pieces of information and that the toponomastic interpretation is often difficult and arbitrary, but when analysing certain maps, one can hardly dismiss the idea that central Arabia must have played its own significant role within the complex and transnational trade network established between the second half of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century and the first half of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. More specifically, we can say that the documentary and cartographic evidence so far explored in the Italian Archives seems to confirm a historical evolution, which is not at all contradicted by Arabic and Persian documentary sources, and it allows us to define more clearly a very important epoch of transition for some Eastern Arabian tribes.

When considering the historical region of \textit{al-Bahrayn}, we can assume that its tribes and peoples must have played a quite significant role within the complex and transnational trade network developing at the turn of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century (between roughly 1470 and 1520). The Arabic chronicles of al-Sakhāwī and of al-Samhūdī perfectly complement the other sources, by confirming the existence of a strong political power in Najd at the time. That particular power created a direct connection between the seaboard and the inland tribes, which were linked to the confederation of the Banu Jabr, a family belonging to the Banu ‘Āmir tribe, a well-known strong and ancient Arabian tribe, to which some Najdian and eastern Arabian beduin tribes – such as the Subai‘ and some sections of the Banu Khalid, for instance – trace their lineage. The Banu Jabr tribal confederation was consolidated in Eastern Arabia at the time of Ajwad ibn Zāmil, who extended it to a large part of Najd and Oman\textsuperscript{12}. As well attested by Arab chroniclers, such as al-Sakhāwī, the Banu Jabr were allotted the territories of \textit{al-Qatīf} and \textit{al-Bahrayn}. By the end of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century they had gained full control on caravans’ and pilgrims’ routes, which meant that they had established their authority over the \textit{dirāt}\textsuperscript{11}.

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\textsuperscript{11} Among the most important Venetian ambassadors we can mention Giosafat Barbaro, Ambrogio Contarini and Caterino Zeno. They were at the court of Uzūn Hasan, the Aq Qoyūnlū, who reigned between 1466 and 1478 in Persia. See O. Pinto, \textit{Viaggiatori Veneti in Oriente (secoli XIII-XVI)}, in A. Pertusi, \textit{Venezia e l’Oriente}, Venezia, 1966, pp. 394-396.

of Bedouin tribes gravitating around the routes connecting the inland with the Gulf coastal regions. A new order was re-established in the dominion of the Banu Jabr, and, within this order, safety along the ancient routes was guaranteed, a fact which led to the return of pilgrims “by thousands, giving offerings and spending”, while travelling across Arabia to reach the Hijaz. The rising force of the Arab merchants, who were linked with tribal groups of eastern and central Arabia, now coalesced within the Banu Jabr confederation, had a direct impact on the decline of the Omani city of Suhār, gravitating around Ibadi power: its trade routes were seriously affected by the tribal fights, a fact which contributed to strengthening the markets of *al-Bahrayn* in the Gulf. Re-export trade was revived in a very tangible way through the *al-Bahrayn* and *al-Yamāmah* routes, and it was apparently booming at the time of amīr Muqrin ibn Zāmil ibn Ajwad (d. 1521). The latter used to organise many pilgrimage caravans and he is reported by Ibn Iyās to have brought to Mecca pearls, colored silks, musk, ambergris and incense (‘ūd). Such typical goods of the Gulf and India underline the significance of the mercantile power gained by the Banu Jabr confederation and vigorously kept until the arrival of the Portuguese.

With reference to the strength of the Banu Jabr tribal confederation and power from the mid-15\(^{th}\) century till the early 16\(^{th}\) century, the documentary and cartographic evidence so far explored seems to confirm our reconstruction. One of the most beautiful and accurate ancient maps preserved at the Marciana Library in Venice – *fra’* Mauro’s map dating back to the mid-15\(^{th}\) century – is very precise, as it gives a series of unquestionably true information regarding Arabia as well, with reference both to some typical goods imported from there and to specific place-names, which can be identified with the most important political and economic centres of the time (no doubt Baherem is *al-Bahrayn*, Chatif is *al-Qatif*, Moschet is Musqat). The inland “provincia de Iman” is the indication of a well-known dominion at the time of the Banu Jabr; it is an indirect reference to their ri’āsah Najd (being chiefs of Najd) referred to by the Arabic chronicles. In *fra’* Mauro’s cartographic masterpiece we read that “not far from Hormosa island...in the middle of Chatif they find pearls” and, among other goods, myrrh, cinnamon, frankincense and precious stones are mentioned. The Arabian coast of the Gulf was clearly becoming an point of reference

14 According to Omani chronicles, such as *Siyar al-‘Umāniyyah* and *Kashf al-Ghummah* the city of Julfār had an Ibadi population, but it is not easy to confirm that Ibadism was really widespread there, as the above mentioned chronicles, being written by Ibadis, are necessarily partial sources. The well known Italian Orientalist Laura Veccia Vaglieri was very cautious when dealing with a source such as *Kashf al-Ghummah*, as attested in his article “L’Imamato Ibadita dell’Oman”, in AIUON, n.s. III (1949), pp. 245-282. See *Encyclopedie de l’Islam*, Vol. 3, Paris, 1971, p.674.
16 Muqrin is reported to have died in a battle against the Portuguese.
for Venetian travellers and merchants, who were there in person; they would come from the Aleppo route and provided the contemporary Venetian cartographers with fresh information\textsuperscript{17}.

Such cartographic evidence seems to be reinforced the following century by the Atlas of the World, signed in Venice by Battista Agnese in 1553: here Bahrain (Baharen) is not only mentioned, but clearly indicated as a major place with reference to pearl fishing (“ubi pescantur perlas”)\textsuperscript{19}.

The beautiful Italian edition of Abramo Ortelius’ map of Asia dating back to the

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure5.jpg}
\caption{Map by Fra' Mauro (1450): detail regarding the “Provincia de Ima(n)”\textsuperscript{18}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{17} The Venetian traveller and merchant, Nicolò de’ Conti, as already said above, was in Hormuz during the first half of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century, and his accounts, recorded by the scholar Poggio Bracciolini in his work De Varietate fortunae, certainly had a major influence on fra’ Mauro and his collaborators.

\textsuperscript{18} Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

\textsuperscript{19} I express special thanks to M. Milanesi for finding and transcribing the maps by fra’ Mauro and Battista Agnese.
same century is very telling too\textsuperscript{20}. Here the inland south-eastern region of Arabia is indicated by the name “Aman” and Bahrain is again mentioned as the place where the biggest pearls can be found. The rich series of place-names in this map seems to entail that a certain tribal order was there, gravitating and converging on “Aman”\textsuperscript{21}.

Another interesting piece of information comes from the Sforza Archive of Milan and it seems to add more to this reconstruction, as in a Sforza document of 1480 we find a quite relevant reference to “Aman” – 1500 slaves and 4000 horses are mentioned as being there to be supplied to the “Turk’s army” – and to the “Signore de Aman”, or “Lord/Chief of Aman”, who is reported to have been killed and deprived of some strongholds by “certain Arabs” (hostile tribes?)\textsuperscript{22}. It is quite clear that an Islamic region becoming part of a transnational trade network was also an area where there was \textit{amān} (security) for the non-Muslim merchants, which means that safety and protection were guaranteed to them and their goods in transit, according to the Qur’anic and \textit{Shari’ah} principles.

No doubt central-eastern Arabia emerges as a power centre founded mainly on transit trade and largely known for the export of thoroughbred horses, even more precious goods at the time, considering their irreplaceable role in war: these Arabian horses were largely sent to India but, as attested, they reached the west as well. It is not by chance then that the rising commercial role of the eastern Arabia seaboard in the international trade network in the span of time we have focused on coincides with a time of conflictual commercial relations with the Mamluks of Egypt. The latters in the first half of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century had seriously affected the Venetians’ interests, as sultan Barsbai in 1428 had established by decree the state monopoly of pepper, which was imported from India and bought by Venetian merchants mostly in Egypt. Spices and pepper trade, in particular, was bound to be a major point in the commercial disputes between Venice and the following Mamluk Sultans as well\textsuperscript{23}. Those same disputes were also probably the spur to look for other markets which were closer to

\textsuperscript{20} This map is largely based on the records of Guillaume Postel (1495-1581), a French scholar who, after travelling extensively in the east lived for some time in Italy. Besides being the author of the first Arabic grammar for Europeans, Postel had translated from Arabic an abridged version of Abulfeda’s geographic work, \textit{Taqwim al-buldān}, and later gave it to the Italian scholar Gian Battista Ramusio in Venice.

\textsuperscript{21} Maestri, E., \textit{Glimpse of Venetian and Vatican Archives: the Cartographic Documents on Arabia}, paper presented at the International Conference “The Historical Documents on Arab History in the Archives of the World”, Abu Dhabi, 1-7 March 2002, pp. 2-3. The 16\textsuperscript{th} century map which is mentioned here is included in the \textit{Monumenta Cartographica Vaticana}, vol. II, tables XVII/XVIII.


those production sites the Venetian merchants wanted to reach. The State Archive of
Venice is extremely rich in diplomatic documents allowing a more precise definition
of the interests, dynamics, disputes and alliances having an impact on the relations
with a pluralistic and kaleidoscopical Muslim World, in which Arabia was not at all
ignored and had its own role among the various actors, more and more interacting
directly with the cosmopolitan “sea world”, in a vital quest for new resources. In this
direction, more specifically, we can argue that the crisis determined by the disruption
of the Al-Jabr’s power in the first half of the 15th century certainly had a very negative
impact on the economic interests of many tribes. The projection of some Najdian
tribes towards the sea was a somehow natural and inevitable outcome; that was a
projection towards new resources, the pearl fisheries first of all, and the pearl trade
and markets, a liquid economic space which, somehow, was ever more absorbing
the desert and inland economic space in a renewed and even much more complex
trade network. Some tribes, previously gravitating in the Banu Jabr confederation or
part of it, were starting to gain some role projected towards the sea, through their
direct involvement in the pearl industry and trade. All of this involved their emerging
among the protagonists of the renewed trade network, as well as their establishing
the first contacts and relations with the Venetians reaching the Arabian seaboard and
markets. That was the dawn of a new era.

+++Not for Trafficking Alone: the “Amana” or “Tierra del Signor de Amana” of
European Accounts…and the Historical Region of Al-Bahrayn

“Hormuz, which they also call Jarūn, is a port on the open sea which has no equal on
the face of the earth. Thither betake themselves merchants from the seven climes: from
Egypt and Syria, from the Land of the Rūms, Ādharbāygiān, Arabian and Persian ‘Irāq,
and the provinces of Fārs, Khurāsān, Mā’ wara’ al-Nahr and Turkistān, from the Qipčaq
plain, the territories of the Kalmūks and all the realm of China and Khānbāliq. Thither
coast-dwellers from the confines of China…the coasts of Arabia as far as Aden, Jiddah and
Yanbu’ bring rare and precious things to which the sun and the moon and the fertilizing
virtue of the clouds have given lustre and beauty, and which can be brought by sea to that
country. To that land come travellers from all parts of the world, and whatever they need
they find in that city, without overmuch search, the equivalent value thereof in whatever
form they desire, whether by sale or exchange. The official levy is ten per cent ad valorem
duty on everything, except gold and silver. People of all religions, and even idolaters, meet
in this city, and nobody permits any hostile gesture or injustice against them. And for this
the city has been given the name of Dār al-Amān (The Abode of Security)”

Thus the Timurid court-official ‘Abd al-Razzāq of Samarqand describes in his historical
account the mirabilia of the Gulf when he travelled there around the 1440s, heading

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24 B. Baldi has been trawling through the rich documentation of the State Archive of Venice,
within the framework of our CRiSSMA-NCDR research work.
embassies from the court of Herat to China and India. He paints a vivid fresco of the vast and fluid world which revolved around the liquid spaces of this Sea. Hormuz was the corner-stone of the whole system: a fabulous and powerful magnet for the Europeans who visited it. By the second half of the fifteenth century, Hormuz was at the very height of its splendour, a cosmopolitan trading-state, one whose nucleus was a barren island in a key strategic position, but whose influence extended far beyond its immediate domains in the Gulf stretching as far as the eastern coasts of Africa, Hind, Sind and the numerous ports of call on the monsoon route to South-East Asia on the one hand, and to Basra and the overland caravan-routes to the eastern waters of the Mediterranean sea, on the other. Yet, and despite the hostility of the inhospitable nature of the site chosen to build the new capital-city (the islet of Jarūn), Hormuz and its court would become the sharp counterpart of all profitable business and dealings between East and West.

But, within this vast framework and within Hormuz’ innovative global dimension, Bahrain would stand out representing a central element of cultural continuity, as underlined by literary sources and literature well complemented with the rich archaeological evidence and the data which are still coming to light.

Samarqandi’s chronicle does not contradict other no less important Arabic sources of his time – such as, for example, Sakhāwī, Samhūdī, Ibn Iyās and others. Besides, it perfectly complements also European sources: not for trafficking alone! The Gulf, synonymous of the “Fabulous Orient”, entered European cultural circles as a centre of learning, too. Here, the rulers were gentle and friendly. They enjoyed to entertain their guests, listen to their experience, learn about their costumes, discuss with them about history, arts and poetry, philosophy, religion. Natural sciences (the spetiarii’s pharmaceutical craft) and historical studies were particularly favoured within a fresh intellectual, commercial and artistic atmosphere.

Dār al-Amān, according to the vernacular and popular local language. This definition was largely in use and circulated, but this same definition “Aman” / “Amana” occurs also in the Italian archives for the same period. In some passages, the terms refer with

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25 Samarqandi, Matla’ al-Sa’dayn wa Majma’ al-Bahrayn, ed. Muhammad Shafi’, Lahore 1360-1368 / 1941-1949, 2 vols., ii, pp. 766, 767-768. Though based to a considerable extent on the work by Hāfiz Abrū and not always impartial due to the author’s position at court, the Matla’ al-Sa’dayn wa Majma’ al-Bahrayn is a very interesting source, as it represents the work of one who took an active part in many of the events he describes both as a high-ranking official of the Timurid court and as a special ambassador to foreign rulers. Moreover, his notes reflect the keen curiosity of a diplomat and traveller “to know” and “to understand”. This makes Samarqandi’s history a particularly informative source.

great clarity to both the “city” (Segnor de la città de Aman) and the realm (Segnor de Aman… Tierra del Segnor de Amana), designating a well defined political, geographical and cultural region, no longer to be interpreted as the mythical dominion of some legendary ruler. This same term is marked on European charts, too. And, even more telling, at the core of this vast region, al-Bahrayn figures as a vast territory, a landed and insular geo-political reality, a puzzling world with its “mirabilia”.

Rich outlets of trans-Arabian caravan routes and renowned ports of call along the vast network of sea-trades, the Arabian coastal cities attracted a cosmopolitan population, amongst whom were appreciable Persian elements. Whereas in the hinterland, sources inform us that violent feuds – formally inspired by religious principles – were taking place since the start of the fifteenth century.27

By the first half of the 15th Century, in the Arabian hinterland growing strife and the disruption of any power-structure was made even worse by rebellions and revolts, laying waste everywhere. Taking advantage of the religious enmities, tribal groups had begun to overrun a large part of the interior. In 843 A.Hg/1439-1440 A.D., contemporary chroniclers tell us that Qatīf was repeatedly attacked and savagely pillaged. The main caravan route linking the Hejaz with Bahrain was de facto impossible, to the greatest disadvantage of pilgrimage and trade.

Thus, glancing over dynastic and political accounts, after a period of chaos and rival claimants to the throne, in the fifties power passed to the Tāhirids, who, in their turn, held much of the Yemen down to the Ottoman conquest early in the sixteenth century. Power disrupted in the eastern regions of the Arabian Peninsula, too. In the Omani hinterland, the disintegration of the previous order provoked fierce feuds between Malikite and Ibadi sheikhdoms. Conversely, all along the coastal region, where the Hormuzi rulers held a de jure sovereignty, Bedouin tribes and Ibadi principalities under Nabhāni emirs were well established and enjoyed a great material prosperity based on trade (both sea and land-trade) and agriculture. Taking advantage of the religious enmities, tribal groups began to overrun a large part of the interior. The people of the interior, of pure Arabian culture and tradition, held to their costumes and long-established traditional nomadic / semi-nomadic activities. Allured by the riches accumulated in the wealthy storehouses of the coastal cities, they raided, plundered, attacked and retreated, their main objective being that of gaining control over the most important caravan-routes and markets of the interior (pilgrimage, trade in horses and pearls, dyes, perfumes, dates, incense and frankincense).

