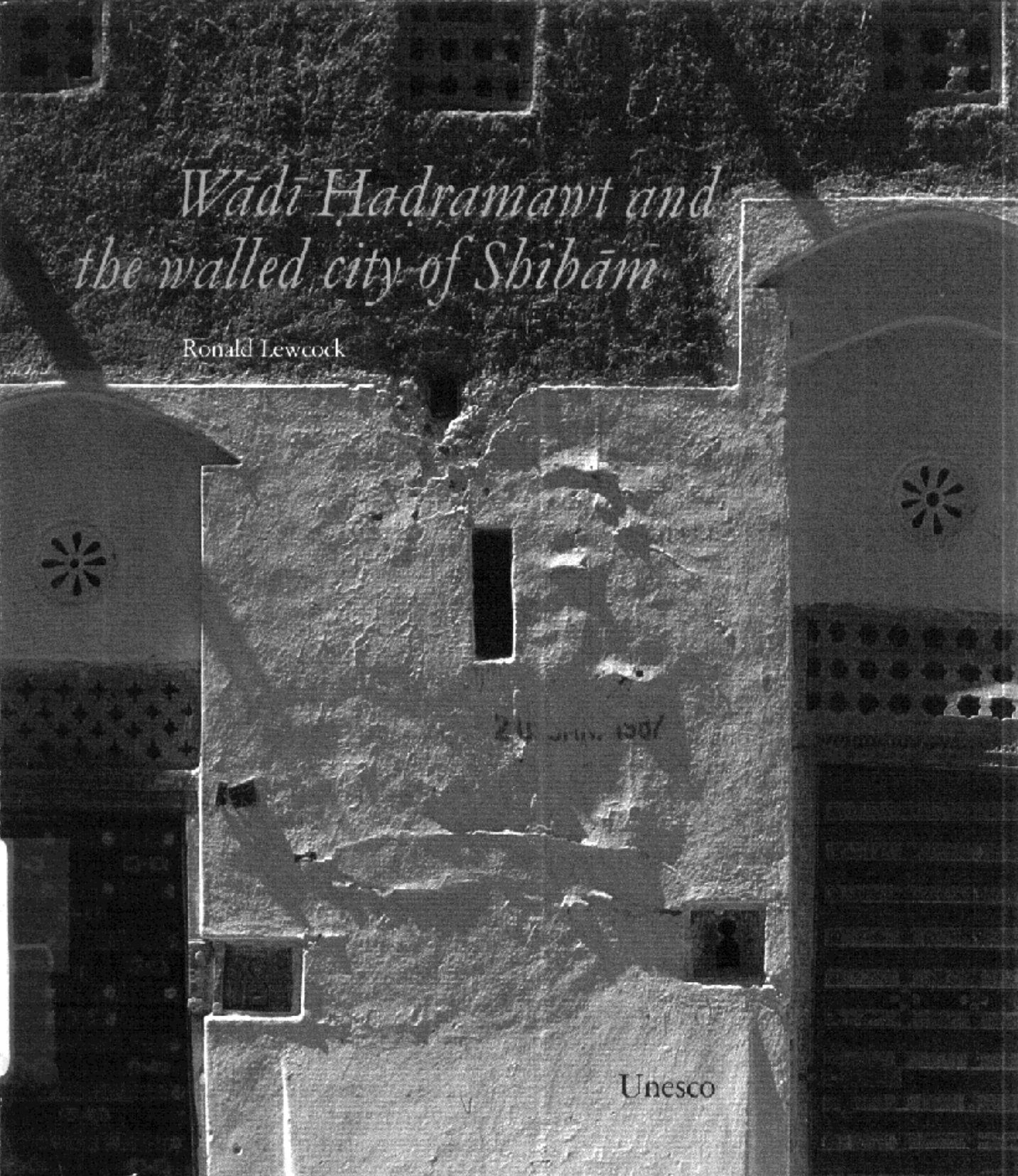


Wādī Ḥaḍramawt and the walled city of Shibām

Ronald Lewcock

Unesco

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Preface

Shibām, with its 500 multi-storey houses nestled against each other in the middle of the valley of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, is a city in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen whose originality and beauty have won over everyone who has had the good fortune to visit it. Travellers at the end of the last century already marvelled at the quality and refinement of the earthen architecture for which Shibām has sometimes been nicknamed 'the Manhattan of the desert'.

Destroyed several times throughout the centuries by devastating floods and rebuilt each time on the same lines, Shibām was for a long time prosperous and influential on account of its location on the spice and incense route. After a period of decline, Shibām is now thriving again, as a result of the government's efforts to modernize agriculture in order to make up for the revenue lost with the almost total disappearance of the spice and incense trade.

The economic boom is being accompanied by an increased interest in the preservation and development of the cultural heritage of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt. The city of Shibām and sites of cultural and natural value in the valley of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt have been inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the Government of Democratic Yemen, with the help of Unesco, has prepared an international campaign to safeguard them.

Launched in Shibām on 22 December 1984 by the Director-General of Unesco, this campaign is aimed not only at preserving the aesthetic appearance of the monuments but also at stimulating goodwill, both nationally and internationally, for the complex task of rehabilitation.

Professor R. B. Lewcock, one of Unesco's foremost authorities

on the southern Arab peninsula, has prepared this publication to inform readers of the richness and significance of Shibām and Wādī Ḥaḍramawt. It is hoped that it will satisfy the expectations of those wishing to join international efforts to safeguard a cultural heritage that is now the responsibility of men and women throughout the world.

A special account has been opened at Unesco Headquarters for financial contributions to the campaign. Readers who wish to offer their support should contact the Division of Cultural Heritage, Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.