In 843 / 1439-1440, contemporary chroniclers tell us that al-Qatīf was repeatedly

attacked and savagely pillaged. The main caravan route linking Hejaz with Bahrain was *de facto* impracticable, to the greatest disadvantage of pilgrimage and trades. It was also within this precarious situation that we witness the rising of a new power, that of the *Bani Jabr*, the Portuguese de Barros’ “Gran Bengebrá” or “Bem Jaure”\(^{28}\), destined to play a central role in the life and fortunes of *al-Bahrain*, too.

During the first half of the fifteenth century, the turbulence of this confederation frustrated all communications between the hinterland and the seaboard. Sources are not unanimous, often contradicting one another. However, it would seem that by the early fifties, Zâmil b. Hašîn al-‘Āmirî al-‘Uqaylî al-Jabrî al-Najdî stands out as the new strong personality of his time, great promoter of the cause of Malikite Islam. After a temporary occupation of Qatîf (it would seem around the 1440), he began to contrast the Ibadi power in the hinterland and the Nabhân emirs along the Omani coastal area. In the seventies, the Bani Jabr were amongst “the major powers in Eastern Arabia...champions of Malikite orthodoxy...”, unanimously described as “people of the interior and the desert...but renowned and feared for their bravery”. We know that by the second half of the fifteenth century, the Banî Jabr had full control over the main trade routes connecting Oman’s hinterland with the coastal regions, and they aimed at expanding their authority towards the north-eastern caravan routes of the desert to Bahrain, which by that time meant trade in pearls, horses and pilgrimage.

Such was the situation when Salghur – crown-prince of the Kingdom of Hormuz – started to fight for his accession to the throne (1470)\(^{29}\). At this very moment, the Banî Jabr authoritatively entered the history of the kingdom of Hormuz, marking a significant turning point in the life and fortunes of *al-Bahrain* and the eastern regions of the Arabian Peninsula.

Ajwad b. Zâmil al-Jabri’s shrewd policy led to new tribal balances. Salghur was appointed *Ra‘īs* (regedor) of Qalhāt (Oman) by his same father Tūrānshāh II and he chose as his favourite residence the city-harbour of Qalhāt, where he used to dwell and where he married to a Nabhânî princess. He spoke Arabic and behaved like an Arab. At the moment he was to have succeeded his father, Salghur felt himself to be in danger because of the loyalty of these sheikhdoms towards his brothers, and fled to the interior of Oman to seek refuge with his father-in-law, Sulaymân b. Sulaymân Nabhânî. However, he did not receive the hoped-for help against his brother and the other pretenders, and he was forced to flee again and seek refuge with the rival

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tribal confederation of the Banī Jabr. There, he obtained Ajwad b. Zāmil’s support
and the backing of his powerful tribe. The confrontation with his brother Shāh Vays
took place in 1475. The two rich provinces of Qatīf and Bahrain were the onerous
price paid by Salghur to Ajwad b. Zāmil for supporting him against his own brothers
during the dynastic crisis that followed his father’s death. He retained for himself
only few minor personal possessions (some orchards and palaces). But, according to
some literary sources, once in power Salghur regretted his generosity, despatched Ra’īs
Nūr al-Dīn Fālī to rescue these two wealthy provinces and mounted up more than
one military expedition against the Banī Jabr. However, he failed and could not re-
conquer Bahrain, being conversely obliged to sign a humiliating agreement in 1485:
Bahrain came once again into the “nominal” possessions of the mulk of Hormuz,
whereas the Banī Jabr were allowed large autonomy in exchange of payment of annual
subsidies in taxes on goods imported. This ensured the emir of the Banī Jabr a de
facto sovereignty on both territories, whilst the rulers of Hormuz never succeeded in
bringing Qatīf and Bahrain permanently under their control.30

Thus, alternating marriage alliances, cunning and force, Ajwad b. Zāmil succeeded in
acquiring a de facto sovereignty over Bahrain and Qatīf, which would soon become hinge of sophisticated craftsmanship, lucrative trade and intense transactions. All in
all, the 1485 peace-treaty between Salghur Shāh and the Banī Jabr marks the apex of the
historical region of Bahrain, no longer a “dominion” of the kingdom of Hormuz,
but a powerful “associated territory”. By the end of the 15th century, al-Bahrāyn was
a vast, de facto independent region, which included landed dominions rimmed by steep mountains to the south-west, and many large and small strategic islands. It was
punctuated by imposing fortifications (al-Qatīf and al-Hasa or Ahsa) and flourishing
oases. It had beautiful cities, where enchanting palaces and orchards could be seen
from a long distance, and plenty of fresh water. Its wealthy markets were renowned,
replenished with precious goods from every corner of the world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the documentary and cartographic evidence so far
explored in the Italian Archives seems to confirm a historical evolution, which is
not at all contradicted by Arab and Persian documentary sources, and it allows us to
define more clearly a very important epoch of transition for the historical region of
al-Bahrāyn at the time. We can easily assume that tribes and peoples here must have
played a quite significant role within the complex and transnational trade network
developing at the turn of the 15th century (between roughly 1470 and 1520). The
Arabic chronicles of al-Sakhāwī and al-Samhūdī perfectly complement the other

30 Information about these events was kindly provided to the Author by Valeria Piacentini, thanks to
her access to Persian literary sources, such as Nimdihi, ‘Abd al-Karīm, Tābaqat-i Mahmūdshāhiyyah,
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sources, by confirming that, at that time, a strong political power existed between the central and eastern regions of Arabia. That particular power had created stronger connections between some seaboard and inland tribes, which were linked to the confederation of the Bani Jabr.

In the light of the Italian records, at the turn of the 15th century the historical region of *al-Bahrayn* emerges as a positive, vast landed and insular region, with an effective and central role within the Gulf and the East-West trade network. It is a major centre of reference for Venetian travellers and merchants, who had started visiting the region. They would come from the Aleppo route and, at their return, provided the contemporary Venetian officials and cartographers with detailed information.

An interesting piece of information, adding more to this reconstruction, comes from the Archives of Milan. The Sforza and Milan kept an ever watchful eye, showing growing interest in the ongoing events: this court had active “agents” everywhere, who regularly sent dispatches to the Dukedom with fresh accounts. In 1470, for example, Milan dispatched Leonardo Botta and Gerardo Colli to Venice to negotiate an alliance between these two city-states. However, the negotiations did not come to any positive result. In 1480, following an alliance between Florence and Naples, Milan broke off official diplomatic relations with the *Serenissima* and the two envoys were compelled to leave. However, during their long staying in Venice, they sent to the Duke of Milan regular reports not only on the tense situation between Venice and the Ottomans, but also on international trade, Mediterranean affairs, luxury goods that could be purchased on the eastern markets, oriental costumes, eastern rulers and markets, etc. On the whole, it is a precious correspondence, of which the texts are preserved in the State Archive of Milan.

As pointed out above, at the time of Ajwad ibn Zāmil the Banī Jabr confederation was firmly established in eastern Arabia. East-West trade, travels, diplomatic and

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*31* This information was obviously a “State-Secret”: for trafficking only! Records are in Venice’s Archives (ASVe: Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreti; Senato Mar; Consiglio dei Dieci et alia). The Venetian traveller and merchant, Nicolò de’ Conti, for example, was in the Gulf during the first half of the 15th century, and his accounts, recorded by the scholar Poggio Bracciolini in his work *De Varietate fortunae*, certainly had a major influence on fra’ Mauro and his collaborators.


missionary activity, continued to foster cosmopolitan taste and exchanges through the Mediterranean towards new sources of wealth and ever new countries, enabling ever increasing cross-cultural and mercantile transfer. The constructive effect of Oriental imports had had a crucial impact on Italian arts and craft industries, too. Cost, rarity, technique and Eastern origin of some of the most admired Oriental artefacts heightened their desirability, giving them a strong mysterious appeal: the “Luxury Arts”. Thus, the increasing ability of Italian craftsmen to mimic intricate Oriental ornament – textiles, ceramics, leather, glass, lacquer – boosted Italian profitable engagement in Oriental markets, and deeply affected politics, giving these Italian commercial states a cosmopolitan new dimension, increasing their influence and well reflecting the dynamic developments of international trade.

Within this framework, the very special role of Venice between East and West comes to the fore: it intertwines actively and positively with the new dynamic role gained by al-Bahrayn at the time, and with its projection in an ever complex trade network. These are the roots of the present, in which three environmental dimensions – the sea, the desert and the oasis – meet, merge and open up to the rest of the world, perfectly complementing identity and heritage of the Arabian Gulf peoples and of Bahrainis as part of them.

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Sheikh Hazza’ Bin Sultan Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (1905-1958)

Representative of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi in the Western Region

Shamsa Hamad Al-Dhahiri

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to shed light on the personality of Sheikh Hazza’ Bin Sultan Bin Zayed Bin Khalifa Al-Nahyan, a figure among outstanding Abu Dhabi personalities who has not been fittingly studied by historians and biographers.

Research material was drawn from historical sources, oral accounts and field visits to locations developed by Sheikh Hazza’, especially in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi Emirate.

The research presents accounts of Sheikh Hazaa's birth and childhood, his personality, his experience with tribal affairs (similar to that of other members of the Al-Nahyan dynasty), and his involvement in political, social and economic affairs since his father Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan came to power as Ruler of Abu Dhabi (1922-1926) and through the reign of his brother Sheikh Shakhbut Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan (1928-1966). The paper also deals with the rationale behind his appointment as Representative of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi in the Western Region at one of the hardest times ever witnessed by the Emirate. The research further deals with Sheikh Hazza's firm commitment to the Emirate's independence and sovereignty and his ability to enhance the status of Abu Dhabi in international forums. Moreover, the research examines the observations and impressions of Westerners who had visited Abu Dhabi and had an opportunity to monitor Sheikh Hazza’s performance and behavior closely, recording these in their correspondences and memoirs.

Much has been said and written on outstanding Abu Dhabi personalities whose progressive qualities positively affected various aspects of life for the inhabitants of Abu Dhabi in the first half of the 20th Century. Among those is Sheikh Hazza Bin Sultan Bin Zayed Bin Khalifa Bin Shakhbut Bin Dhiyab Bin Issa Bin Al Nahyan Bin Falah who established himself as a leader within Abu Dhabi’s settled populace as well as among its Bedouin, and eventually became a most noble pillar of society.
In view of the dearth of material and studies referring to Sheikh Hazaa, the present paper seeks to shed light on his character, his loyalty towards his brothers, his true patriotism and firm commitment to the independence and sovereignty of the Emirate, and the degree to which he enhanced Abu Dhabi’s status in international forums.

Whoever wishes to research Abu Dhabi and the biographies of its leaders must first become familiar with the Al-Nahyan Family Tree in order to distinguish the various personalities, incentives and motivations leading to certain events.

Without delving too deeply into the family tree, Sheikh Hazza may be duly introduced as the grandson of the true founder of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed the Great (1855-1909). He is also the son of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (1922-1926), and brother of two Rulers of Abu Dhabi: Sheikh Shakhbut Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan (1928-1966) and Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan (1966-2004), the latter being the founder and first President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Moreover, Sheikh Hazza represented the interests of the Al-Nahyan Dynasty in the Western Region in the mid-20th century.

To examine the character of Sheikh Hazza, certain questions must be raised as to his upbringing and personality as well as his contributions to the social, economic and political dimensions of Abu Dhabi and, like all other members of the Al-Nahyan Dynasty, his knowledge of and involvement in tribal affairs. There are also queries as to his role as Representative of the Ruler in the Western Region at one of the most difficult times witnessed by the Emirate. Finally, the question arises as to how was he described by Westerners who had an opportunity to monitor closely his accomplishments and performance.

**Birth and Upbringing**

There are no sources that specify the exact date of Sheikh Hazza’s birth. British sources say he was born in 1905.1 The Lebanese writer/historian Ameen Al-Rihani2 (1876-1940), who met Sheikh Hazza at the court of King Abdulaziz Al Saud in Riyadh in 1922 as part of a tour of Arab countries while Hazza was negotiating on behalf of his father, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, states that Hazaa was then 15 years old and thus he must have been born in 1907.3 One source suggests that the land of ‘Jiwaa’, and particularly the village of Mujib where his father Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed had been brought up, is most probably the birthplace of Sheikh Hazza.4 It has been ascertained that it was Hazza, not his brother Khalid, who was born in that place in western Abu Dhabi.5

The father of Sheikh Hazza is Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed, the ninth Ruler from the Al-Bu Falah in Abu Dhabi who ruled the Emirate from 1922 to 1926 and was known for his courage and piety. His mother was Sheikha Salama Bint Butti, from the Al Qubaisi tribe and was renowned for her paramount influence in Abu Dhabi.6 Sheikh
Hazza was the second among his three brothers, the eldest being Sheikh Shakhbut, followed by Khalid and Zayed. He also had one sister, Maryam.

Sheikh Hazza was brought up in a powerful, devout environment. His father enjoyed a prominent social status and was renowned for his ethics. His mother was also known for her wisdom and patience and it was natural that young Hazza was perfectly raised by parents who did their best to prepare their children on the basis of virtue so that they may develop outstanding personalities.

In spite of the scarcity of information as to his childhood and youth, it can be assumed that young Hazza learned the essential lessons of life from his father’s council (Majlis) where he spent most of his time meeting with and talking to learned people and tribal notables, learning from them and benefiting from their extensive experiences. He thus gained adequate knowledge of the history and culture of the region. He also benefited from his mother’s family who lived in a pure Bedouin setting and, together with his brothers, attended the Majlis of their grandfather, Butti Bin Khadim, an Al Qubaisi Sheikh. He witnessed debates on tribal woes of which he had but indirect and remote knowledge while in Abu Dhabi. He also listened with extreme interest to debates on issues such as war, genuine Arab customs, and on traditions followed during troubled times such as those that prevailed during that period.

At that time, Abu Dhabi was not the intellectually barren oasis it once was, thanks to scholars, judges and notables who had ushered in an active cultural movement. Encouraged by his father and other knowledgeable elders with whom he became associated, young Hazza learned much on Islamic culture and the teachings of the Holy Quran. Merchants of Abu Dhabi had played a prominent role in the dissemination of Islamic culture through the recruitment of scholars from Al-Hasa, Rustaq, Persia and Mauritania. Thanks to these people, schools were established and education became a primary issue. Together with his brother Shakhbut, Hazza joined a school in Abu Dhabi and was taught by prominent men such as Sheikh Abul Khayyaz of Persia, and, according to another source, Mohamed Al-Khayyar. A colleague of Sheikh Hazza said, “I have studied here in Abu Dhabi, together with Sheikh Shakhbut, Sheikh Hazza, and Sheikh Khalid and their sister Maryam and we were taught by Mr. Aqail Al-Farsi, a scholar, judge and imam of the Seer Mosque. Hazza often would joke with us during our lessons together.” An oral history interviewee from Abu Dhabi, a grandson of Mr. Aqail, said that his grandfather’s name was Aqail Saber Haidar Al-Khoury, and he was a close friend to the sons of Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed I.

As Hazza grew up, he was married to his first cousin, Sheikha Maryam Bint Said Bin Zayed Bin Khalifa Al-Nahyan. When she died, he married another cousin, Sheikha Maryam Bint Hamdan Bin Zayed Bin Khalifa Al-Nahyan. However, he had no children from either wife.
Sheikh Hazza encountered challenging circumstances and grave dangers throughout his life. However, the most difficult situation occurred when he accompanied his mother and brothers on a very distressing journey from Abu Dhabi to Al-Ain. Sensing danger, their father, Sheikh Sultan, on July 12, 1926 asked his eldest son Sheikh Shakhbut to protect the family. After that day, Hazza never again saw his father alive. He was then 19 years old. The sad demise of his father left Hazza with intense anguish but kept him even closer to his brothers, with whom he shared life with all its pleasures and hardships.