Appeal by Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco

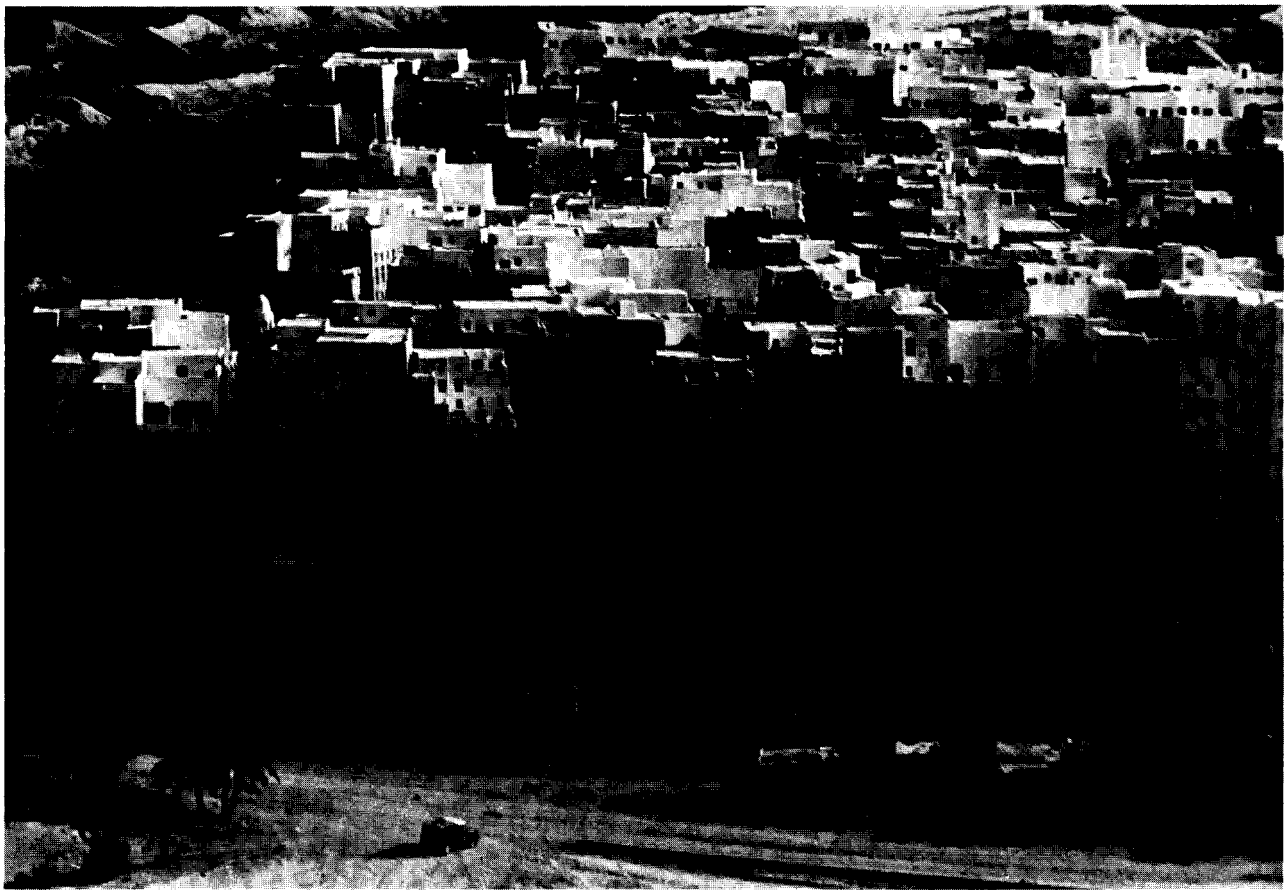
For the safeguarding of the city of Shibām and the valley of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt

The history of the South Arabian plateau is closely bound up with that of the city of Shibām, the former Ḥaḍramī capital. Situated at the meeting-point of all the wādīs and important as a caravan halt on the spice and incense route, Shibām enjoyed through the ages a prestige which reached as far as the east coast of Africa.

Built around the fourth century A.D. Shibām is one of the supreme examples of Yemeni art and architecture. The traveller who comes unexpectedly upon it, after crossing a vast and level desert, sees a dazzling sight: rising from groves of date palms in the bottom of a luxuriant valley, the city seems to soar gracefully towards the sky. It is made up of towers, seven or eight storeys high and clustered together, most of which are several centuries old. These towers, built of sun-dried brick, were designed to allow the great patriarchal families to forgather beneath the same roof, whilst also allowing the time-honoured intimacy of domestic life to be respected.

At first sight, surrounded still by its ramparts, its fortified towers and defence works, Shibām seems to have preserved its life unchanged since it was founded. But in the last few decades new types of modern dwelling have made their appearance, and the city has achieved a delicate balance between its size and its population, between its past and its present, a balance which preserves its basic identity.

The city lies in the valley of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, where an essential part of the relics of Yemen's magnificent history lies buried, from pre-Islamic ruins and temples to the palace frescos of Chabawa.



1.
Shibām. The west end of the old city seen from the mountain across the wādī. The house measured to ascertain its height is that on the extreme right. The city wall bordering the wādī is visible at the bottom.

The whole of this valley and its admirable capital are, however, now threatened by the combined effects of torrential rains and devastating floods, the most recent of which carried away part of the Muza' dam, upstream from the city. Most of the buildings are now saturated with damp and considerably damaged.

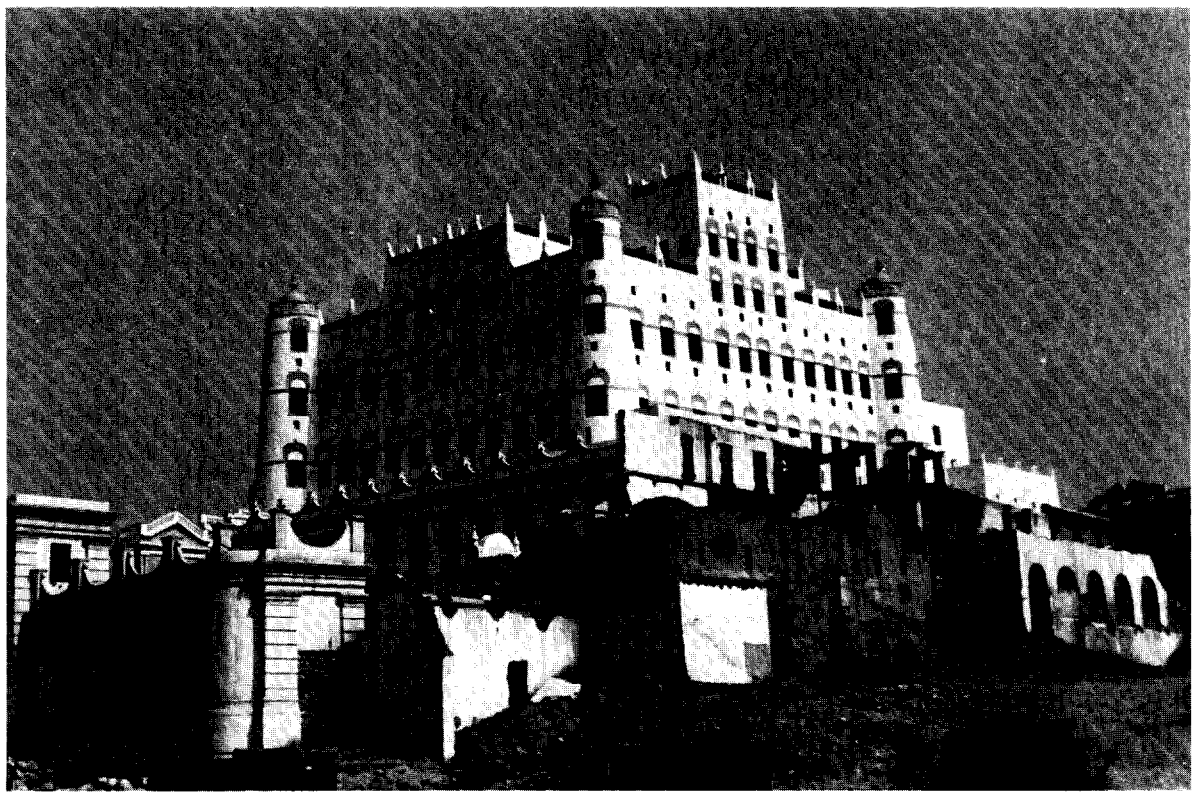
In response to this situation, the Government of Democratic Yemen has promulgated a law aimed at preserving its cultural, architectural and archaeological heritage, and has established a High Committee for the Campaign to Safeguard the Historic Monuments of Shibām and Wādī Ḥaḍramawt. Emergency work

has already been undertaken in Shibām with the active participation of the inhabitants.