The British historian J. B. Kelly said that “News from Buraimi shows that Shakhbut and Hazza' have received the news of their father’s demise and have taken refuge with Sheikh Ahmad bin Hilal-al-Dahiri and that the Abu Dhabi subjects who reside in Buraimi have recognised Sheikh Saqr bin Zaid through his son.” Three months after the incident, Hazza and Shakhbut fled Al-Ain and continued to roam from one place to another seeking refuge. They thus went to Dubai then to Sharjah, Al-Hasa, Wakra and to Delma. From Delma they headed for Qatar and on to Riyadh. However, they returned to Abu Dhabi after the death of their uncle, Sheikh Saqr Bin Zayed, in 1928.
Hazza's personality and falconry

Thanks to his sound upbringing, Sheikh Hazza won wide respect from the tribes and was renowned for his honesty, piety, modesty, tolerance, faithfulness and magnanimity. He had succeeded in forging strong friendly ties with tribal notables, statesmen and the military. In a message to the Deputy Political Resident C. A. Gault, dated August 1955, the Political Agent P. J. Tripp said, “A very close friendship binds Sheikh Rashid, Ruler of Dubai, and Sheikh Hazza.”\(^\text{18}\) The British military commander, Peter Clayton of the Trucial Oman Scouts (which was formed in 1951 to maintain security of the Interior), described Sheikh Hazza as ‘a good friend of the Scouts.’\(^\text{19}\)

Hazza used to exchange formal and cordial messages with tribal chiefs and notables from the time his father assumed power as Ruler of Abu Dhabi. Noticeable among such messages was one dated 24/3/1924 and addressed to a Mr. Abbas Bin Abdulla inquiring about his conditions. Starting with the traditional phrase *Bism Allah Al Rahman Al-Raheem* and customary greetings, the message says: “Thanks to God Almighty we are fine, and may Allah protect you from harm. Here all is very well. It is such a long time since we have heard anything from you; we sincerely hope that nothing serious is stopping you from contacting us. You are requested to tell us your news; we are much concerned about you, especially with regard to current diseases. We pray Allah to spare his worshippers. The sum total of facts herein is contained in a letter from the noble Sheikh, our father, Sultan Bin Zayed. This is what we should indicate and please do not withhold your news from us……”\(^\text{20}\)

The hospitality of Sheikh Hazza was legendary indeed. He was strictly committed to genuine Arab traditions. His *Majlis* was open to all with no security guards or employees to check on visitors or to set up barriers between the Sheikh and those who wanted to see him. A Bedouin Sheikh would never turn away any visitor and whoever enters his *Majlis* becomes a welcome guest who may eat and sleep in the Sheikh’s guesthouse as he wishes, and leaves after being well-provided. There are numerous accounts of this aspect of Hazza’s personality. For instance, Al-Sayed Abdulla Al-Sayed Al-Hashemi -- who had been Imam (leader at prayer) of the Khalaf Bin Abdulla Al-Otaiba Mosque in Abu Dhabi and teacher at the adjoining school, said in a manuscript of his collection of poems dating back to the first half of the 20th century:\(^\text{21}\)

*Greetings to the most welcome and faithful youth, Sheikh Hazza,*

*Who has shown exceptional magnanimity and sympathy,*

*Loved by all people as he leaves none disappointed.*\(^\text{22}\)

It is possible to form an interesting picture about Hazza’s personality from excerpts of records left by foreigners who had an opportunity to observe his behavior closely. He
Sheikh Hazza' Bin Sultan Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (1905-1958)

had indeed attracted the attention of the famous European traveler Wilfred Thesiger while on a visit to Abu Dhabi in 1948. Thesiger said that Hazza cheerfully receives his guests with a broad smile that never leaves his face.\(^23\) M. S. Buckmaster, the British Political Resident in Abu Dhabi in the period from 1955 to 1958, was much impressed by Hazza's personality, particularly his wide knowledge of current events. In preparing his memoirs, Buckmaster had largely depended on the information provided him by Sheikh Hazza regarding Bani Yas tribal factions, Hazza being well versed in tribal affairs and greatly interested in genealogy. This particular trait is purely Arabian, for the Arabs have always been ahead of other nations with regard to the preservation of their origins and genealogy as well as the collection of their oral histories due to the absence of record-keeping.\(^24\)

Likewise, Hazza was referred to by Julian Walker, once the British Political Agent in Dubai, who met Sheikh Hazza often while discharging his duties in the Trucial Emirates, including the demarcation of borders between the Emirates, a task that required extensive knowledge of tribal borders. Haza'a had been helpful in this connection as he had managed to collect details regarding Abu Dhabi tribes in Liwa.\(^25\)

Falconry expeditions -- a hobby acquired by Sheikh Hazza since his early childhood while accompanying his father and brothers\(^26\) -- had certainly opened up vistas of knowledge and experience: dealing with animals, birds and weapons; knowledge of wind, stars and directions, and other experiences and acquired skills. Noteworthy among the accounts written on Sheikh Hazza's falcon-hunting trips is one that occurs in the memoirs of Ronald Codrai. “Two days ago set out to find Sheikh Haza (brother of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi). Found him out in Bainuna, near Agaila, where I spent the night. It was very pleasant. He was on a hunting trip, but with a carpet and a couple of cushions he had created a majlis where we sat talking until it was time to turn in. Had camel’s milk, dates and tinned fruit for dinner --presumably he was relying on catching game for anything more elaborate.”\(^27\)

Codrai described how the falconers used to gather around the Sheikh near a coffee fire at the end of a day’s hunting and relate their falcons’ ‘achievements’ while the falcons themselves stood arrogantly, their heads covered and legs tied by cloth strips so that they may not fly away. Then poets and story-tellers started competing. Such is the typical scene whenever a Sheikh goes out falcon-hunting in this region.\(^28\)

As to the animals targeted for the hunt in Western Abu Dhabi, a narrator who had accompanied Sheikh Hazza on his falcon-hunting trips said, “We used to accompany Sheikh Hazza and his young brother Zayed on their trips to hunt deer that live in the desert...Our main target was the larger animals: Al-wedeihi (maha), and the deer and we hunted them with arrows, spears or daggers.”\(^29\) According to Codrai, who had accompanied Sheikh Hazza on one of his hunting trips, the hunting season started
in autumn when the *qittah* appeared in the skies of Abu Dhabi and also when the *qubbra* migrate to Arabia.\(^{30}\) It often happened that an ordinary Bedouin determines the hunting day and hurries to the hunting-enthusiast Sheikh to tell him that he has spotted in the desert the location of an abundant target, often the *habbara* birds. That Bedouin would be rewarded for the information he had brought and then the hunting party was selected and the necessary preparations made. The party would then set out led by the Sheikh.\(^{31}\)

It is also said that some Sheikhs (including Hazza) used to go hunting accompanied by saluki dogs, known for their speed and hunting capability. However, falcons were, and still are, the most common instrument used in hunting *habbara* birds, rabbits and other smaller animals, though the salukis had long been associated with Bedouin life. However, only a few could afford such dogs. It is believed that Sheikh Hazza had one, as Susan Hillyard (wife of Tim Hillyard, Representative of the Abu Dhabi Marine Operations/ADMA) said in her memoirs regarding the saluki dogs in Abu Dhabi that “The dogs in Abu Dhabi, though saluki type, were more like lurchers. These were pedigree. Nevertheless dogs, as a kind, are considered unclean and I was astonished to find one climbing on to Sheikh Haza’a’s lap, while we were having a preliminary coffee….” Sheikh Hazza remarked, “Pedigree dogs are not unclean, Umm Deborah.” as he went on to stroke the dog’s head and ears.”\(^{32}\)
Abu Dhabi Administrative and Political Affairs

Sheikh Hazza was a contemporary of Abu Dhabi Rulers of the 20th century, from his grandfather Sheikh Zayed Bin Khalifa (1855-1905) to his brother Shakhbut Bin Sultan (1928-1966). Together with them, he witnessed political currents and family differences over who would rule. He also saw the political disturbances brought about by the coming of his father Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed to power, as Abu Dhabi interior had harbored tribal differences and disputes resulting in the emigration of certain Bani Yas tribes to Abu Dhabi and nearby islands, leaving their camels to graze in southern Dhafra and Al-Ain, thus boosting claims and ambitions by subjects of neighboring states. The Ruler was obliged to deal with the situation in his hinterlands in a non-traditional way, resorting to new policies and tactics. He thus dispatched his son Hazza in 1922 at the head of a delegation to meet the King of Saudi Arabia. Consisting of a number of notables, the delegation offered gifts to the Saudi Monarch and came back with similar gifts. Among the reasons that had led Sheikh Sultan to select his son Hazza as leader of the delegation was the latter's leadership capability, enhanced by his extensive political experience as he had been brought up among Abu Dhabi rulers and leaders. Upon being informed of this visit, the British Political Resident in the Gulf ordered an inquiry into its purposes and asked the British Political Agent to contact Hazza's father and indicate to him the need to adhere to treaty commitments prohibiting any dealing by Abu Dhabi with any power other than the British government, and thereupon Sheikh Sultan presented an apology.

When Sheikh Shakhbut Bin Sultan succeeded his uncle Sheikh Saqr Bin Zayed (1926-1928) as Ruler of Abu Dhabi in January 1928 with the support of his closest relatives, his brother Hazza and the rest of the family pledged to support him, as their mother Sheikha Salama had urged them to swear that they would remain united. This had granted the Emirate stability while the region was laboring under continual disturbance. The new leadership has thus been enhanced and the early 1950s witnessed a drive for the better in all fields, not only in Abu Dhabi, but also in the other Trucial States emirates. Leaders of the region held successive meetings. However, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi rarely attended those meetings and this attitude upset his brothers. Therefore, Sheikh Hazza, together with his brother Zayed, attended the first of those meetings, and the latter was rarely absent from them, especially meetings of the Council of Rulers of the Trucial States. However, minutes of those meetings contain nothing relating to their involvement in the debates, particularly in the first meeting. Expressing his own point of view regarding this state of affairs, the Political Agent in Sharjah wrote to the Political Resident Bernard Burrows on 1/12/1953 saying that all participants in the Council are not used to entering into free dialogue in semi-official councils. Mutual distrust has also prevented some of them from talking freely in the presence of others as well as in the presence of the representative of HM government. Generally speaking, all the Rulers attended meetings of the Council just to oblige HM government, and not out of a genuine desire to do so.
Within the context of oil, Sheikh Hazza assisted his brother the Ruler in the planning and development of exploration following the launching of work at the first test well in a modest ceremony in Abu Dhabi. In his memoirs, Ronald Codrai speaks of that day (16/2/1950) saying, “A big day at Ra’s al-Sadr! Sheikhs Shakhbut, Khalid and Haza came to the ‘spudding-in’ ceremony (commencement of drilling the first exploration well in south-eastern Arabia).”

**Ruler’s Representative in the Western Region**

Thanks to his active involvement in purposeful politics, and awareness of the requirements of the area and those of Abu Dhabi society, Hazza rose to the position of Ruler’s Representative in the Western Region. Here, certain questions may be asked: How did he discharge his duties in that Region? Did he encounter obstacles in dealing with tribal chiefs? Did he encounter political threats? Was there a residence for him or did he establish one? Why did Sheikh Shakhbut select him as his representative in that region?

The careful choice of representatives is part of the overall political vision and wisdom, especially when the Ruler is busy with other pressing matters. Sheikh Shakhbut was indeed a prudent leader with political vision. Recognizing the capabilities and skills of his younger brothers, he assigned them certain tasks and appointed them to certain key positions. When the need arose for a man capable of maintaining the influence of the Bani Yas tribe in the Western Region, he did not hesitate to assign this task to his brother Hazza, who was renowned for his knowledge of desert affairs and desert dwellers, although we have not been able to determine the official designation Sheikh Shakhbut granted his brother Hazza as he chose him for that mission. However, Julian Walker, British Political Agent, said in his memoirs on the Emirates, “In the early summer of 1954, I met Sheikh Zayed in Buraimi, and sometimes his elder and intelligent brother Hazza who was responsible for the affairs of Abu Dhabi in the West whenever he happened to be with him.”

The period during which Sheikh Hazza held that position is believed to correspond with the time in which Sheikh Zayed was given the official designation of Ruler’s Representative in the Eastern Region, i.e., 1946. Sources do not state or even allude to Sheikh Hazza’s residence in the Western Region. However, British historian John Kelly states that the Wali or Emir appointed by the Ruler of Abu Dhabi exercises his powers from Dhafra and is responsible for maintaining peace among the tribes, settling disputes, collecting zakat on behalf of the Ruler. Kelly adds that “Several of the walis have been members of the ruling family. His normal place of residence is Mariyah, in the Liwa Oasis and his authority extends to the Batin, Bitanah, Qufa, Saruq, Ramlat al Hamra and Bainunah.”

Success of any ruler or chief in that region constantly depended on his ability to settle political tribal problems, which were often acute and chronic. As stated earlier, Hazza had close contacts with tribal notables who held him in great respect. Therefore,
his appointment as the Ruler’s Representative in the Western Region contributed to the stability and security of tribal society in that area, especially as he was keen to examine all its affairs. His hunting trips provided an invaluable opportunity to visit his subjects living in the desert. Some Bedouins used to visit him at his hunting camp to discuss urgent matters and put forward demands of the tribes living in the area and those that frequently visited it.

The British traveler Wilfred Thesiger was particularly impressed by Sheikh Hazza’s careful examination and consideration of all the affairs of the Western Region. When Thesiger met Sheikh Hazza at the Ruler’s residence in the late 1940s, he told Hazza of his coming close to the outskirts of Liwa. Hazza commented saying, “We have heard rumors from some Awamir that a Christian was there, but we did not believe them as we could not imagine that a European could come and go without being seen by anybody. As you know, news brought about by Bedouins cannot always be relied upon. I thought they were referring to Thomas who had crossed the sands sixteen years earlier.”

As the British statesman Martin Stanley Buckmaster was conducting extensive research into tribal territorial claims and rights in Abu Dhabi in 1952, he travelled freely in the interior of the Emirate and the Liwa Oasis. He met with several local figures and from them he collected invaluable information on the region. He had had an opportunity to meet Sheikh Hazza, with whom he discussed certain affairs of the Western Region, and was impressed by his excellent knowledge of that subject.

**Crises and Awkward Situations**

Sheikh Hazza and his brothers had witnessed several overlapping challenges, directly and indirectly. The most important was that of maintaining security in Abu Dhabi while the promise of discovering oil was looming on the horizon. Did Sheikh Hazza establish security and stability in the Western Region under such circumstances?

Through his extensive inspection tours and his close ties with the various tribes, Sheikh Hazza succeeded in forging forceful alliances and lucrative dealings with tribal chiefs. Such was indeed the cornerstone of the local policy of the Al-Nahyan ruling dynasty in Abu Dhabi. However, the Western Region had its share of turbulence as tribal disputes arose from time to time. In dealing with such disputes Sheikh Hazza had always preferred to defer to tribal chiefs to ensure speedy settlements. This could be easily gleaned from Buckmaster’s memoirs, in which he recounts his inspection journey to Liwa in the Western Region in the company of Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, which took about two months [days??] (from March 10-12, 1950). Buckmaster stated that the major problems that often occurred in Liwa among tribes dwelling in the Western Region were normally referred to Al Bu Falah Sheikhs or their representatives. In 1950, Sheikh Hazza himself examined a major case, but normally he used to leave such problems to the elders to settle.
Sheikh Hazza' to the right during the spudding-in ceremony at Ras al-Sadr in 1950,
Ronald Codrai.

Sheikh Hazza had also witnessed crises of a different nature. A major US oil company functioning outside the USA, in Saudi Arabia in particular, had eyes on Abu Dhabi desert as a potential concession. Thus, American and British interests overlapped with the interests of major oil companies in the two countries. In the meantime, conditions were changing in both Saudi Arabia and the Emirates resulting in border problems in
1949, when teams affiliated with the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO) started prospecting for oil in the south and south-east of the Qatar Peninsula. One of those teams had ventured into Dhafra, a district in the Western Region. The team was accompanied by some armed soldiers dispatched by the Ruler of Al-Hasa. According to J. B. Kelly, the team’s excursion was known and approved beforehand but it had penetrated as far as positions near Abu Dhabi city. It was later made clear that the ARAMCO team was given incorrect information and that their destination was Dubai. The team had thus retreated westward along the Abu Dhabi coast. Later, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi informed the British Resident in the Trucial Coast in a letter dated 18/4/1949 of yet another and more serious incursion. Thereupon, on April 22 of the same year, Sheikh Hazza went on a fact-finding mission accompanied by the British Agent in Sharjah, P. D. Stobart, and an employee from the British Petroleum company functioning in Abu Dhabi, escorted by a number of guards. They found an ARAMCO camp in a spot not far from Ras Al-Sila and with them were items of offshore drilling equipment. Another camp was found beside a landing strip, where there was an ARAMCO employee who admitted that they were actually operating in a territory belonging to the Trucial Coast as per the map provided by the company. The British Political Agent submitted a written protest to the American Manager of the ARAMCO camp, who replied saying that the protest should have been addressed to the Saudi government as the company had nothing to do with the political aspect of the border problem.

For his part, Sheikh Hazza, on behalf of his brother the Ruler, submitted a statement to the British Resident in the Gulf. In turn, the British government had on 11/5/1949 submitted a protest memo to the Saudi government confirming the encroachment on Abu Dhabi territory. Thus the demarcation of borders between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia became a matter of urgency, particularly as verbal battles were being fought in international forums between the American administrations that had wanted to invest in the Emirate’s territory through Saudi contracts granted to their companies, and the British governments that were vehemently defending Abu Dhabi interests and rights. However, such a protest did not deter the Saudis from advancing on Buraimi villages and even dispatching a Saudi Emir to administer Buraimi late in August 1952.

Sheikh Hazza and the Buraimi Issue

The Buraimi issue (1949-1974) is not part of the subject of this paper. It is but a border issue between two brotherly Arab states. However, it was one of the most complicated issues that emerged in the region, with more than two parties involved and more than one demand set forth. However, our interest in the Buraimi issue stems from Sheikh Hazza’s role in it. He watched developments, together with his brother Zayed, using field glasses while loyal tribesmen were standing beside them.
In the early 1950s, there was a dispute among Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi over ownership of Buraimi. The disagreement resulted in several crises represented in rivalry between tribes, and disputes over undetermined borders. The prospects of oil in the area further heightened tension and on occasion led to gunfire incidents, sieges and aggressions. Several protest notes were addressed and eventually the parties agreed on international arbitration. In view of the paramount importance of the testimony to be presented by Abu Dhabi, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Shakhbut, chose his brother Hazza as representative of the Emirate at the Geneva Court (1-17 September, 1955) which convened to debate the Buraimi dispute. He was accompanied by his brother Zayed and others who were to testify before the court. It was a most challenging mission that caused much concern at the Foreign Office in London and the Political Agency in Dubai as the Abu Dhabi delegation lacked foreign language skills and they were to be examined and cross-examined by foreign lawyers. However, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and senior British officials had full confidence in Hazza and his brother Zayed, who had already shown outstanding capabilities in dealing with all affairs of the Emirate, whether border or other vital issues.

As part of the preparations for the arbitration, and through Sheikh Hazza’s periodic inspection tours of the Eastern Region to assist his brother there, several bags
containing old correspondence relating to the late Ahmad Bin Hilal (1896-1936), who was the Ruler's Representative in the Eastern Region, were found in his house. The value of such correspondence lay in the fact that the letters dealt with local affairs of the region. The Sheikhs discovered that they shed adequate light on several issues, including who was exercising authority and sovereignty in the interior over the previous hundred years or so. Those documents were eventually translated into English under the supervision of the Foreign Office, and a detailed report was produced supported by documentary quotes and presented to the international arbitration board in 1955, enhancing the claims of Abu Dhabi as well as those of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.\(^{54}\)

Sheikh Hazza was reserved in his testimony before the court, especially as he submitted proof and evidence regarding the volume of illegal Saudi activities and intervention in the area. He also referred to the Saudi expansionist campaign which had been going on for a long time.\(^{55}\) With the failure of arbitration in Geneva, a force from the Trucial Oman Scouts supported by forces of the Sultanate intervened and succeeded in terminating the Saudi presence in Buraimi when the Saudis withdrew from the oasis by the end of October 1955.\(^{56}\) However, a major problem remained to be solved, namely, restoring loyalty of the tribal chiefs who had previously supported the Saudis; otherwise, there would be no real peace in the hinterlands.

Abu Dhabi had won the respect of the area's tribes since the era of Hazza's grandfather, Sheikh Zayed the Great. Therefore, as the crisis was developing, Sheikh Zayed, in his capacity as Ruler's Representative in the Eastern Region and with his direct experience with tribal affairs and loyalties,\(^{57}\) offered the tribes all assurances of good treatment, the safety of all loyal chiefs so that they could come and talk to him as well as to the representative of the British Resident in the area. Sheikh Hazza, who was speaking in the name of Sheikh Zayed, asked the British diplomat Edward Henderson to repeat the assurances he had earlier given to his brother Sheikh Zayed to ensure their safety while in Abu Dhabi. Such assurances given, negotiations proceeded and many tribal chiefs capitulated and the crises with insurgent leaders thus came to an end.\(^{58}\)

**Beda’ Hazza and Falaj Hazza**

In Arabic, *Beda’* means ‘an oasis with wells’, and *Badie* means ‘water and palms; streams running close to the villages valley.’\(^{59}\) Meanwhile, *Falaj* in Arabic means ‘a stream; a smaller river.’\(^{60}\) Briefly, the *Falaj* is a guided irrigation system carrying water through a network of channels to beneficiaries.\(^{61}\) Apart from dictionaries, atlases of the region point to places in Abu Dhabi carrying the word *Bed’* or *falaj* as part of their names; for instance *Bed’ Hazza* is a place in western Abu Dhabi while *Falaj Hazza* is a district in today’s Al-Ain. Both were named after Sheikh Hazza Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan. It is reported that he was deeply interested in drilling artesian wells and the development
of irrigation networks locally known as *aflaj*. When Ronald Codrai visited Sheikh Hazza at his camp in Bainuna, a district of the Western Region, and particularly at Aquila, which was known for its big well located at the road junction (the road leading west and that extending from Buraimi), he noted that a fresh potable water well had been drilled and named Beda Hazza. A bullet was shot to ceremonially mark the occasion. During their trips in the desert, Abu Dhabi Sheikhs always set up their camps near water wells. They would determine the depth of such wells according to the quality and quantity of water that could be drawn from them; they knew that wells are likely to dry up. They would constantly drill new wells as per the needs of the region, especially as heat waves occur and thirst goes to extremes.

The remains of Falaj Hazza’ in Al Ain. Photo by Shamsa Al Dhaheri, 2014.
The ecology of Eastern Arabia has inspired desert dwellers to establish underground channels (aflaj) and the technology had spread far and wide due to the importance attached to it by the Rulers. Sheikh Hazza was particularly interested in agriculture and the development of palm groves, especially in the Al-Ain villages known for an abundance of subterranean water. There is a district in Al-Ain known as Falaj Hazza; it was Sheikh Hazza who had ordered the establishment of a falaj to bring water from Al-Uqda in the Mo’taredh Oasis, the mother source of that falaj. From there, water was carried through a surface channel established along the edge of a valley that passes through Mo’taredh until it reaches the area where Sheikh Hazza developed palm orchards.

Referring to the course of that falaj, one narrator said, “It starts at Al-Oqda at the Mo’taredh Oasis in Al-Ain, exactly at I’dan Basbas – an area abounding in Ghaf trees. The course of the falaj extends along a parallel to a valley that passes by Al-Mo’taredh ultimately reaching an area beyond the Falaj Hazza district neighboring the area of Zakher. It thus irrigates the Sheikh Hazza palm orchard and I recall that it has been the only orchard in that part of the ground.” It is also reported that the sources of Falaj Hazza are to be found in an area known as Hamla in the middle of Al-Ain.
and irrigated a district called Al-Tawasa (now part of the Manaseer district but not the residential district now called Falaj Hazza). However, the phenomenon of aflaj drying up hit Falaj Hazza; a scarcity of rain water caused the falaj’s stream to decrease as it was not regularly or adequately replenished through the drilling of more wells and the channel itself was not regularly maintained. Still, remains of Falaj Hazza can still be seen today.

Sheikh Hazza in the Memoirs of Susan Hillyard, Wife of the Abu Dhabi Oil Company Representative

Nothing in the official sources and references compares to what Susan Hillyard (1929-2014), wife of Tim Hillyard, Representative of the Abu Dhabi Marine Operations Company (ADMA), has written in her memoirs about the personality of Sheikh Hazza. She reminisces on happy events as well as awkward situations with Sheikh Hazza and so has portrayed certain aspects of his personality such as his relationship with family members, society and his homeland, his noble manners and his warmth. What follows are some of the topics she dealt with in her memoirs.

Camel races

Susan had been able to witness Sheikh Hazza’s interest in desert sports, especially falconry and camel racing. She was once invited to a camel race by the Sheikhs of Abu Dhabi. She and her husband Tim were having lunch with Sheikh Hazza when he suddenly asked her whether she had ever ridden a camel. She replied that she had not. Sheikh Hazza then invited her a few days later when a race was organized in the early hours of the day. Accompanied by her family, they proceeded to the camel-race course, and witnessed scattered convoys of camels crossing the desert to take part in the competition. They found Sheikh Hazza and his brother Zayed seated at a previously set up camp where they were to receive their guests. Of course, the organization of the race was not such as we see today.

Commenting on the simplicity of the organization and the race course, Susan said, “It was not like any Western race meeting: no stands, no enclosures, stable blocks, rings, weighing rooms, no white or red railings to mark off the track.”

Susan goes on to describe the general scene and the event itself; she said, “The Sheikhs were encamped in the desert among their Bedouin on a ridge above a small, flat plain. Hobbled camels were everywhere…There were hooded hawks with head sitting on their little posts, jesses with tiny bells attached on their leg…Salukis mingled among the throng…The camels, when we got there, were drawn up not quite in a line, more in a semi-circle with a couple of salikis at foot. Sheikh Haz’a’a gave a yell and they went off at a hard-gallop which soon came down to a loping trot…we fell in behind the last one, in Land Rovers and a pick-up, the occupants of each encouraging them
The race festival consisted of several divisions. Susan described how Sheikh Hazza then jumped out of his Land Rover and ran behind them, beating them with a camel stick to spur them on, not far from the winning post.

Sheikh Hazza and his brother Zayed were interested in varying the activities accompanying the festival. So there were an auction and a decorative contest and these attracted a big number of camel owners and breeders to acquire the best and most genuine Arabian breeds. Thus, the camel race festival involved sports and educational competitions that brought people together for beneficial and cordial activities.

The Al-Nahyan Sheikhs had realized that the organization of such races at that time was a much-needed activity to overcome tribal skirmishes that occasionally erupted among Bedouin subjects, and the races did indeed attract the attention of Bedouin chiefs and notables who became preoccupied with the sound breeding of camels and their preparation for races and a lucrative trade.

The race ended and Sheikh Hazza, seeking a way to impart the event to ladies of the families, asked Suzan to visit them and tell them what she witnessed. She wrote in her memoirs saying, “I received a message from Sheikh Hazza’s house asking me to come over and tell his wife, Sheikha Maryam Bint Hamdan, about my impressions regarding the race and accompanying activities and how I have enjoyed following its various divisions.”

A Journey by Air to the Al-Ain Oasis

Susan Hillyard accompanied Sheikh Hazza on a flight from Abu Dhabi to the Al-Ain oasis in order to fetch his mother Sheikha Salama, who was spending some time with her son Sheikh Zayed, Ruler’s Representative in the Eastern Region, and to inspect her farms there.

It should be mentioned here that the Emirate’s flying capabilities were very limited at that time compared to more advanced countries, nor were there any landing strips. However, Sheikh Shakhbut was interested in developing air traffic and on that particular occasion wished his mother to come from Al-Ain aboard a special plane. He thus made all the necessary arrangements through Tim Hillyard. There was a small airstrip in Al-Ain and Sheikh Hazza was to guide the pilot to it while Sheikh Zayed waited for the plane there in Buraimi. Sheikh Shakhbut also asked Tim to let his wife (Susan) accompany his mother on her trip back to Abu Dhabi in order to reply to her queries with assistance, when and if necessary, from the pilot himself.

It was mid-January 1955 when Sheikh Hazza flew from Abu Dhabi to Al-Ain oasis aboard the Gulf Air plane that would bring his mother back to Abu Dhabi. It was the
wish of the Sheikhs to let their mother avoid the hardships of an automobile trip over sand dunes and muddy areas (sabkha) to ford on camelback as part of a caravan on a week-long journey as she had done before; she was now much older and suffering from joint pain. There was also another factor: Al-Nahyan men were reluctant to let their women travel on land due to mounting political disturbances in the region.

Sheikh Hazza boarded the plane and occupied a seat immediately behind the cockpit as per a request from the pilot himself, Ken Bulmer, to maintain the plane’s balance during take-off. Also upon request from the pilot, Susan sat in the cockpit to guide him to the landing strip. Susan further describes the journey saying, “After fifteen minutes flying, giving us time to see the huge sand dunes…we ran into low cloud… If the clouds don’t lift we shall have to go up to Sharjah to refuel and try again from there. As you know, there aren’t any aids to help us find it.”

After several unsuccessful attempts, Susan suggested that the pilot should seek help from Sheikh Hazza as he knew the topography of the area. Hazza immediately pointed to the location of the landing strip. The plane thus touched down on a desert track, alongside which was a smoky fire, where they were greeted by Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan, along with Christopher Gordon-Pirie and Robin Huntington and a number of curious men, women and children. Sheikh Zayed then took Sheikh Hazza and Susan in his jeep to meet Sheikha Salama, noting that they had lit the fire to guide them to the landing strip.
At that moment Susan says, “There was a chuckle from Sheikh Haza’a who was sitting behind us having let me ride in front. They needed me to guide them. Just as well I was there or they might have circled until they crashed. Just then we came to a halt. A tiny little old woman, Sheikha Salama, was waiting a few yards off. She was bade farewell by well-wishers and at the door of the plane the pilot looked as if he was in deep thought as to who would sit in the cockpit. Perhaps his mind was preoccupied with such thoughts more than concern with the plane itself. After all such speculations, he left the matter for the Political Agent, Christopher Pirie-Gordon, to arrange; for he could speak Arabic fluently and he also knew well both the protocol and local customs and traditions. Moreover, he was being assisted by Sheikh Zayed with regard to seating arrangements. Sheikh Zayed sorted it out in no time flat. “How many seats? Can we have a child on each lady’s lap, apart from my mother, that is? Haza’a can travel in the cockpit, presumably?”

The flight back to Abu Dhabi was quiet and comfortable. Susan asked the pilot if they could overfly Abu Dhabi as they would all enjoy seeing it from the air, she said. “We skimmed the shoreline above our house and then the most amazing sight. All the little barasti huts were flying a piece of cloth in honour of the Sheikah Salaamah” on her return to Abu Dhabi.
Hazza and the two daughters of Sheikh Zayed the Great

Sheikh Hazza was much intent on encouraging the Al-Nahyan women to involve themselves and interact with Western female guests and introducing these women to the customs and traditions of Abu Dhabi society. Susan Hillyard happily recalls her first visit to two daughters of Sheikh Zayed Bin Khalifa, Sheikha Shamsa and Sheikha Latifa, upon an invitation from Sheikh Hazza and his brother the Ruler. The Operations Manager of G.S.I. and his wife, Harriet Stoutjesdycke, were visiting the Hillyards at that time. The Bahrain-based visitor was especially pleased to have the opportunity to meet Sheikh Hazza’s two aunts, and upon receiving the invitation from Sheikh Hazza and Sheikh Shakhbut, she happily replied, “…Tell the Sheikh how honored…we would be.” Commenting on that occasion Susan noted “the warmth in the aunts’ voices and the way they kissed and were kissed by their nephews, the smile on the little servant’s face as she bustled about finding us some Turkish delight-type sweets, a present brought to them from Oman via Buraimi…”

Noticing that the aunts’ hands were markedly painted with _henna_ (camphor), Harriet asked why and the Sheikhas replied, “Henna? For decoration mostly, especially on bride’s hands at weddings when we paint them in elaborate patterns…and we use it on the palms and on the insides of our fingers in the summer…It prevents them from sweating.” Immediately, Sheikh Hazza asked his aunts to offer some henna to Susan and Harriet then and there. Although Harriet declined the offer, Susan applied a small amount on her right hand. It was a memorable experience for all.

Sheikh Hazza’s Journey between Life and Death

Sheikh Hazza was a lover of life and a true philanthropist. Though his health started declining in the early 1950s, he never lost his sense of humor. His mother and brothers were deeply affected when it was ascertained that he was suffering an incurable disease. Sheikha Salama herself ordered an intensive search for doctors while his brothers were searching for a suitable hospital. It was noted that previously Sheikh Hazza was treated in the American mission hospital in Muscat and was so pleased that the family asked a similar hospital be established in Al Ain.