At its twenty-first session, held in 1980, the General Conference of Unesco adopted a resolution authorizing me, in collaboration with the Government of Democratic Yemen, to work out a plan of action for the preservation and restoration of the city of Shibām, which has been on the World Heritage List since 1982, and also the valley of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt. In pursuance of that resolution, several technical study missions were sent by Unesco to the places in question in 1982 and 1983.

The plan of action that has been drawn up takes the form of an integrated regional socio-economic development programme aiming, among other things, to help revive various sectors of economic and cultural life and at the same time to restore the main buildings of the city of Shibām and Wādī Ḥaḍramawt.

2.
Sai'ūn. The former Sulṭān's palace.



The Government of Democratic Yemen is making a substantial effort in this connection, but the resources at its disposal are limited. It has therefore asked Unesco to support it by appealing for international solidarity.

Accordingly, I call upon the governments of all Member States, intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations, public and private institutions, funding bodies and the peoples of the various nations to participate by making voluntary contributions of all kinds for the protection, preservation and restoration of the monuments and sites of historic, cultural and natural value in Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, and the architectural heritage of the city of Shibām in particular.

I invite National Commissions for Unesco and all willing helpers to set up, within each Member State, a national committee for the purpose of alerting public opinion to the problems of Shibām and Wādī Ḥaḍramawt and mustering the necessary support.

I invite museums, art galleries and libraries to organize exhibitions and other events relating to Shibām and Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, the proceeds to be paid into a special fund established to support the campaign throughout this region.

I invite all intellectuals, artists, writers, historians and sociologists, and all those who work in the field of information—journalists, columnists, professionals of the press, radio, television and the cinema—to help to generate, in all countries, public awareness of the problems of Shibām and Wādī Ḥaḍramawt and encourage public contributions to their preservation.

I invite all Yemenites throughout the world, wherever they may be, to work for the success of the campaign to safeguard, preserve and restore the cultural heritage of Shibām and Wādī Ḥaḍramawt.

I venture to hope that the contributions will be commensurate with the huge task that lies ahead, and that they will make it possible to preserve for all time these unique monuments of Yemeni architecture in their natural environment, for the good of the people who live there and the delight of future visitors.

A. M. M'Bow

Aden, 22 December 1984 Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow

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Foreword

Except to its own people, the remote valley of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt was unknown until comparatively recently. In the late nineteenth century a British couple, the Bents, had penetrated into a small part of the valley, but only in the 1930s did European Arabists and British Government officers finally travel the length of the wādī, reaching first Shibām and later, further east, Sai'ūn and Tarīm. The accounts they subsequently wrote of this verdant land, studded with the ruins of ancient civilization, and interspersed with fantastic 'skyscraper' cities built entirely of mud, fired the imagination of everyone interested in Arabian culture and history.

But it remained to the Government of the independent People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to open the newly stabilized country to systematic study by both local and international scholars, and to organize in 1980 the preparation of the appeal for a Unesco international campaign for the monuments and sites of historic, cultural and natural value in Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, and in particular the architectural heritage of the city of Shibām.

During this campaign the antiquities will be mapped and studied in detail, and the major monuments and sites protected from damage by flash floods and exposure to sun and storms; it is intended to conserve them and provide facilities in the wādī which will make tours and visits more practical and pleasurable. At the same time, and in accordance with one of the principal aims of Unesco, encouragement will be given to the revival of the traditional craft industries and cultural activities of the wādī, so that the campaign may enhance not merely the physical heritage but also the spiritual and social life of the people.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to all the scholars on whose work I have drawn in the preparation of this book. Some of them have been kind enough to read the manuscript and offer their advice and make corrections. I would particularly like to thank Dr Abdallah Muheiras, Dr Abdallah Bāwāzīr and Dr Abdal Kader al-Sabbān of the Yemini Centre for Cultural and Archaeological Research, Dr Jean-François Breton of the French Archaeological Institute in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and Dr Robert Wilson from the United Kingdom.

For their permission to reproduce their drawings and plans, I am grateful again to the French Archaeological Institute, particularly its director, Dr Jean-François Breton, and the architect, Mr C. Darles, and also to Mr Jean Gire who prepared some of the drawings during a Unesco mission in 1979.

Introduction

Almost in the very centre of that [South Arabian] region are the Atramitae [Ḥaḍramīs]—the capital of whose kingdom is Sabota [Shabwah], a place situated on a lofty mountain. At a distance of eight posts [days' travel] from this is the incense-bearing region—inaccessible because of rocks on every side, while it is bordered on the right by the ocean, from which it is shut in by high plateaux. The forests extend eighty miles in length and forty in width.

Pliny (xii, 30)

This ancient vision of a legendary green paradise miraculously blooming in the midst of desert wastes is still the popular Arab image of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt to this day. The Arabic word '*wādī*' actually means 'a dry riverbed'. But although a strictly accurate term for the great valley, it does not convey the effects of the reserves of water underground, nor what the Arabs could do by irrigation with flood waters after rains.

Wādī Ḥaḍramawt is an immense valley which runs for 160 km from open plains in the west, where the cliffs of the rocky plateaux to north and south close in about it, near Shabwah, towards the east until it joins the much less fertile Wādī Masīlah. This latter wādī, dry and inhospitable, ultimately leads south-eastwards to reach the sea on a deserted coast. The main Wādī Ḥaḍramawt is 12 km wide in some places and an average of 700 m above sea level, and is fed by innumerable tributaries, i.e. smaller wādīs of the same kind. Some 70 km beyond the west end of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt one comes to the site of the legendary city of Shabwah, from which the whole wādī was ruled in antiquity, and then one quickly reaches the desert of Saihad—'an empty desert, a wilderness where the winds blow in all directions, a country where crows are king'. Only after travelling west across this desert for three days would one come to irrigated fields and settled lands once more, the beginnings of highland Yemen.

In ancient times Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, with its rich loam soil, must have been a virtual Garden of Eden. Its elaborate system of dams and irrigation channels harnessed the twice-yearly monsoon floods to produce the luxuriant groves of incense trees of which reports reached as far as Rome. Today, with nearly all trees but its palm forests gone, the plants and scents of the crops of the

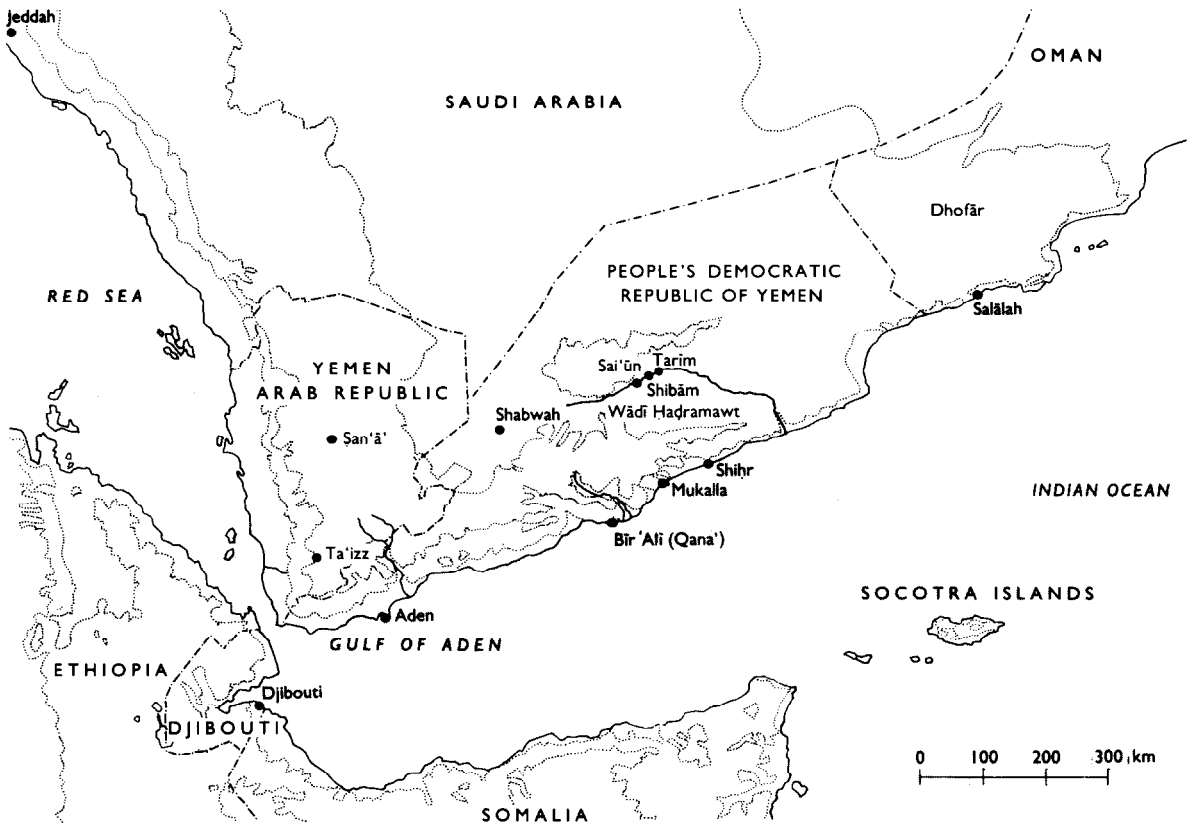
valley still amaze the visitor, their delight heightened by the bare sandstone of the endlessly varied cliffs behind them, and an awareness of the vast desert which begins above, on either side.

If one starts from the medieval port of either Mukalla or Shiḥr, on the somewhat inhospitable shores of the Indian Ocean, and travels some 160 km north across a rugged, arid plateau, one reaches the edge of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt. Here the ground seems to open at one's feet, a great rift in the flat, dry, rocky landscape, 300 m deep and an average of 2 km wide. Below the level of the world lies the hidden valley, much of its floor carpeted with luxuriant green vegetation. The sense of wonder at this secret world will be heightened by the abruptness with which it ends on the other side of the chasm, where the sterile landscape starts again, to fuse 30–50 km farther on in the immense, rolling sand-dunes of the Empty Quarter.

It used to be thought that the incense forests began farther east, in the land of Dhofār, now in Oman, but evidence is accumulating which justifies an interpretation of Pliny's description as Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, and suggests that harvesting of the other forests in Dhofār may have taken place only in later centuries, when the trade in incense spread and the demand for frankincense increased. The extraordinary richness and scale of the ancient ruins in the wādī are thus explained, and the legend of Ḥaḍramawt and its neighbouring lands as 'Arabia Felix' can be truly understood. But a consideration of the wādī's ancient glories should not distract us from appreciating those of its characteristics that still survive.

Here over many centuries has been created one of the breathtaking architectural achievements of mankind, the towering houses and palaces of Ḥaḍramawt. Entirely built of mud, and rich in form and decoration, they rise above the date-palm plantations in town after town of noble block-like massing. Of all these settlements, the supreme example is the ancient city of Shibām, elevated on an outcrop in the valley floor, at a narrow point halfway along the length of the wādī, so that until recently it commanded the passage of caravans in every direction.

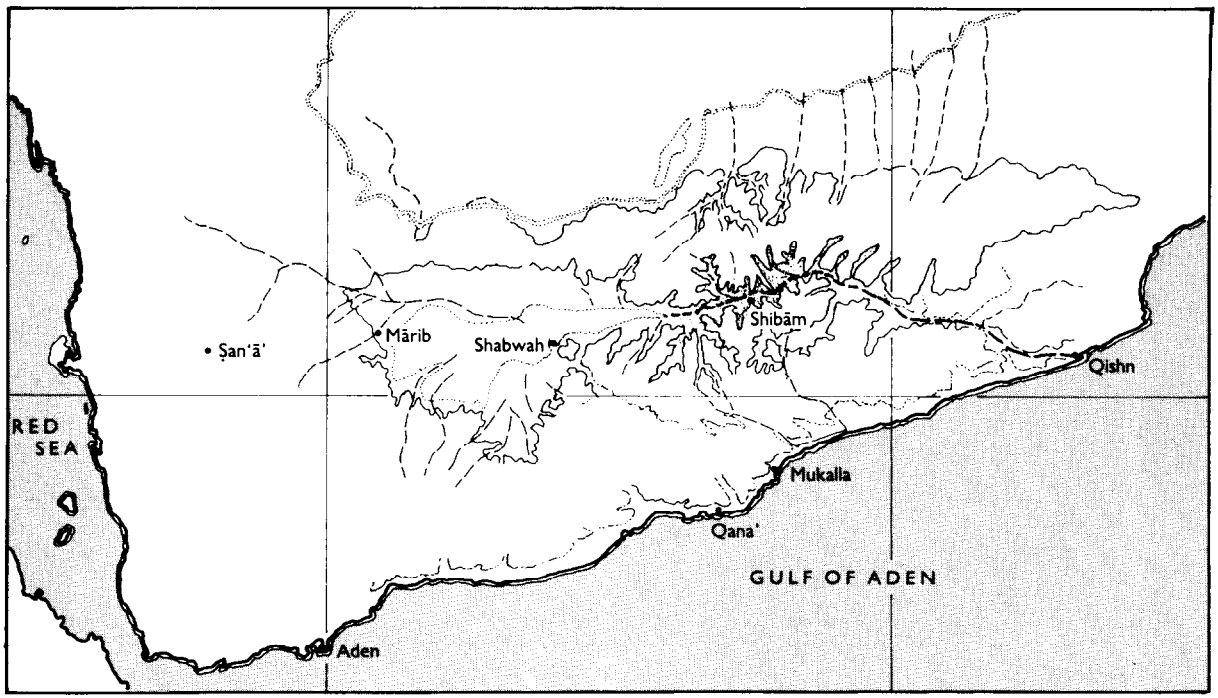
But there are other beautiful old towns, such as Sai'ūn, with its immense palace, gaily striped with whitewash, far outstripping even the highest houses of ordinary men; and noble Tarīm, flanked by long walls and once-splendid gates; and Qaṭn, Hainin, Ḥuraiḍah, and many others. (See maps on pages 17, 18 and 19.)