In her memoirs Susan Hillyard speaks of Sheikh Hazza’s suffering and his experience with Western medicine. His mother had herself received medical treatment in India and Sheikh Shakhbut had previously been to Paris and London for treatment. After his surgery at the Canadian mission hospital in Buraimi, in a bid to ease her concern about her son, Sheikha Salama asked Susan to visit her. As she arrived at Sheikha Salama’s _majlis_ she pondered “What did I say to Sheikha Salaamah if and when she asked me. Telling fibs about my lack of knowledge as to how the oil exploration was going was one thing, but the truth was bound to come out and then where would I be? At the moment she was rejoicing that her son had safely weathered the operation
and it would have been cruelty to tell her that there was no hope…”\textsuperscript{78} In fact, several weeks after the operation his health seemed to improve but he soon began to suffer again.\textsuperscript{79}

In 1957, Sheikh Hazza’s health further deteriorated and he was admitted to the Presbyterian Hospital in New York, one of the world’s best hospitals that included all medical specialties.\textsuperscript{80} British statesman Julian Walker recalls his journey to New York where he met Hazaa’s brothers Khalid and Zayed saying, “In May, I sailed to New York where I met the Abu Dhabi Sheikhs, Hazza in hospital for cancer.... They were homesick, and seemed to welcome a familiar face”\textsuperscript{81}

Sheikh Hazza’ (left) next to his brother Sheikh Zayed in New York, 1957.

The UAE National Archives Collection, Abu Dhabi.
Susan Hillyard described in her memoirs Sheikh Hazza upon his return from New York welcomed her with his usual sweet, warm smile. She visited him often upon his own request and on one such visit she took along her daughter Deborah’s children’s encyclopedia as he enjoyed looking at the wildlife photos. Together, they browsed the contents, especially the colored pictures depicting various species, and discussed their original habitats. His face brightened considerably as he was captivated by anything to do with nature. When they came upon a picture of the flamingos, Sheikh Hazza noted that there was a flock that visited the mangrove swamps up the coast towards Dubai but could only be seen from the sea. Susan replied that she knew of the flock and had in fact eaten one once and found it very delicious.\(^{82}\)

In 1958, Sheikh Hazaa travelled to India for further treatment in one of its hospitals. He was accompanied by his brother Zayed.\(^{83}\) He died on January 20, 1958 and all the shops in Abu Dhabi Emirate respectfully closed down for two days in mourning.\(^{84}\)

During Hazza’s last days, Julian Walker said, “In January 1958, my father and I exerted tremendous efforts to secure a certain drug for him. However, his excessive pain made him relinquish that drug and resort to local ones. He died in the same month.”\(^{85}\)

Always made to feel welcome in Sheikh Hazza’s home, Susan could not stop her tears when she went to offer condolences to the family.\(^{86}\) The ladies of the household were all there particularly to console his widow, Sheikha Maryam Bint Hamdan, and help alleviate her grief.\(^{87}\)
Notes and references


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11. Khoury, Al-Sayed Ali Ahmad Al-Khofry states that his grandfather’s name is Aqeil Saber Haider, and that his paternal grandfather was El-Sayed Amin Baqer.

12. Interview with El-Sayed Ali Ahmad Al-Khoury on 1/10/2013


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Agent, Dubai) to C.A. Gault (Acting Political Resident, Bahrain), August 27, 1955, vol. 9: 222


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29. Mohamed Ayoub interview by Sayed Mohamed Al-Rifai in the 1980s, from the archives of the Heritage and History Commission


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54. Morsi, Mohamed, *Dawlat Al Emarat Wa Jiranoha*: 293

55. Kelly, J.B. *Eastern Arabian Frontiers*: 279
56. Clayton, Peter, *Two Alpha Lima*: 103-108

57. Maitra, Jayanti 22


60. Ibid.


65. Interview with narrator Al-Sayid Salem Hashel Al-Dhahiri on 25/4/2014

66. Interview with El-Sayed Mohamed Bal Abd Al-Dhahiri on 26/1/2014


68. *The Telegraph*, UK, 5 June 2014 Susan Hillyard’s Obituary

69. Hillyard, Susan p.127

70. Ibid 140

71. Ibid 56

72. Ibid 57

73. Mr. Christopher Pirie Gordon assumed his position as Political Representative in the Trucial Coast at the new premises of the British Residency on the edge of Khor Dubai (Dubai Creek) in 1953. See Peter Clayton, *Two Alpha Lima*: 53

74. Captain Robin Huntington, was the Intelligence Officer of the Land Forces HQ in the Arabian Gulf. Upon ending his service with the British Army, he returned to the Trucial Coast to launch the Digdaga Agricultural Station near Ras Al-Khaimah. He continued to work at agricultural projects in the ‘Northern Emirates’ until his death in 1983. See Peter Clayton, *Two Alpha Lima*: 229

75. Hillyard, Susan 57

76. Ibid: 60

77. Ibid. 47
78. Ibid: 47


80. Hillyard, Susan 146-147


82. *Memoirs of the Emirates*: p. 61

83. Hillyard, Susan 218

84. This photo includes Sheikh Hazza, his brother Zayed and a hospital staff member where Sheikh Hazza was receiving treatment. However, neither the one who took the photo nor the hospital itself could be identified. (The photo was posted on Instagram.)

85. Clayton, Peter 174


87. Hillyard, Susan p. 220 and 228
Remembering the Iranian Invasion of the Tunb Islands

David Neild

In the early part of 1966 I returned to the Trucial States for a second tour of duty on secondment from Her Majesty’s Forces to the Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS), having already served with the force from 1959 to 1961. Initially on my second tour I commanded the Support Group based permanently in Manama and equipped with mortars and machine guns, but by 1968 I had been promoted to Major and was in command of B Rifle Squadron. Whilst stationed at Fort Jahili in Al Ain I was informed that B Sqn would have the honour of being the first TOS Squadron ever to be deployed and based in Ras al-Khaimah territory at a location named Hum Hum. For some reason since the establishment of the Trucial Oman Levies in 1951 (the name was changed from Levies to Scouts in 1956) no squadron had ever been located in Ras al-Khaimah before, and the importance of this new move was made abundantly clear to me: it was vital to establish a good relationship with His Highness Sheikh Saqr, the Ruler. I made a point of calling on Sheikh Saqr immediately after our arrival in our tented camp near the Agricultural Research Station at Dig Dagga. We soon built up a good working relationship in the six months that we were there before being rotated to Masafi (rifle squadrons only spent six months in one location before being moved on).

Towards the end of 1968, and with the proposed Federation of the seven Trucial States – initially Britain hoped this would be nine, but Bahrain and Qatar later elected to become independent states – only three years away, I accepted an invitation from HH Sheikh Saqr to set up and command what came to be called the Ras al-Khaimah Mobile Force (RAKMF). His Highness insisted that I would have to leave HM Forces to take up the offered appointment as he made it very clear that my loyalty had to be to him and him alone. I was only 30 years old and the opportunity to form and command my own small army was one that I could not resist even though it meant giving up a career as a regular British Army infantry officer. With much assistance from the TOS we managed in the space of three years to train and equip a force of three hundred well trained soldiers. Considering we had started this project from scratch this was no small achievement; I was immensely proud of the accomplishment. Frequent discussions were held between the British Government and Sheikh Saqr as to not only about the proposed Federation and how it would function but also on the future of two small islands in the Gulf (the lesser and greater Tunb Islands) that belonged to Ras al-Khaimah. I was in attendance at most of the
meetings and can say that the British Government was most concerned that Iran, which claimed the Islands as its own, would take the territory by force unless an acceptable compromise was concluded before the end of 1971. This timeframe was significant, as the British Government had announced its intention to relinquish external protection of the Trucial States by this date. Based on my own recollections from this period, interviews with two police survivors in March 2014, and the use of the declassified British Government documents, I have provided an account of the tense events surrounding and leading up to, the Iranian seizure of Ras al-Khaimah territory on the 30 November 1971.

On the 18 January 1967 George Thomson, the British Minister for Foreign Affairs announced in the House of Commons that the British Government had no intention of giving up its security role in the Gulf. This was further confirmed by Goronwy Roberts, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, when he toured Iran, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Dubai shortly after George Thomson’s declaration. Robert’s message was that Britain would stay in the region as long as was necessary to maintain peace and stability.

On 9 January 1968 the British newspaper the Daily Express headlined that a decision had been taken to bring home all British military forces stationed in the Gulf and the Far East (i.e. what was known as the ‘East of Suez’ overseas commitment. This decision – which had actually been taken in November 1967 after the Sterling devaluation crisis – was confirmed one week later in a seemingly embarrassed Downing Street statement, which also added that the planned exodus of British Forces would be completed by the end of 1971.

With Robert’s reassurance at the end of 1967, the timing and date for the withdrawal must have come as a complete surprise to the Trucial State Rulers who, according to Glen Balfour-Paul, Deputy Political Resident at the time, the Rulers were “dumbfounded by the abrupt reversal.” It certainly came as a “bolt out of the blue” to the British officers, including myself, who were serving at the time in the Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS). We felt let down by our political masters. Independence, while generally accepted as inevitable in the long-term, was, at the time, neither sought nor universally welcomed.

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In an attempt to achieve further progress with these sensitive issues in the Gulf, the government of Prime Minister Edward Heath brought distinguished diplomat Sir William Luce out of retirement. Over the course of 1970-71, Luce, a former Governor of Aden who had also been a Political Resident in the Gulf, made frequent visits between the various Rulers in what today I believe is called “shuttle diplomacy”. As well as pushing Britain’s agenda of political federation amongst the Trucial States, Luce was also tasked with settling Iranian claims to Abu Musa (belonging to Sharjah) and the Tunb Islands.

While agreeing in principle that the Lesser and Greater Tunb Islands were part of Ras al-Khaimah’s sovereign territory, the British position was that a deal would have to be negotiated with Iran so that Tehran would take possession of them. The explanation offered by the British Government was that despite the “all powerful Ras al-Khaimah Mobile Force” and the available Police resources that Ras al-Khaimah could muster it was still considered that the Ras al-Khaimah, even as part of a larger federation of states, would not be in a position to provide adequate security on the Tunb Islands, which were located on the busy international shipping lanes operating through the strategically important Straits of Hormuz.

Various lucrative proposals were put forward from Iran to the Ruler, including a possible lease agreement and financial incentives to enable the building of hospitals, schools and roads. These were all emphatically turned down by His Highness Sheikh Saqr, despite the British Government pointing out that they would no longer be responsible for the external security and protection of the region after 2 December 1971. Sheikh Saqr consistently argued that the Islands belonged to Ras al-Khaimah and he was not prepared to consider any proposals that would see them handed over to Iran, even as part of a shared lease agreement.

With only months remaining before Britain’s departure, the Shah reiterated that, “Iran would not tolerate a Union (of Arab Emirates) which could claim sovereignty over Iranian territory”. Indeed, he “would at once oppose and destroy it (the prospective UAE) and would deploy all resources to that end”. As late as 18 October 1971, Douglas-Home lamented that: “Unless Iranian claims to the disputed Gulf Islands are settled in Iran’s satisfaction before formal establishment of the UAE, the Shah seems determined to try to sabotage it and launch an attack on our Gulf policy”. Britain felt under pressure to try and strike a deal that would appease the Shah. This supports the diplomat Glen Balfour-Paul assessment that: “At no stage did Britain

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4 The National Archives (hereinafter TNA), PREM 15/1763, Peter Ramsbotham (Ambassador to Iran) to FCO, Audience with Shah: Islands and UAE, 7 September 1971.

5 TNA CAB 148/117, Defence and Overseas Policy Committee (71) 65, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Sir Alex Douglas-Home, “Policy in the Gulf”: 18 October 1971
admit the validity of the Iranian claim; but the importance of maintaining the good will of the Shah, was fundamental to Britain's Middle East Policies as a whole”.

Right up to nearly the last day HMG pleaded with Sheikh Saqr to finalize a compromise deal, hinting that if no peaceful solution was found it could not be ruled out that Iran would take the military option to occupy the islands.

On the 9 September 1971 the British ambassador to Iran, Peter Ramsbotham, who was heavily involved in the negotiations, again wrote to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that a “special relationship” would be proposed on a successful outcome over the disputed Islands that would include political cooperation in the Gulf and Indian Ocean, with increased orders for British weapons, contracts for British manufacturers and a moderate Iranian policy on oil matters. This was the carrot; the Iranian stick was that the Shah threatened to leave the Cold War defence alliance, the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) unless the islands dispute was satisfactorily resolved. Such a move would disrupt overflying rights, damaging Britain's ability to maintain its remaining military commitments in Southeast Asia and affect the timing and cost of withdrawing from the Gulf itself. It was therefore in Britain's interest to push hard for a settlement in Iran's favour and pressure continued to be applied on Ras al-Khaimah to come to agreeable terms with Iran.

While the ongoing negotiations were taking place on the future of the Tunb Islands there had also been discussions with the Ruler, the Ras al-Khaimah police commander, Trevor Bevan, who was also on secondment from the Britain, and me to strengthen the police section of six men on the island. Up until then this small police detachment maintained a Ras al-Khaimah presence on the Island and also kept an eye on the small Ras al-Khaimah fishing community who owed their allegiance to the Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah and made a living there. Back in 1904 a monsieur Dambrain, the European Director of Persian Customs, visited the Island and having first replaced the Qawasim Flag with an Iranian one he installed two Persian Customs guards. The British Government took this issue up with Teheran and a few days later at their insistence the Iranian flag was lowered and the two guards withdrawn. This clearly demonstrated to all countries in the Gulf that the British Government was in no doubt that the sovereignty of the Tunb Islands belonged to Ras al-Khaimah. A decision had been made by the Ruler after consultation with Trevor Bevan and me that soon after Britain relinquished her protection over the Trucial States in December 1971 a detachment from the Mobile Force would be stationed on the Island as well.

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as the police section. The logistics of how to implement this had still to be worked out. That being said, a new radio had already been installed as a first step to improve communications, creating a direct link between the Island and our signal centre in the barracks and also to my house in Ras al-Khaimah town.

At around dawn on the 30 November, I was still in my house when I heard the operator on the Tunb Island trying to call me. We established contact and he informed me of the dramatic events that were unfolding – Iranian troops were invading the Island. I told him to take any necessary action to protect them and I would report back once I had spoken to the Ruler.

I put the operator on standby, hurriedly dressed and drove to the Ruler’s residence only a few minutes away, entering the courtyard without hindrance as it was guarded by my own men. One of the Ruler’s own domestic staff appeared and I told him to call His Highness and that I needed to see him immediately. Sheikh Saqr appeared, greeted me as always in a friendly way and asked me what needed his attention so urgently at that early hour.

Once I had briefed him on the sketchy information that I had his mood changed abruptly. He told me to assemble every possible dhow and be ready with the Mobile Force and as many armed volunteers as we could muster. It was apparent that his initial intention seemed to be that we would all set sail together to the rescue of the Islands in our wooden dhows and take the battle to the Iranian navy.

This was not quite the reply I was anticipating. Bravery is one thing but the thought of our wooden fleet challenging the strength of the Iranian navy which would be supported by their military helicopters did not seem a very practical option, and the chances of emerging victorious from such a conflict were zero. However I replied to Sheikh Saqr that if that was His Highness’s wishes they would naturally be obeyed and once our “Armada” was in place we would set sail. Sheikh Saqr then thought for a moment and told me to wait while he prayed.

It was a moment in my life I will never forget. Sheikh Saqr had just given orders that would guarantee a watery grave for all of us should we carry out his directive which I had no doubt that we would, in the full knowledge of the fatal consequences of such an assault.

Sheikh Saqr finished his prayers, came back to me and quietly said that after his meditation he realized that he could not send his subjects on an impossible mission that could only end in death and defeat. He instructed me to radio the police section on the Island and to inform them that he had directed that they were to lay down their weapons and surrender. He also instructed me to
tell the police detachment that he would act swiftly to secure their release and to thank them for their bravery and loyalty. That very special moment in time comes back to me frequently and my close relationship with His Highness Sheikh Saqr which had always been there had been strengthened even further that morning.

I quickly returned to my house to give the necessary instructions from the Ruler but discovered that the radio link was dead and no communications possible. Hurriedly I rejoined Sheikh Saqr to see what our next move would be and it was not long before the Mobile Force and Police were on full alert not sure what to expect next. The Iranians had surprised everyone and had carried out their illegal invasion and occupation of the Tunb Island while the Trucial States were still in theory entitled to protection from outside aggression by Britain, albeit there was only one day of that responsibility remaining.