I.
Map of South Arabia, showing the relationship of Ḥaḍramawt to the Indian Ocean and neighbouring countries.

Throughout the wādī there are scattered sacred tombs and other enclaves which are *ḥawṭah*, that is, protected from tribal feuding. Their immaculate beehive-shaped domes, freshly painted with whitewash every year, punctuate the landscape and mark the sites where once there were periodic fairs, at which the mountain tribes met to barter produce and buy the meagre quantities of luxury goods they could afford.

One of the tombs, magnificently set against a dark cliff almost at the end of the wādī, is the focus of the main pilgrimage of wādī life (now fallen somewhat into abeyance), the tomb of Qabr Nabī Allāh Hūd, the pre-Islamic prophet. Adjoining the tomb and below it is the impressive, deserted town, beautifully constructed and maintained, which serves to house people on the annual pilgrimage during the three days of ritual observances.



11.
The topography of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, shown in relation to the coast of South Arabia.

There are also island forts in the dry riverbed, all now in ruins, mostly dating back several thousand years and doubtless originally intended to protect the ancient incense trade. In addition, they probably served as collection centres for the people and their produce, when the Shenzis (savages) from the mountains came down to raid the ripe crops.

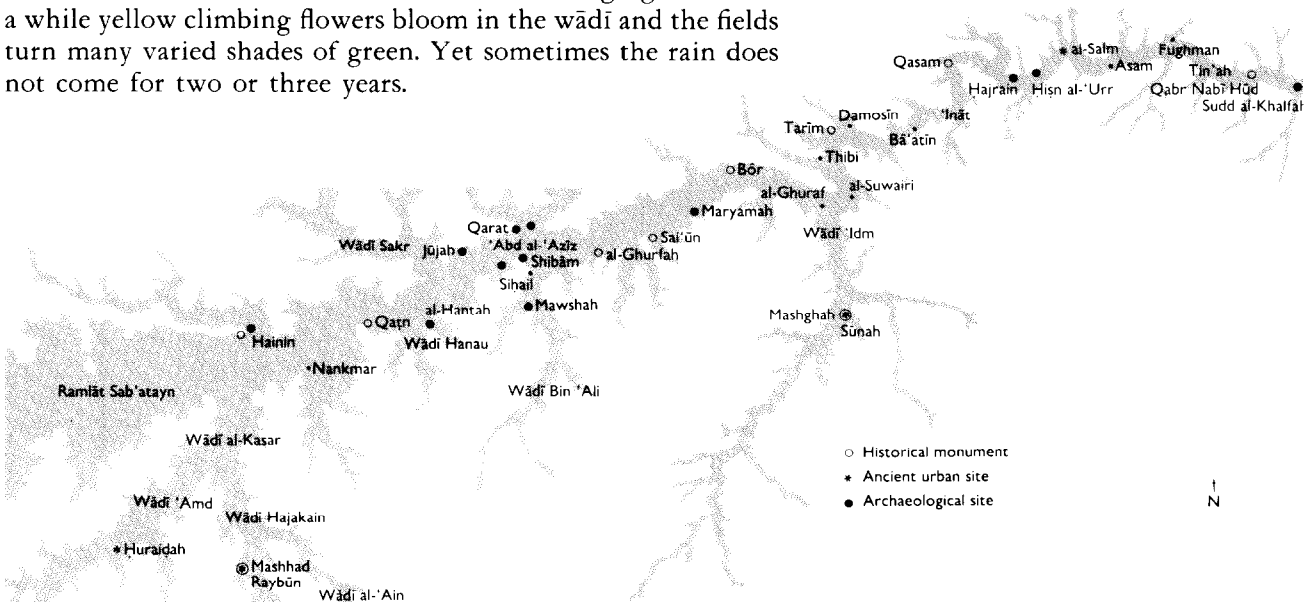
Life in the wādī was often precarious. A mere thirty years ago foreign visitors used to observe Bedouin tribes who were involved in blood feuds fighting each other outside the walls of the cities, and stray shots from the cliffs were frequently heard. The people of the town, Saiyids (princes of Islam), sheikhs, traders, craftsmen, workers and, until quite recently, slaves, formed sheltered communities, surrounded by the cultivated fields of *dhura* (great millet), sorghum, vulgar corn, pumpkins, and *ḥashīsh*. Cattle, sheep and black-and-white goats grazed among the date palms and on the fringes of the irrigated land. Most of the agriculture and pasturage is still carried on by women wearing black shawls on top of which are perched tall, broad-brimmed, straw 'witches' hats'.

The villages and towns, whose total population is approximately 200,000, are connected by roads. At short intervals, on one side or the other, there are small domed water cisterns (*siqāyah*) and shelters for pilgrims on the way to Mecca (*murabba'ah*). Building them is a charitable act. In the old days foot runners, dressed only in loincloths and carrying long staffs, ran along these roads to bring letters from one important house to another.

In the side wādīs there are often high stone banks of terraced cultivation, and wild figs, wild date and fan palms. Many of the small villages lie up on the rocky slopes of the main wādī or its tributaries, thus leaving all available flat land for cultivation, using either water diverted from the floods after the seasonal monsoon rains or subterranean water brought up from wells in leather buckets.

Rainfall over any of the side wādīs brings a *sā'il*, or flood, sweeping down into the main wādī bed, first as a small trickle, but followed a few minutes later by a rushing wall of water half a metre high–then one metre, then five, taking everything before it. Within a few hours it is over. If the dams and diversion banks have worked well and not been broken, all the surrounding fields and date plantations are filled with standing water that is left to soak into the rich loamy soil brought down by earlier floods. However, the main wādī bed soon dries. Occasionally a few pools of water lie unabsorbed for some weeks, to create picturesque reflections from the *ithl*, or tamarisk, trees overhanging them. For a while yellow climbing flowers bloom in the wādī and the fields turn many varied shades of green. Yet sometimes the rain does not come for two or three years.

III.
Map of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, showing major archaeological sites, monuments and major towns.



Land-Rovers and trucks now carry goods and people up from the coast along made-up roads where once camel trains, some 150 strong, took three days for the journey. When the first few hundred motor-cars in the wādī were brought up they came in parts on camel-back—the motor road to the sea being fairly recent. There are now, however, daily flights to the main port of the governorate at Mukulla, and others to distant Aden.

But the character of the wādī itself remains unchanged: tranquil, oblivious to man's progress. A power station has been built, with sufficient capacity to provide the whole system of valleys with all the electricity it needs for years to come. There are agricultural schemes, utilizing more underground water than was ever dreamed of, and dates are now packed for shipment all over the Islamic world.

But the essential grandeur and beauty of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt remain the same. The sun rises behind the long line of rock promontories that project from the cliffs to the south, its rays creeping down the northern escarpment, throwing into relief the mountain bastions which march from the eastern to the western horizon. The dawning light strikes across the tops of the houses and then the palms and fields below. The calls of the *mu'aḍḍin* from numerous minarets sound a pattern of echoes from the cliffs of the wādī, and the first lone figures emerge from their houses to wash and to perform their solitary early prayers in the open air. A gentle, embracing light spreads over the land. The cliffs glow magenta, their pillars and hollows revealed in pale blue shadows. Soon the sun is high, revealing how the width of the wādī varies as tributary valleys fuse and part, always closed in by cliffs, at times peaceful and aloof, at others embracing and even powerfully dominating. There are noble, double-stepped projections of advancing rock: each bastion seems about to separate from the wall behind, to assume a godlike individual personality of its own. Sometimes the succession of mountain bulwarks do, indeed, take on the aspect of a pantheon of ancient gods—never more so than at the end of the day, when the giant forms loom out of the night sky, more sensed than visible, dimly illuminated by the lights of the towns below. Then there steals over the observer an awareness of the awesome timelessness of this land, old before Islam, continually renewing itself, yet ultimately unchanged, immutable.

History of Ḥaḍramawt

Pre-Islamic history

The name Ḥaḍramawt appears as early as the Book of Genesis (x, 26): 'Ḥazarmāveth' contains the same radicals as Ḥaḍramawt. The origin of the name is obscure; some people see it as derived from the name of the national pre-Islamic prophet Hūd, or from his last words, which are said to have been *'Ḥadara al-mawt,'* 'Death has come.'

According to legend, Hūd was one of the descendants of 'Ād, son of Joktān, mentioned in Genesis (Joktān was the son of Shem, one of the sons of Noah); and it was the family of 'Ād who first settled the valley.

When the sons of 'Ād had passed away, it is reputed that the sons of Ḥaḍramawt, descended from another son of Joktān, Ḥazarmāveth, came to power. According to this version of the origin of the name, 'Ḥaḍramawt' was the nickname of 'Amr, who lived in such troublesome times (perhaps created them?) that he was called 'Death is present.' Finally, the tribes of Kindah, who still live in the wādī, triumphed. They claim descent from Joktān by yet another son, Ya'arub.

The Kindah tribes bring us into historic times, for the name appears in some of the earliest inscriptions, and Kindah tribes furnished some of the famous early leaders in the wādī. But the Kindah remained nomads, distinct from the urban populations, until a few centuries before Islam.

The growth of settled life in the wādī is still shrouded in the mists of time. Evidence from the inscriptions of the kingdoms to the west, however, suggests that the towns evolved as entrepôts controlling an increasingly valuable trade route, probably dealing

mainly in aromatic incenses (and possibly in foreign imported goods brought across the Indian Ocean) in the latter part of the second millennium B.C. Just as these rich kingdoms, Ma'īn, Saba', and Qatabān, to name them in descending order from north to south, seem to have developed their elaborate irrigation works, hillside terracing and great dams to support the population needed to engage in the trade, so Wādī Ḥaḍramawt and its tributary wādīs seem to have developed the same kind of irrigation works in order to increase the yield of incenses and balsams. In addition, the wādī itself needed general security, which led to the creation of a succession of towns and fortified posts to protect and house the valuable goods that were passed up the length of the valley *en route* to the great Mediterranean markets in the north.

At a certain distance beyond the west end of the wādī, however, settled life could no longer be sustained. Between the last of the Ḥaḍramī cities, Shabwah, and the Kingdoms of Qatabān and Saba' farther west lay the desert of Saihad, a 'dangerous desert' (al-Bakrī).

So Shabwah became a gathering point for the formation of the huge armed caravans needed to shepherd the valuable goods in safety across the arid wastes in the face of the threatened depredations of the desert nomads. Later, as the demand for incense grew, and Dhofār far to the east became a second major source for the supply of frankincense, the importance of Shabwah increased still further: it was to this city that the Dhofār frankincense was taken prior to its dispatch to the north, after much of it had been shipped down the coast to the Ḥaḍramī port of Qana', now known as Bīr 'Alī. (According to one Roman source, Qana' was also the port to which trade goods from India were carried—muslins, silks, tortoiseshell, pepper, cinnamon, cotton, indigo and precious stones, as well as ivory from Africa and pearls from the Gulf.)

To understand the importance of the trade from Ḥaḍramawt to the rest of the ancient world, it is worth looking at the role played by incense in the daily life of the great civilizations. Because of the vagueness of ancient terminology, it is not easy to be certain whether the incenses referred to always include the frankincense of Ḥaḍramawt or Dhofār. Nevertheless, since frankincense was afterwards judged to have the sweetest perfume of all incenses, it was very probably in demand from an early time.

In Egypt, the Pharaonic dynasties offered incense in tribute to the gods, while in ancient Sumeria and Babylonia it was burned to purify the temples. In ancient Crete, ritual incense-burners were used. Assyrian bas-reliefs at Nineveh show tall incense-burners flanking images of the gods and of the royal family. The Hebrew tabernacle was always veiled by the smoke of incense.

By the time of the ancient Romans, Pliny (xii, 42) could write:

> Let us take into account [also] the vast number of funerals that are celebrated throughout the whole world each year, and the heaps of odours that are piled up in honour of the bodies of the dead.... It is the luxury of man, which is displayed even in the paraphernalia of death, that has rendered Arabia thus 'happy'.

We are fortunate in the survival of a unique historical document from Roman times, a navigational guide to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, written by an anonymous Alexandrian captain: *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.* This book tells us that it was the Ḥaḍramī 'people alone . . . and no other people among the Arabians [who] behold the incense tree'.