I have read many differing reports on what allegedly took place on that fateful day but I have at last been able to interview two of the policeman who were actually there and their description of events are very similar.9

The police section consisting of six men under the command of L/Cpl Salam Suhail were coming to an end of a 2 month deployment on the Island and were due to be relieved. One member of the section, Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Obaid told me that they first sighted an Iranian ship approaching the Island at about 0500hrs. Five helicopters then flew overhead dropping leaflets with a message in Farsi. The leaflets advised the inhabitants and police not to fire at any arriving Iranian troops and to surrender peacefully. A group of approximately thirty Iranian soldiers then landed and in the gun fight that followed a number of them were killed. L/Cpl Salem Suhail was also fatally wounded while attempting to protect the Ras al Khaimah flag and four of the remaining policemen in the section wounded including Mohammed who was shot in the leg.

The second policeman I was privileged to interview was Hamtoo Abdulla Mohammed, a Yemeni, who was the signaler on duty that morning and he vividly recalled his efforts to make contact with the Ras al Khaimah mainland and our brief communication together.

From the details I obtained from the two policemen I can relate that they were

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9 Both interviews were conducted by the author in Ras al-Khaimah in March 2014.
taken off the Island by helicopter having been roughly handled by Iranian soldiers with no consideration given to the seriousness of their wounds or condition. Hamtoo, the only policeman not wounded was handcuffed and blindfolded and also removed by helicopter after the others had departed. The local Ras al Khaimah fishing community of around two hundred people who lived on the Island were sent back to Ras al Khaimah later in the day having first hurriedly buried L/Cpl Salem Suhail. The wounded policemen were initially taken to a hospital in Banda Langa before being released some months later and returned to a well deserved hero’s welcome which was attended by Sheikh Saqr and the entire Ras al Khaimah population.

The invasion was promptly brought to the attention of the Political Agent in Dubai and immediate action demanded as the Trucial States were still legally protected from external aggression by HMG albeit for only a further 24 hours. A telegram was sent from Sheikh Saqr to Prime Minister Heath demanding “urgent action to be taken with a view to effecting immediate withdrawal of the Iranian troops from the Islands”. Sheikh Saqr considered the “outrageous Iranian attack” a “breach of our treaty with the British Government, who is supposed to protect our people and soil against any foreign aggression.”10 Sadly Sheikh Saqr and all of us involved knew only too well that there was no way that HMG would intervene with military action on behalf of Ras al-Khaimah and were probably more concerned about their relationship with the Shah. Speaking retrospectively, the former ambassador to Iran, Peter Ramsbotham thought that turning a blind eye to the Iranian take over – while setting up the UAE – was not, “a very proud moment for the British Empire, but it was the only way that we could avoid a showdown.”11

The tame response from Britain at the time was to remind the Ruler that they had repeatedly warned him that unless a compromise was reached it was quite possible that Iran would take possession of the Islands by force. However because the occupancy had occurred before the formal hand over from HMG to the proposed Union a strongly worded letter of protest would be sent to Teheran about the incident which no doubt terrified the Iranians! It is probable that Iran decided to invade the Tunb Islands whilst still under

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10 TNA PREM 15/1763, Urgent telegram from the Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah to Prime Minister Edward Heath, 30 November 1971.

11 Excerpt from transcript of interview with Peter Ramsbotham on 18 October 1985, Iranian Oral History Project, Harvard University Center for Middle Eastern Studies.
Remembering the Iranian Invasion of the Tunb Islands

British protection in the hope that public anger in the Gulf would be directed mainly against The British Government for failing to come to the rescue of the Trucial States and Ras al-Khaimah in particular rather than the true culprit. This strategy did not work as once the invasion became common knowledge and despite the fact that there was a great deal of resentment towards Britain the rioting and looting that followed was concentrated at property with an Iranian connection including banks and shops.

On the second day of public unrest which the Ras al-Khaimah Mobile Force and police were struggling to control as demonstrations were taking place in many different parts of the town, we received information of a very large crowd gathering and that the situation was getting out of control. I happened to be with the Ruler when this news came through and Sheikh Saqr immediately decided to see the situation for himself escorted by a detachment of the Mobile Force. The Ruler told me that it would be unwise for me to accompany him as the anti-British feeling was running high and I could be in danger from the protestors. This was totally unacceptable to me as I wanted it clearly understood by everyone that I too was part of Ras al-Khaimah and I could not help where I was born. Sheikh Saqr accepted this comment which was from my heart and I followed his vehicle accompanied by more of my soldiers. When we arrived in the middle of the old town where the angry demonstration was taking place Sheikh Saqr got out of his vehicle to face the protestors who were demanding action. They continued marching towards us shouting insults directed at Iran but had become more subdued in the presence of Sheikh Saqr. The Ruler stood his ground and looked directly at the noisy crowd then called out some of the ring leaders by name to come and talk with him. He patiently explained the situation and made it quite clear to them that as the leaders of the demonstration he expected them to be responsible and to ensure that the demonstration should be a peaceful one. He also reminded them that he knew them and their families personally and that he would hold them accountable if any violence was to occur. The Ruler’s discussion with them worked like a dream and the mood of the crowd noticeably changed from the previous threatening behavior to just a demonstration of anger and frustration which was totally acceptable and justified. It was once again an extraordinary example of Sheikh Saqr’s influence and power over his people which enabled him to achieve the result he desired purely by his presence which was so much more effective than any outcome that could have been achieved by a group of my armed men in dealing with that same situation.
I had always been of the opinion that a secret deal had been brokered between Britain and Iran over the future of the Tunb Islands but it would now appear that this was not the case. In June 1971 a document from the National Archives now available to the general public reveals that the British Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home recommended to Prime Minister Heath that the best policy was “to keep The Iranians talking for the rest of the year and let the Shah seize the Islands by force, if he really is determined to do this, after the termination of our protection at the end of the year.” He continued “put most of the odium for an illegal act squarely on him”.  

My birthday fell on the day following the Iranian invasion, and, because of anti-Iranian protests in Ras al-Khaimah, it is one birthday that I will never forget. Sometime after the illegal invasion of the Islands HH Sheikh Saqr was interviewed about the events and in response to a particular question he replied “I considered sending an armed force back to Greater Tunb, to show our resistance. But the Iranians had the best armaments that money could buy and we only had rifles. The loss of one life, our policeman defending the initial attack, was already too high a price”. This statement which is recorded in the book Saqr: Fifty Years and More by Graeme H Wilson confirms my recollection of a man who was both resolute in the defence of Ras al-Khaimah’s interests but deeply compassionate about the lives of his people.

Sheikh Saqr continued to press for a negotiated settlement for the Tunb Islands on the international political agenda and the UAE regularly highlights the act of aggression by Iran through the United Nations and other influential international bodies. To date Iran has rejected any diplomatic moves to reconcile the future sovereignty of the Tunb Islands.

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12 TNA DEFE 25/265, Letter From Sir Alex Douglas-Home (Foreign Secretary) to Edward Heath (Prime Minister), Gulf Policy, June 1971
Omani-US Relations (1833-1939)
Imad Jasim Al Bahrani

Introduction

Oman was the first Arabian Gulf state and the second Arab state to establish trade relations with the United States of America (USA), the first being the 'Alawi state in the extreme Maghreb, in what is now known as the Kingdom of Morocco. Morocco was the first Arab country to recognize the American Declaration of Independence on February 20th, 1778, less than two years after its independence on July 4th, 1776.

Relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the USA date back to the late 18th century, to September 1790 when the sailing ship 'Rambler' navigated from Boston to the Omani capital, Muscat. The 'Rambler' was commanded by Captain Robert Folger(1) during the administration of George Washington,(2) the first American President.

In 1792, a group of Americans arrived at Muscat coming from Wadi Halfin(3) after their ship was wrecked while on its way from Sherbthat overlooking the sea on the south-east of Oman. Eight of the sixteen crew had survived and, having covered a distance of 805 km, arrived in Muscat, whence they boarded a British ship to Bombay and then to the USA.(4)

This study shall focuses on Omani-American relations between 1833 and 1939. The year 1833 witnessed the signing of the Omani-American "T reaty of Amity and Commerce", which marked the beginning of commercial relations between the two countries. The year 1939 saw the outbreak of World War II and subsequent USA involvement therein, culminating in the Allies' victory and the resulting change in US policy towards the Arab World.

Relations between Oman and the USA may be chronologically divided into :the three stages as follows

- 1833 to 1856: the emergence of trade and diplomatic relations following the signing of the 1833 Treaty and the positive result of this was the improvement of relations until the death of Sayyid Said Bin Sultan in 1856.

- 1856 to 1932: review of Omani-American relations following the death of Sayyid Said Bin Sultan and the causes leading to the estrangement between the two countries until 1933.
• 1932 to 1939: the development of Omani-American relations since the assumption of power by Sultan Said Bin Taimur in Oman in 1932 that paved the way for reinforcement of relations between the two countries and Britain’s attitude towards such developments, including the impact of Sultan Said Bin Taimur’s visit to Washington in 1938 on the two countries’ relations and this stage ends with the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

**Omani-US Relations (1833-1856)**

In 1828, an American trader named Edmund Roberts(5) visited the port of Zanzibar and hired the ship *Mary Ann*. He was particularly impressed by the island’s charms, its markets, commercial activity and the facilities granted to foreign traders.

While in Zanzibar, Roberts addressed a letter to the then US President Andrew Jackson(6) identifying the potential benefits resulting from dealing with new markets in East Africa and suggesting the conclusion of a trade treaty between Oman and the USA. Roberts had also sent a similar letter to His Majesty, Sayyid Said Bin Sultan on January 27, 1828.

These correspondences took place a few years prior to Sayyid Said Bin Sultan’s decision to make Zanzibar a second capital of the Sultanate in 1835.(8) Zanzibar thus acquired political and commercial significance dimensions that made it quite a profitable destination in East Africa.

In September 1833, the warship *Peacock* arrived at Muscat carrying the treaty,(9) which was signed by Sayyid Said Bin Sultan on September 21, 1833. The treaty went into effect on the same day it was ratified by the US Congress, June 30th, 1834. On September 30, 1835 the two countries exchanged instruments of the Treaty’s ratification.(10)

The American envoy had carried a message to the US President from His Majesty, Sayyid Said Bin Sultan, in which he wrote:

“I have responded to the wishes of HE, your envoy Roberts, and concluded a Treaty of Amity and Commerce between our two beloved countries. It is a treaty by which we will most sincerely abide, myself and my successors. Your Excellency may rest assured that all the American ships that anchor in the ports belonging to us shall receive the same kind treatment we receive at the ports of your contented country where prosperity prevails. I sincerely hope that Your Excellency shall consider me a close and everlasting friend.”(11)
The Treaty stipulated the following:

- Strengthen existing cordial relations between the two countries and ensure free trade by their subjects;
- Enjoy all the trade benefits granted to other countries having good relations with Sayyid Said Bin Sultan;
- Allow American traders to do business in Omani territories against a 5 percent fee on the goods they export;
- Grant the American Consul the right to settle all disputes that may arise between subjects of his country, while the Consul of Oman will have the same right regarding Omani subjects in the USA;
- Allow consuls appointed, by the US President to reside at the ports of Sayyid Said Bin Sultan and settle disputes between American subjects.\(^{(12)}\)

The treaty was regarded as a political gain for Oman as it represented recognition by the USA of Oman’s status and the prestige of Sultan Said Bin Sultan. In the meantime, the USA gained the friendship of an Asian power boasting possession of a navy bigger than that of the USA.\(^{(13)}\)

According to the American press, the Omani navy consisted of 70-80 warships, each equipped with from 4 to 74 canons.\(^{(14)}\) The Omani navy was also described as a supreme force in all the ports of East Africa, the Red Sea, the Ethiopian coast and the Gulf.\(^{(15)}\)

In his personal records, Roberts observed that the Omani navy was more powerful than the sum total of all the navies of the local rulers, from the Cape of Good Hope to Japan.\(^{(16)}\)

However, the conclusion of the treaty raised British concerns and therefore the British Government of India had dispatched Captain Henry Hart to Zanzibar to evaluate the nature of American involvement in East Africa. Hart arrived in Zanzibar in February 1834 and met with Sayyid Said Bin Sultan, to whom he conveyed British concern about increasing American activity and influence in the Sultanate’s possessions. But subsequently, he submitted a report to his government emphasizing that the Americans did not intend to settle down in East Africa and that the 1833 Treaty did not provide for any military assistance to seize Mombasa as the British had initially believed. However, he also confirmed that the volume of American trade with goods from Sayyid Said Bin Sultan’s territories was on the rise.\(^{(17)}\) Thereupon, Sayyid Said Bin Sultan concluded a treaty with Britain in May 1839, similar to the Omani-American Treaty of 1833.
In 1936, the US Government selected Richard Palmer Waters as its first Consul in Zanzibar. It is noteworthy that Henry B. Marshal was appointed as US Consul in Muscat on February 15, 1838. But, he held that position for only nine months as he was shifted to Bombay Consular Affairs thereafter were managed by Robert’s former interpreter, an Omani national named Saïd Khalfan, until the latter died in July 1845.

It should be noted that the US did not wish to appoint a Consul in Muscat following Marshal’s departure of Muscat. This may be explained by the fact that during that period, Zanzibar was then the most vital center for American trade in the Sultanate and its territories. Zanzibar port was receiving American ships bringing in cotton material as well as domestic articles, rifles, gunpowder, watches and shoes. In return, they left carried ivory, cloves, spices and coconut. About thirty American ships had anchored at the port of Zanzibar in 1835. In 1838-39, three US ships anchored at Muscat port unloading goods worth 110 dollars. Dates were an essential constituent of the Omani-American trade, and the focus therefore, had been on Zanzibar more than on Muscat.

Final page of Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Oman and the United States of America in 1833
Source: Hermann Frederick Eilts- Oman-Use 150 years of Friendship- p 10
To further enhance trade relations between the two countries, the Omani ship *Sultana*, which was built in Mumbai in 1833, arrived in New York on April 30, 1840, coming from Zanzibar. It was led by a British captain named William Sulaiman and on board was a high-level Omani delegation led by Ahmad Bin No'man Al-Ka’abi, (22) Personal Secretary to Sayyid Said Bin Sultan, who was thus the first Arab envoy to the USA.

The Omani delegation was warmly welcomed by the Americans, and particularly by the Mayor of Brooklyn and the President of the Marine Club in New York. Interestingly, members of the delegation in their traditional Omani dress aroused the curiosity of New Yorkers who pursued them as they passed by.

Ahmad Bin No'man presented the US President with a set of valuable gifts sent by Sayyid Said Bin Sultan; among these were two thoroughbred Arabian horses and a beautiful sword carved in gold. In return, the President sent a gift to His Majesty consisting of a luxuriously furnished large boat, four revolvers and two automatic rifles.

Ahmad Bin No’man also visited the Institute for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and witnessed a railroad demonstration. *Sultana* was the first ever Arab ship to reach America’s eastern coast. (23) The journey lasted about ten months from the time it left Zanzibar and returned thereto on December 8, 1840.

On January 24, 1846 Charles Ward was appointed as US Consul in Zanzibar and Muscat was adjoined to the Zanzibar Consulate. The new Consul played a rather negative role that contributed to worsening relations between the two countries, and ultimately Omani-American relations were severed in July 1850. (24)

Disagreements between the two countries were attributed to the following reasons: (25):

- Rejection by the US Government of a request by Sayyid Said Bin Sultan to amend the 1833 Treaty giving American merchants the right to enter all the ports [under Sayyid Said] of the Sultan’s territories, which was construed to be limited only to Zanzibar, while the US administration demanded the right of its traders to enter all the ports of the Sultanate;

- The unfair legal status of American subjects committing crimes against Arabs such as murder, or being engaged in disputes with Indian traders (*Banyan*), who were under British protection. An American sailor had on one occasion murdered an Arab citizen and the case resulted in the retrocession of consular jurisdiction especially as assaults by Americans on Indian traders had become recurrent.

However, the two countries managed to overcome their respective differences as the
American President, Millard Fillmore, dispatched a special envoy to Sayyid Said Bin Sultan. He was Commodore Olik, who arrived at Zanzibar on December 1, 1851 and met with American traders before he had his first audience with Sayyid Said Bin Sultan. They made it clear to him that Said Bin Sultan held the American community in respect and treated them well, granting them certain privileges. In the meantime, Consul Charles Ward, who was the cause of deteriorating relations, left Zanzibar and was succeeded by William Macmillan in 1852. These developments indicated that the USA was keen on maintaining its ties and commercial interests with Sayyid Said Bin Sultan.