Frankincense is still grown in the gullies and secluded wādīs of Ḥaḍramawt—small thorny trees, 'not of great height or thickness', as the author of the *Periplus* tells us, 'they bear the frankincense sticking in drops on the bark'. According to the ancient Greek botanist Theophrastus (372–287 B.C.):

> frankincense, myrrh, cassia and also cinnamon are found in the Arabian peninsula about Saba', Ḥaḍramyta, Kitibaina [Qatabān] and Mamali. The trees of frankincense and myrrh grow partly in the mountains, partly on private estates at the foot of the mountains; wherefore some are under cultivation, others not.

Today no frankincense is deliberately cultivated in the wādī, but enough comes down from the small tributary valleys, where it is gathered from the wild bushes, to supply most of the people's needs. It is still used for fumigating and purifying, and for sweetening drinking water. It is also burnt for its aroma on social occasions, and a departing guest is offered the incense-burner to perfume his clothing before going out into the street.

Pliny tells us more about Ḥaḍramawt in ancient times. The gathering of frankincense was reserved to a small class:

Not over three thousand families have a right to that privilege by hereditary succession. For this reason, these persons are called sacred, and are not allowed, while pruning the trees or gathering the harvest, to receive any pollution, either by intercourse with women or contact with the dead; by these religious observances it is that the price of the commodity is so enhanced.

'All the frankincense ... in the country is brought ... to be stored in Shabwah' (*Periplus*), which shows the city's key position, west of the forests and of the main road up from the port on the coast.

The King of Ḥaḍramawt had taken up residence in Shabwah, and it is therefore often referred to as a 'royal city'. According to Pliny (xii, 32):

The incense, after being collected, is carried on camels' backs to Sabota [Shabwah], of which place a single gate is left open for its admission. The laws have made it a capital offence to deviate from the highroad while carrying it. At this place the priests take, by measure and not by weight, a tenth part in honour of their god, whom they call Sabis; indeed, it is not allowable to dispose of it before this has been done; out of this tenth the public expenses are defrayed, for the divinity generously entertains all those strangers who have made a certain number of days' journey in coming thither.

There are certain portions also of frankincense which are given to the priests and the king's secretaries: and in addition to these, the keepers of it, as well as the soldiers who guard it, the gate-keepers and various other employees, have their share as well. And then besides all along the route, there is at one place water to pay for, at another fodder, lodging of the stations, and various taxes and imposts besides; the consequence of which is that the expense for each camel before it arrives at the shore of our sea [the Mediterranean] is 688 denarii.

The relationship with the other South Arabian kingdoms to the west is suggested by references in inscriptions to a Minean colony in Ḥaḍramawt and to an agreement with the Qatabānians (the Gebanitae): 'The incense can only be exported through the country of the Gebanitae, and for this reason it is that a certain tax is paid to their king as well' (Pliny, xii, 32).

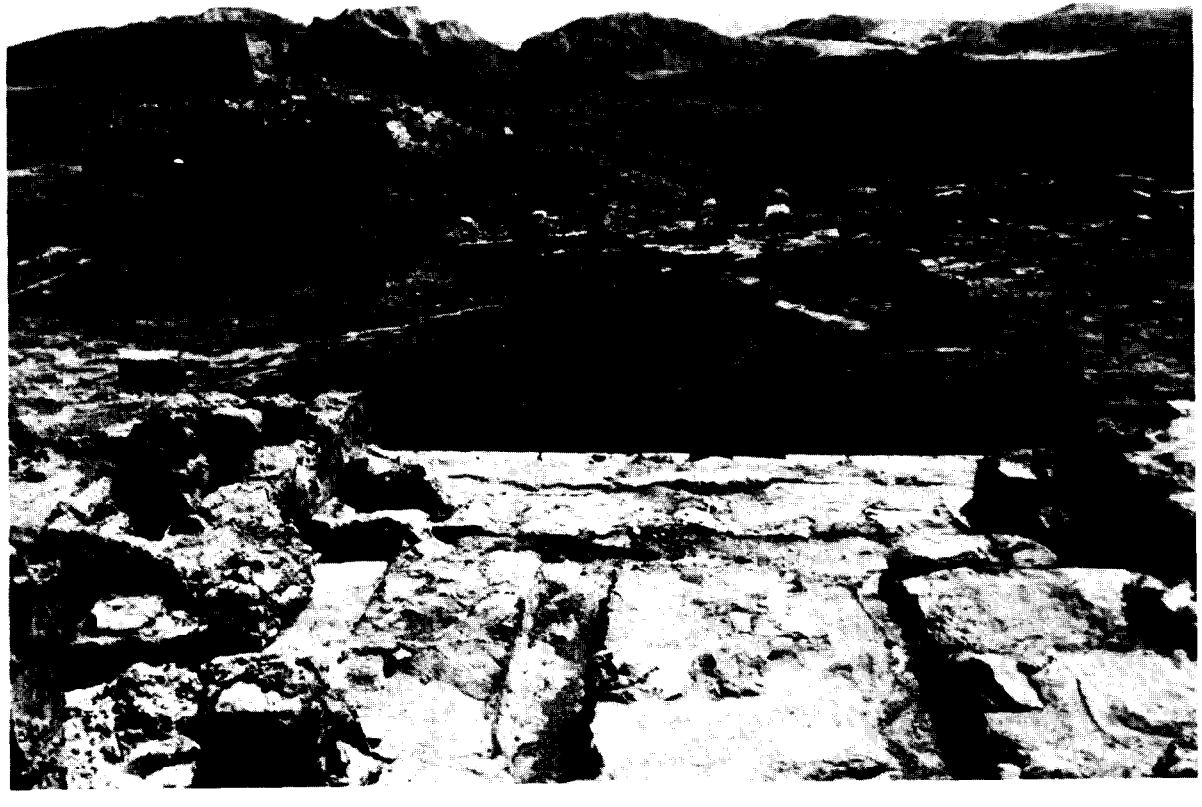
There are numerous references, on the other hand, to wars between the Ḥaḍramīs and the Sabaeans, from the central kingdom, whose capital was Mārib.

The whole machinery of trade was a delicate mechanism, in a constant state of adjustment. Although the richness of the incense

trade was important—particularly because it had presumably led to the original growth of centralized organizations which undertook the gigantic irrigation and dam-building works to provide the water necessary to sustain agriculture in the semi-arid conditions of much of the area—it is clear that a great deal of the prosperity for which the region was renowned came from the fertility of the alluvial soil and the husbandry of the people.

The site of Shabwah has been excavated systematically by French archaeologists since 1975; the remains of a great building (believed to have been the royal palace) high on a stone podium and fronted by a range of rooms round a courtyard have been uncovered, as well as a number of other major structures, the most splendid of which is the citadel. The entire city area is surrounded by a double wall, in which the remains of large town gates can be observed.