Omani-American Relations (1856-1932)

Following the death of Sayyid Said Bin Sultan in 1856, Omani-American relations reached an impasse due to conditions resulting from the partition of the Omani Empire and Lord Canning’s decision to sever Zanzibar from Muscat in 1861. The situation was further exacerbated by subsequent domestic conflicts in Oman between the sons of Sayyid Said Bin Sultan. Additionally, trade and economic activity declined while the USA opted for a policy of self-containment as the Civil War erupted between 1861 and 1865.
The United States revived its old interest in Oman and the Arabian Gulf following the end of the Civil War and after Turki Bin Said\(^{(30)}\) came to power in Oman (1871-1888). On July 22, 1881, the USA appointed Luis Maguire, a Briton residing in Muscat, as its Consul in Muscat. He was previously working for Muscat Establishment, an affiliate of W. J. Towell & Co.\(^{(31)}\) Maguire held that position from October 1866 to July 1880 when he was succeeded by his compatriot, A. MacKirdy, also of Towell & Co.\(^{(32)}\) The American practice of appointing non-American Consuls continued until 1909, during the reign of Sultan Faisal Bin Turki\(^{(33)}\) (1888-1913), due to a marked growth of economic activity in the port of Muscat during that period.

However, in March 1915, the US Consulate in Muscat was abruptly closed down and its holdings and archives were shifted to the US Consulate in Baghdad.\(^{(34)}\) Sultan Taimur Bin Faisal\(^{(35)}\) expressed his astonishment as the American decision in a message to the British Consul in Muscat on May 29, 1915.\(^{(36)}\) However, he ultimately respected the decision and the British Consul in Muscat became caretaker of American interests in Muscat.

Relations remained at that level until November 7, 1923 when John Randolph, the American Consul in Baghdad, paid a visit to Muscat.

**Omani-American Relations (1932-1939)**

Omani-American relations entered a new stage with the accession of Sayyid Said Bin Taimur as the Sultan of Oman in February 1932, succeeding his father, Sultan Taimur Bin Faisal, who abdicated in favor of his son. There was mutual interest in strengthening relations. On the Omani side, Sultan Said Bin Taimur believed that his rapprochement with the USA would make him all the more independent from Britain, especially in view of its dominating presence in the Arabian Peninsula. The American side, on the other hand, was seeking a foothold in Oman, now that oil had been discovered in the Arabian Gulf region. An opportunity presented itself for the USA in 1934 to gain a foothold in the region when it dispatched a diplomatic mission to Muscat in March 18, 1934, led by Paul Knabenshue, to mark the centenary of the 1833 "Treaty of Amity and Commerce".\(^{(37)}\) The mission handed Sultan Said Bin Taimur a message from US President, Franklin Roosevelt,\(^{(38)}\) expressing good will and conveying greetings to the Sultan on the said occasion.\(^{(39)}\)

The Americans next sought an oil concession in Oman, and the Sultan wishing to free himself from British influence, used the pretext of the failure by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to discover oil in the Sultanate, and established contact with Standard Oil of California in 1937.\(^{(40)}\)
However, Britain was standing at bay to check the American attempts to penetrate into Oman. Nevertheless, the Americans persisted in their attempts and Standard Oil managed to convince the Sultan to enter into direct contact with the US administration. Sultan Said Bin Taimur, sent a letter to US President Roosevelt in March 1937, expressing his wish to visit Washington in order to strengthen relations between the two friendly countries. The American President welcomed the Sultan to the USA and asserted the importance of further developing his country’s relations with Oman.\(^{41}\) This furnished proof of the role played by oil and trade companies in fostering the political relationships between countries.

However, the question that posed itself in this context was: Where was Britain while such contacts were being made between the Americans and Oman? Of course, Britain was watching and monitoring such contacts and expressed dissatisfaction, especially as the Sultan did not inform the British Government in India (Bombay) of the contacts between himself and the US President, nor of his wish to visit Washington. In 21 July, 1937, Britain drew the Sultan’s attention to the fact that he should inform the British Political Resident in the Gulf of any correspondence or contacts he made with foreign powers.\(^{42}\) Though Britain did not objection to the Sultan’s visit to the USA, the Americans were requested to keep the visit secret. Such a request reflected British concerns over the possible consequences of the success of such a visit by way
of encouraging the other Emirates and Sheikhdoms of the Arabian Gulf to follow suit and seek close ties with the USA thus restricting Britain's influence in the region.

However, Sultan Said Bin Taimur responded to the message of the British Government of India through a message addressed to Mr. Ralph Ponsonby Watts, the British Consul in Muscat, in 5 August, which he asserted his legitimate rights and his determination to make decisions independently. He also proclaimed his freedom of action, practically and legally.\(^{(43)}\)

The US States Department informed the British Ambassador in Washington about the visit which was about to take place and assured him that it was a friendly visit and had no political repercussions. The visit was duly publicized against Britain's wishes as Sultan Said Bin Taimur arrived at the American capital in Washington, DC in March 1938 being the first ever Arab ruler to visit the USA. He was given a red carpet reception with the US President, Franklin Roosevelt, at the head of the well-wishers gathered to welcome the Sultan. Talks between the two sides focused on the discovery of oil in Oman and review of provisions of the 1833 Treaty.\(^{(44)}\)
Though no advanced diplomatic relationships were officially established, the visit was a positive step towards cementing Oman's relations with major powers. It was also seen as a breakthrough for Omani diplomacy, which had succeeded in breaking British colonial hegemony and getting closer to the USA in spite of all the pressures exerted by Britain to belittle the visit.\(^{45}\)

The above visit was followed by the outbreak of World War II erupted (1939-1945) and Omani-American relations took a new turn, characterized by military cooperation between the two countries with Oman offering military facilities to the US forces during the War.
Notes

NB: A= in Arabic


2. George Washington was born in a plantation at Westmoreland in Virginia. At 16, he joined Lord Fairfax, the largest land owner in the state, in a campaign aimed at exploring the latter's western lands. In March 1755, Washington joined a campaign against the French led by General Edward Braddock. Upon the latter's defeat Washington was disbanded but was later (1775) chosen as commander of that army and took part in what came to be known as the Franco-Indian War. Washington struggled for endorsement of the federal system embracing all the states and his struggle ultimately led to convening a constitutional convention in Philadelphia in 1787. After the endorsement of the constitution at that convention, Washington was unanimously elected as the first President of the United States and was sworn in in January 1780. He ruled for two consecutive terms from 1789 to 1797. He died on September 9, 1799. See Abdulaziz Sulaiman Nawar and Mahmoud Mohamed Jamaeddin, *Tārikh Al-Wilayat Al-Mottahida AL-Amrikiya*, Darul Fikr Al-Arabi, Cairo, 1999, p.85; Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. http://ar.wikipedia.org

3. Situated in Welayat (state) Adm, one of the states of Addakhliya Province, Sultanate of Oman, located in the extreme south of Addakhliya, 225 km from Muscat and 860km from Dhofar. See site of the Omani Ministry of Information: www.omanet.om/arabic/region,addakhliyah1.asp?cat=reg

4. Hermann Eilts, *Oman and the USA, 150 Years of Friendship* translated into Arabic by Mohamed Kamal, Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, Muscat, 1985, pp. 9 and 10 (the Arabic version).

5. Roberts was born in 1794, lost his parents while a child and was a well-known merchant in Buenos Aires then moved to London and later to Paris. For more details, see Herman Eilts, *ibid.* p.12


7. Andrew Jackson was born on March 15, 1767. In 1788, he became a lawyer in northwestern North Carolina and at the age of 30, was elected to the Senate. He had been commander of the American forces in the battle of New Orleans in 1815. He also took part in the war which eventually led to purchasing the state of Florida in 1810 and later became its first Governor. In 1829, Jackson won the Presidential elections and on March 4, 1829 became President of the United States. He was re-elected for a second four-year term. Jackson opposed policies of the National Bank of the US as he felt that the bank was being directed by the rich and was not serving the interests of lay citizens. During his presidency he signed the Indian Removal Act which forcibly relocated a number of
native tribes to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). See Abdulaziz Sulaiman Nawar and Mahmloud Mohamed Jamaleddin, op. cit. p.107 and http://marefa.org

8. In 1828, Sayyid Said Bin Sultan headed a military campaign to East Africa and made his first visit to Zanzibar. Admiring the island and recognizing its commercial and strategic importance, he took his historic 1832 decision making Zanzibar a second capital for the African sector of his empire. Zanzibar was at a median position for commercial operations in his kingdom and it possessed natural harbors. The decision was taken in spite of several risks as the two capitals were separated by 250 miles and traffic between Oman and Zanzibar was governed by monsoon wind. See Emad Bin Jassem Al-Bahrani, *The Omani Empire in the Reign of Sayyid Said Bin Sultan (1856-1806)*, *Kan Historical Journal* No. II, 2008, p.73.


12. *Oman in History*, op. cit. p.460


15. *Ibid.* p. 27


18. Richard Stevens, *op. cit.* p.128

19. Ra’fat Ghuneimi Al-Sheikh, *USA and the Sultanate of Oman During World War II (A)*, A study of negotiations between the two sides regarding use by the USA of air facilities in the territories of Muscat and Oman, *Arab Historian*, Federation of Arab Historians, No. 12,1980, p. 237

20. *Oman in History*, op. cit. p.462

22. He is Ahmad Bin No‘man Bin Mohsen Bin Abdulla Al-Ka’abi Al-Bahrani who was born in Basra, southern Iraq in 1784. His father was of Arab origins, descending from Bani Ka’ab who had settled on the Gulf coasts; his mother was of Persian origins. Ahmad joined the service of Sayyid Said in Muscat in the early 1820s. It is related that he travelled to China, Egypt and Europe on several missions, mainly the trade of his master, or as manager of the commercial ships on board of which he travelled. In 1835, he became the private secretary of Sayyid Said Bin Sultan, a position he retained until Sayyid Said Bin Sultan’s death in 1856. In 1869, Ahmad died and was buried in the General Cemetery of Zanzibar. See Wesam Al-Saba’, Ahmad Bin No‘man Al-Ka’abi Al-Bahrani… Sanawat Zanzibar, and Al-Wasat (Bahraini newspaper), No.3713, Tuesday, November 6, 2012

23. Youssef Al-Sharouni, op. cit. p.89

24. Ibid. p. 462

25. Richard Stevens, op. cit. p238

26. Ra’afat Ghuneimi Al-Sheikh, op. cit. p. 238

27. Ibid, same page

28. The death of Sayyid Said on 19 October 1856 occurred at sea when he was on board Victoria on a voyage from Muscat to Zanzibar. He was buried in Zanzibar, see Emad Bin Jasem Al-Bahrani, op. cit. p. 76

29. Lord Canning, Governor General of India had endorsed partition of the Omani Empire. The Canning decree confirmed Sayyid Majid Bin Said as Ruler of Zanzibar and other African possessions in his capacity as successor of his father Sayyid Said. The decree also stipulated that Zanzibar Ruler would pay 4,000 riyals annually to the Ruler of Muscat and that the latter and Omani tribes would refrain from interfering in Zanzibar’s affairs, see Oman in History, op. cit. p. 475

30. Turki Bin Said was born 1832. He was the fifth son of Saif Bin Sultan. Before assuming power, he held several key positions, the most important of which was Governor of Sohar (from 1851 to 1868), and Governor Jawader (1868-1871). In 1871, forces of Turki managed to enter Matrah following a violent battle in which Imam Azzan Bin Qais Al-Bousaidi was killed together with his right arm, Sheikh Said Bin Khalfan Al-Khalili. As Muscat and Matrah surrendered, Turki marched on them escorted by 500 camel riders. With this significant victory, Turki restored the Sultanate system after three years of Imamate rule (1868-1871). The latter stage of Turki’s rule witnessed stability and peace. He died in 1888 and his successor Faisal Bin Turki peacefully assumed power. See site of the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://mofa.gov.om

31. Mohamed Rajai Rayan, op. cit. p. 270

33. Faisal Bin Turki was born in India in 1864. He is the middle son of Sultan Turki Bin Said. He assumed power following the death of his father in 1888. His reign coincided with growing European colonial influence in the Arab world, especially British and French as both Britain and France occupied several parts of the Arab homeland. Oman was one of a few Arab states that survived this colonial invasion, thanks to the balanced policy pursued by Sultan Faisal Bin Turki with regard to Oman's international relations, especially with Britain and France. In 1894, he authorized the establishment of a French Consulate in Muscat and gave the French a concession for the establishment of a coal depot at Jassa in 1898. Faisal also ordered the issuance of a brass coin in 1897 and during his reign the port of Muscat became an important hub for the arms trade. The latter years of his reign saw the rise of the opposition Imamate movement led by Imam Salem Bin Rashid Al-Kharousi and Sheikh Noureddin Al-Salmi. He retained his rule until his demise in October 1913. See Noureddin Abdulla Bin Mohamed Al-Salmi, *Tohfat Al-A’yan fi Seerat Ahl Oman*, Maktabat Al-Imam, Noureddin Alsalmi, Muscat, p.357; Lorimar, *op. cit.* pp.809, 818; site of the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://mofa.gov.om

34. Records of Oman, p. 720

35. Sayyid Taimur Bin Faisal was born at Qasr (palace) Al-Alam in Muscat in 1886 and ruled the Sultanate upon his father's death in October 1913 under very difficult domestic and external conditions. At that time, Oman had witnessed internal conflicts between the Sultan and tribes of the interior. Meanwhile, World War I was looming on the horizon and the Sultan did his best to avoid or overcome as much of those difficulties as he could. He tried to impose a measure of political stability in order to improve the economic situation of the Sultanate. Therefore he concluded the Treaty of Seeb in 1920 between himself and the Imamate movement, thus ending a 7-year internal conflict which had started a few months before he came to power in 1913. In the wake of World War I, Omani trade began to flourish again but was faced with a severe crisis due to the Great Depression, starting in 1929. Sultan Taimur Bin Faisal started an economic reform for which he recruited three Egyptian experts. The reform included the customs system. Moreover, he formed the first ever Cabinet in the history of Oman under his brother Nader Bin Faisal in 1920. In 1929, he appointed his son Said Bin Taimur as Prime Minister. It was during his reign that some modern technologies were introduced, such as telephones, and motorcars. He also ordered paving of the road leading to Matrah and established Sultanate schools which were the first regular schools in Oman. Meanwhile, the oil prospecting agreement was signed between Oman and Darki Company. In 1932, he ceded power to his son Said and resided in India, visiting his homeland but once towards the end of World War II and stayed there from September 1945 to January 1946. He died in 1965 and was buried in Bombay. See Youssef Al-Sharouni, *op. cit.* p.147; site of the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://mofa.gov.om


38. Franklin Roosevelt was born in 1882 in New York, USA, an only son to his parents. He studied at Gorton School in Massachusetts and later at Harvard University where he studied history. Graduating in 1903, he joined the Faculty of Law of Columbia University (1904). After graduation he worked as a lawyer for three years. However, he was not much interested in legal work. In 1910 he became a Senator for the state of New York. He ultimately proved to be a dexterous and bold statesman. Following the breakup of World War I and America’s involvement therein, Roosevelt—now Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy—worked on several military projects and made a tour of European theatres of war meeting several high-ranking commanders. In 1921, the Democratic Party’s Convention nominated James Cooks, Ohio Governor, for President and Roosevelt for Vice-President. However, they were easily defeated by Republican candidates. In 1921, Roosevelt suffered from polio and it was generally thought that his political career had come to an end. However, he defied his own disability and made a comeback in 1924 and four years later became Governor of New York state and pursued new policies. He was re-elected scoring a landslide victory in 1932. In the same year, the Democratic Party nominated him for President, and John Nancy Garner, Governor of Texas, as Vice-President. Both scored an overwhelming victory and Roosevelt became President on March 4, 1933 at the age of 51. In 1936, he was reelected for a second term. In 1940, he was again nominated for President, and won a third term. Roosevelt declared that all people should enjoy freedom of expression and worship and should be free from want and fear. Those came to be known as The Four Freedoms. In 1944, presidential elections were held in the USA and Roosevelt and his Deputy Harry Truman scored an easy victory over their Republican rivals. Two days after being sworn in, Roosevelt left the USA for Yalta to meet with Churchill and Stalin. The three leaders endorsed a final assault on Germany and examined other issues. On March 29, 1945, Roosevelt went to Warm Springs, Georgia for a rest and on April 12 he suffered a brain hematoma while working at his office and died on the same day. See: Franklin Roosevelt: A President Who Saved American Economy from a Wheelchair: Djazair News, http://www.djazairnews.info/panorama/133-panorama/6666662458-2013-09-30-20-11-27.html


40. Ibid. p.261

41. Ibid. same page

42. Baily, Vol. VI, Foreign Relations, p.514

43. Ibid. p. 518-519

44. Idris Herdan Mahmoud, Britain’s Attitude toward American Political and Military Presence in Oman, Historical and Cultural Studies Journal (A), Vol. 4, No. 12, 2012, p. 315

45. Ibid, same page
Approaching Archival Photographic Collections with Advanced Image Retrieval Technology

Lei Wang

Editor’s Foreword

The technology for recording, preserving and accessing information in all of its complex modern formats is changing rapidly. Archives around the world are actively engaged in research on how best to assess recorded information for its long term value and then how to gather, preserve and enable researchers to retrieve records they need. This research is done through collaboration with the network of experts in the International Council of Archives (ICA) and results are presented at the ICA’s annual meetings.

At the ICA 2012 annual meeting held in Brisbane, Australia, archivists shared their experiences in dealing with the challenges of documenting an increasingly visual society. Images, whether still or moving, whether digital or analogue, are an essential part of the modern record. They document modern society in all its diversity and increasingly are prime source materials for studies in many disciplines. They must be selected and kept for both current and future generations.

The paper presented by Lei Wang of the University of Wollongong reported on a pilot project carried out by the Australian National Archives. This considered an archival application of a computer based image retrieval system, using basic image features to compare and retrieve photographic images rather than text descriptions. Archivists are closely following the major commercial applications of the software for managing image collections. Facebook has to deal with the upload of 300 million images each day. Facial recognition software is becoming more common for security purposes and offers possibilities for accessing portraits and groups. In dealing with photographs of places and buildings, interest has demonstrated the potential for linking the images to maps, layered by date, avoiding lengthy description. Many archives, coping with immense backlogs of images, now limit description to the series level, treating all the photographs taken at an event as one, and recording the date, photographer, place and individuals, using one descriptive entry for all. Broadcasters, commercial advertising agencies and image banks now have sophisticated software to manage images in detail, ensuring that copyrights and previous uses are also documented for each image.
Approaching Archival Photographic Collections with Advanced Image Retrieval Technology

Archives are cooperating to adapt to the changing nature of the modern record and to the demands of young, visually literate researchers. This article is a contribution to the continuing international effort.

The volume of archival photographic collections is increasing at an unprecedented pace, posing significant challenges to traditional text-based image retrieval. Instead of using textual information, content-based image retrieval directly analyses and characterises visual content to perform image retrieval, which lends itself to handling large collections. This article provides a basic introduction on content-based image retrieval by discussing its advantages and limitations with respect to text-based image retrieval. After that, a prototype system built on the collection of National Archives of Australia is presented. It demonstrates the process of content-based image retrieval and illustrates its effectiveness with query examples. Finally, a short summary on content-based image retrieval and the open issues to be addressed are given at the end of this article.

Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed the fast development of digital imaging equipment and computing technology. It has become astonishingly easy, convenient and efficient to record and preserve information using digital images. The advent of mobile platforms and their ubiquitous use have made this situation more pronounced in the last several years. The rapid development of the Internet enables the wide dissemination, collection and sharing of images. As well, public expectations for convenient mobile access to visual content has risen substantially. Together, these factors have largely contributed to the increasing volume of image collections in galleries, libraries, museums, and archives.

Archival photographic collections are expanding at an unprecedented pace with more images collected and richer topics covered. Nevertheless, the increase in collection size does not necessarily mean that more visual information can be readily accessed by archival researchers and public users. Instead, due to the wide use of text-based image management systems, efficiently accessing, browsing and retrieving images in large collections becomes more and more difficult. Text-based systems require that each image be associated with textual information, and searches for images are performed completely based on the textual information. However, manually annotating images is a labour-intensive and time-consuming process. As a result, the increasing size of collections has posed significant, often overwhelming, challenges to text-based image management approach.

Foreseen and raised several decades ago, the above issue has aroused considerable research in multiple disciplines, including information science, artificial intelligence, and computer science. As one of the most promising solutions, content-based image retrieval (CBIR) [1, 2, 3] employs computers to extract information directly from the visual content of images. Bypassing textual annotation and automating the
whole retrieval process, CBIR is regarded as a promising approach to dealing with extensive collections. After two decades’ intensive research, CBIR technology has made significant progress and is being applied to various practical applications [4].

This article introduces the basic concepts of CBIR technology and discusses its advantages and limitations with respect to text-based image retrieval. As an illustration of this technology, a prototype CBIR system developed on the collection of National Archives of Australia is presented, demonstrating how CBIR works and what we can obtain via such a system. The conclusions presented at the end of this article highlight the future work and open issues to be addressed.

Content-based Image Retrieval

‘Retrieval’ means the process to locate information stored in a database. For example, through search engines like Google, we can retrieve documents and webpages from the Internet by entering keywords or free text. For image retrieval, the information to be located is a single image or a set of images. Retrieving images from an archival collection has been a routine request from journalists, historians, and public users.

In a traditional text-based image management system, each image in a collection has been attached with textual information such as keywords, tags, annotations, synopsis, web links, or the surrounding text in a webpage. Also, the query is usually expressed in words, sentences, or a short paragraph depicting the content of images to be retrieved. The textual query is then matched, via archivists and/or computer programs, with the textual information attached with each image. Images that are the best matches are found and presented to the user.

The above text-based image retrieval has several merits. Firstly, users can naturally and conveniently express their requirements for an image, with keywords or free text. Secondly, an archivist can incorporate her expertise to refine the query to make it clearer, more precise and complete. Thirdly, the maturity of database management technology provides a solid foundation for text-based searching and matching of images.

On the other hand, the drawbacks of text-based image retrieval have gradually become pronounced, especially during the last one or two decades.

With the increasing size of image collections, it becomes more and more expensive and laborious, if not intractable, to manually annotate each image;

Textual description, usually in the form of a small number of words or a short paragraph, is limited in expressive power. In contrast, image content becomes more diverse with expanding collections. As a result, the textual description becomes less and less efficient in accurately and comprehensively characterising images;

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1 An adage says “A picture is worth a thousand words”.
Due to the so-called “subjectivity of human perception”, people annotate the same image in different ways. Consequently, a query submitted by a user may not necessarily be consistent with the description attached to the relevant images, which could make text-based retrieval fail. An example of this case is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: These images can be annotated in various ways. For example, they could be described concisely as “post office”, “ore” and “fashion” or with more details as “Lady reading newspaper”, “trucks and drivers in mining industry” and “A village in Southeast Asia”. Image courtesy of National Archives of Australia.

Content-based image retrieval is developed as a solution to improve the above situation. It appeared in 1970s and has been intensively researched during the last two decades. The basic idea of CBIR is to directly use image content to evaluate the similarity of images. It addresses the above drawbacks of text-based image retrieval in the following ways:

• Human annotators are replaced by computer. The computer is pre-programmed to automatically analyse images and thus able to handle large-sized image collections more efficiently. This avoids the tedious and lengthy manual annotation process;

• By analysing an image, numerical description of its visual content is generated. It plays the role of traditional textual description for each image. The numerical description can be designed to describe all kinds of information, e.g., colour, texture, shape, and layout, about this image. Hence, it can be more expressive than a short textual description and therefore more effective in characterising diverse image content;

• Instead of using textual description, image similarity is evaluated based on the numerical descriptions. This evaluation is free of the issue of “subjectivity of human perception” potentially introduced by manual image annotation.

CBIR systems allow users to directly submit an image, graphics, or even line sketches as an example of their query [5]. Also, users can directly specify the properties of colours,
textures, and/or shapes in the images to be retrieved [6]. The new query approach is attractive and convenient, especially when image content is hard to depict in words. There has been a large body of literature on CBIR, including all kinds of approaches, methods and algorithms studying various issues related to CBIR [4]. Also, during the past two decades, many content-based image retrieval systems have been developed. They include the pioneering academic systems, such as QBIC (IBM) [6], Photobook (MIT) [7], VisualSEEK (Columbia) [8], and SIMPLIcity (Stanford) [9], and the commercial ones such as Google images, Microsoft Bing, and Baidu Shitu developed by IT giants. In particular, with the recent advance of image recognition techniques, CBIR technology is being applied, at an accelerating pace, to a variety of fields including e-commerce, education, entertainment, medical diagnosis, security, and military to name but a few.

Although CBIR technology has achieved great success, it has its own limitations when compared with text-based image retrieval, which are summarised as follows.

- The most critical issue with CBIR may be the “semantic gap” between high-level concepts used by human and the low-level numerical description used by computer. Take the first image in Figure 1 as an example. Human users will interpret it with high-level concepts like “bench”, “person”, and “indoor”. In contrast, a computer will characterise it with the distribution of grey values, the presence of textures in various regions, or the edges and shapes of objects. Unfortunately, two images close in terms of these numerical descriptions do not necessarily contain the same or similar objects, and this could lead to completely irrelevant retrieval result. Semantic gap has long been a standing issue in the field of computer vision [2];

- CBIR generates image description exclusively from the visual content of an image. Nevertheless, for many images, their significance is not only decided by visual content but also by other “non-visual” factors [3], such as the time when a photo was taken, the photographer of the photo, or the person with whom this photo has connection. However, these factors cannot be readily considered by the CBIR approach;

- CBIR is also affected by the subjectivity of human perception, albeit in a manner different from text-based image retrieval. CBIR uses computer to compare images and cannot effectively take into account user preference. For example, some users may focus on the foreground of a query image, while the others may pay more attention on its background. Extra interactions between users and the system are usually needed in order to mitigate this problem;

- In addition, querying by submitting an example image could become awkward when users do not have any image beforehand.
To remove the above drawbacks, extensive research has been undertaken to bridge and reduce the semantic gap in the literature, including the bag-of-features model to be introduced in the next section. Also, to model the preference of users, a mechanism called relevance feedback has been adapted from the field of information retrieval to CBIR, making human users an important component in the loop of image retrieval [10]. A more fundamental and systematic remedy comes from the recognition that CBIR is a complement to text-based image retrieval and that they should be integrated to build better image retrieval systems [11, 12].

A Prototype CBIR System

This section introduces a prototype content-based image retrieval system developed on the archival photographic collection of National Archives of Australia. This system is purely based on the numerical description of visual content and the textual information associated with images is not utilised. This system demonstrates the basic process of content-based image retrieval, and it is being improved and integrated into the text-based image retrieval system called PhotoSearch [13] of National Archives of Australia. The structure of the CBIR system is illustrated in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: The illustration of the CBIR system.](image)

This system consists of three components, namely, user, search algorithm and image database. The user could be anyone who is going to search for images from this database. Search algorithms are implemented as a set of computer programs to match a query image with the images in a database. Image database generally contains two types of databases. One stores images while the other saves the numerical descriptions of these images. The image database used in this system contains more than 28,000 photos collected by National Archives of Australia. They cover a wide range of topics about Australia's history, life, and development and span a long period of time.

To create the numerical description database, the state-of-the-art bag-of-features (BoF)
model is used. This model originates from the field of text analysis [14]. It was applied to image retrieval about ten years ago and has been significantly developed since then [15, 16]. The basic idea of the BoF model is illustrated in Figure 3. Loosely speaking, this model views an image as a “document” and each small-sized patch of the image as a “word”. A set of elementary types of image patches are found by analysing the image patches from all the images. These elementary types are called “visual words” and they together form a “visual dictionary”, which mimics the dictionary used in text analysis. A document can be described by the number of occurrences of various words. Applying this idea to image, the BoF model describes the visual content of an image by a histogram indicating the number of occurrences of various visual words. The histogram for each image in the database is extracted by computer programs and stored in the numerical description database.

To use this system, a user firstly browses the images randomly selected by the system from the database. Once the user finds any image that she is interested in, she can click the image to submit it as an example to query the system. The search engine then evaluates the similarity between this query and all the images in the database based on the associated histograms. After that, the images whose histograms are most similar to that of the query are found, sorted in descending order, and displayed on screen as retrieval result.

Figure 3: In the BoF model, an image is viewed as a “document” and each small-sized patch of the image is viewed as a “word” in the document.
The interface of this prototype system can be seen in Figure 4. It is partitioned into left and right panels. The left one is used to display the images randomly selected from the database. A user can click the “Get more pictures” button at the left bottom corner to access another screen of randomly selected images. When the user clicks an image to submit it as a query, this image will be highlighted by a red square. The retrieval result will be displayed in the right panel. By clicking the “next” button at the bottom right corner, another screen of retrieved images will be displayed.

The following examples illustrate the results obtained by this system. Figure 4 shows the response when an image related to “Wine Testing” is submitted as a query. As seen in the right panel, a number of identical copies are found from the image database. This retrieval result suggests that duplicated copies in a large collection can be easily located without using any textual information. A similar result can also be obtained for near-duplicated copies where colours, textures or other visual cues have been mildly modified. This function can help image management by grouping identical or similar copies and can also be used to prevent collecting duplicate copies. In addition, when manual image annotation is needed, these identical or similar images can be put together and annotated in one shot, which will significantly improve the efficiency of manual image annotation.

Figure 4: Example of retrieval result when querying with an image related to “Wine Testing”

Figure 5 shows the retrieval result for a query related to “The Governor General Lord Casey”. The example of query is highlighted in the left panel, showing the scene of investiture. Imagine that an archival researcher acquires this image somewhere and is keen to know more about it, for example, who participated in this event and when and where it was held. This situation can be well addressed by this CBIR system, as demonstrated by the

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Note that the CBIR system does not need to know that this image is about “Wine Testing”. This information is mentioned here only to explain the query.
retrieval result in the right panel. A number of (identical or similar) images related to the same event have been retrieved. All the textual information associated with these images can be accessed by the archival researcher. Another retrieval result is shown in Figure 6. The example of query talks about “The International Federation of Business and Professional Women held their 24th board meeting at the Canberra Rex Hotel in Canberra. Delegates enjoy a fashion parade”. Again, more information on this event can be obtained via the retrieval. The above only shows a tiny portion of the interesting examples offered by this CBIR system. Nevertheless, through these examples, we have been able to feel the power of CBIR technology and its advantages over text-based image retrieval.

Figure 5: Example of retrieval result when querying with an image related to “The Governor General Lord Casey”.

Figure 6: Example of retrieval result when querying with an image related to “The International Federation of Business and Professional Women”.
Conclusion

The idea of content-based image retrieval has been around for more than three decades. A great deal of research has been done in multiple disciplines. With the advance of research and steadily improved retrieval performance, it has been demonstrated that content-based approach is efficient in utilizing computing power and artificial intelligence to automate the analysis of visual information. It can not only harness the increasing volume of visual data, but can also address a number of critical issues experienced by traditional text-based approach. The basic system presented in this article provides some ideas on what the CBIR technology can do for managing and accessing archival photographic collections. There are many improvements and enhancements to be done. For example, the current system conducts image retrieval based on the visual content of whole images. It is planned to extend the system to work on an object-based mode, e.g., retrieving images that contain a specific building, person, sign or an object. This is often desired when searching archival photographic collections. Also, through the research in the last two decades, it has been recognized that the CBIR approach will not be able to (if it could) fully replace text-based image retrieval in a long period of time. A better solution is to integrate the two complementary approaches. To achieve this goal, a number of open issues need to be addressed, especially:–

- How to model the sophisticated relationship between images and words;
- How to combine visual and textual information to perform image retrieval.

The first issue plays a pivotal role in automatic image annotation, which uses computer to predict relevant keywords for an image based on its visual content [17]. When there are a large number of unannotated images, automatic image annotation will be the most important technique to bridge content-based image retrieval and text-based image retrieval. Significant research efforts have been made to improve automatic image annotation, although its performance is still far from being satisfactory, especially when compared with manual annotation. The second issue needs to be resolved in order to combine textual and visual information for retrieval. In particular, this combination needs to be responsive to users and queries. Having this functionality allows the knowledge and preference of users, for example, through the interactions with the retrieval system, to be taken into account. Solving the above issues still has a long way to go. However, we are optimistic to see wider applications of content and text integrated image retrieval systems to archival photographic collections in the near future.

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