3.
Shabwah. The forecourt of the great building which was probably the royal castle.



Other large city sites exist within the area of the main wādī, at the entrances to the larger tributary valleys: in Wādī ʿAmd, the site of the ancient city of Mudāb, opposite Ḥuraiḍah, where the Temple of the Moon was the first Ḥaḍramī site to be excavated in modern times (by Caton-Thompson *c.* 1936); in Wādī Ḥajrain, the ancient city of Raybūn, near Mashhad; in Wādī ʿIdm, the twin ancient city sites of Mashghah and Sūnah; and finally, in Wādī Ḥaḍramawt itself, farther east, the city sites of al-Hajrah and al-Ṣawm. But there are also innumerable smaller sites, both of forts and, high on the surrounding collines (low promontories of the great cliffs), of temples, with grand, straight, stone staircases leading up to them from the valley below.

Occasionally we gain dim glimpses of the religion and ways of life of the people in ancient times. The wādī is full of legends of ancient giants, and there are many revered tombs of them, mostly made by piling up stones, varying in length from 9 to 24 m. Many of these giants were reputed to be miracle workers, like Ṣāliḥ, the father of Hūd, who created camels out of living rock (perhaps the first camels in Arabia?). People are said to go blind if they take away stones or steal anything from these tombs. The tombs are, or were until recently, the sites of annual pilgrimages which seem to have little or nothing to do with Islam, but are survivals from ancient times. The most important of these pilgrimages, to the site of the tomb of Hūd himself, has been arrogated to Islam for more than 1,000 years. But we know that in antiquity a great annual fair took place at the tomb, to which tribes from many distant places came to exchange goods and, presumably, to make some sort of religious observances. The nature of these observances is still unclear. The Ḥaḍramī pantheon is thought to have had a close similarity to those of the other South Arabian kingdoms, and was therefore dominated by the triad of the moon and the moon's consort: the sun, and the star of Venus.

The moon god in Ḥaḍramawt bore the distinctive name of Sīn, probably borrowed from the Babylonian religion. The city of Shabwah was clearly an important religious centre, because of the rituals connected with the gathering and trans-shipment of the incense, and presumably because it was the residence of the king. According to Pliny, Shabwah had more than sixty temples in his time. After its destruction it seems to have continued as a pilgrimage centre: a fifth-century-A.D. graffito there is associated with the monotheistic cult of Raḥmān. But the Kings of Ḥimyar

now claimed jurisdiction over the city and the entire wādī, terming themselves 'Kings of Saba', Dhū Raydān, Ḥaḍramawt and Yamanāt'.

In Shabwah and throughout the wādī there seems to have been, in ancient times, an annual ritual hunt for ibex in the mountains, some relic of which survived until recently. The three-day hunt ended with public celebrations and the sacrifice of a captured animal, after which the meat was eaten. This, and other superstitions associated with the hunt, suggest an ancient religious ritual (also attested by numerous inscriptions), and the connotation has led to its being strongly disapproved of and suppressed wherever possible by strict orthodox Muslims in modern times.

A high level of culture seems to have been enjoyed in Ḥaḍramawt and throughout South Arabia, particularly by the urban people. Some of their luxuries doubtless came down the trade routes in exchange for incense, and Hellenistic art was dominant in the first centuries of the Christian era. In the earlier centuries before Christ a major artistic influence in sculpture seems to have come from the Assyrian Empire in Mesopotamia.

From the western Kingdom of Yemen, more than 5,000 inscriptions in stone have survived, many dating from the first millennium B.C. Inscriptions in stone are rarer in Ḥaḍramawt, and the earliest are later than the western ones. The explanation for this is probably that early Ḥaḍramī inscriptions were executed in wood, brick or plaster. Certainly, the first datable inscription, from the city of Raybūn and thought to be from the ninth century B.C., is of baked earth. The monumental stone inscriptions mostly come from the fifth to fourth centuries B.C. One of the finest hillside temples, Bā-Quṭfah, has inscriptions which have been dated to before the fourth century B.C.

The evidence of archaeological finds suggests that the region continued to prosper for nearly 1,000 years, with a steady increase both in the area under cultivation and in the volume of the incense trade (which seems to have reached its apogee in the third century A.D.), and a corresponding growth of cities and settlements in South Arabia. It is possible that this very expansion sowed the seeds of decline. The larger populations may have overstrained the fuel, food and fodder resources of the area, leading to the interminable wars of which the inscriptions tell us. In this period the most cataclysmic event was the capture and

systematic pillage of Shabwah by the King of the Sabaeans in A.D. 220–30. Over-cultivation may have led to impoverishment of the soil and the eventual abandonment of some of the plantations. Over-grazing may have destroyed the natural cover and probably led to large flash floods, which proved too much for the dams and irrigation works. According to al-Bakrī, the great Mārib dam burst in A.D. 520, and again in A.D. 650, and the main dam at the east end of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt burst shortly before the advent of Islam. The very cultivation system, which allowed fresh silt layers to accumulate on the fields below the dams, thus raising the field levels with each seasonal flood, made the task of building up the stone retaining walls and dams increasingly arduous.

Eventually the entire region was subject to a series of foreign invasions. The first came in the early sixth century A.D., when the Ethiopians captured Mārib and the Ḥaḍramī port of Qanā, according to an inscription there; they seem to have been aiming to take over what was left of the trade in incense and Indian goods. We do not yet know how far they penetrated into Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, or whether they reached Shabwah. The archaeological evidence suggests, however, that the palace of Shabwah continued to be occupied after the third century A.D., and was ultimately destroyed by fire, perhaps caused during an earthquake. At some time, according to the early Islamic historians, the bulk of the inhabitants left and moved farther east, into the more fertile and sheltered lands of the wādī proper, where they settled around Shibām. According to al-Hamdānī, writing in the tenth century A.D., the city was named after them.

There is evidence that before Islam there were some Christians in the wādī—as one might expect, for conversion was apparently one of the aims of the Ethiopian conquest. Until recently, popular belief in the wādī still held that some of the ruined forts on the mountain ridges were built by Christians. Moreover, scholars know of two Christian poets of the Kindah tribe who were born in Dawʿān.

The second invasion was by the Persians, in other words, the Sassanians. It is said that they were invited in by dispossessed members of the Yemeni royal families to help them drive out the Ethiopians, in the last quarter of the sixth century A.D. Again, the exact extent of Persian domination in South Arabia is not known—for the Persians, once invited, naturally came to stay. But the strong Persian style of the door pillars and other carvings

from Ḥiṣn al-ʿUrr at the eastern end of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt suggests that this fortress was either theirs or belonged to one of their satraps.

After the bulk of its people had left, Shabwah does not seem to have been entirely deserted. Situated as it was on a dome of salt, the city became a source for this precious commodity. The salt was mined by a few village families and exported thence all over the wādī and as far afield as Ṣanʿā' and Aden, until modern times.

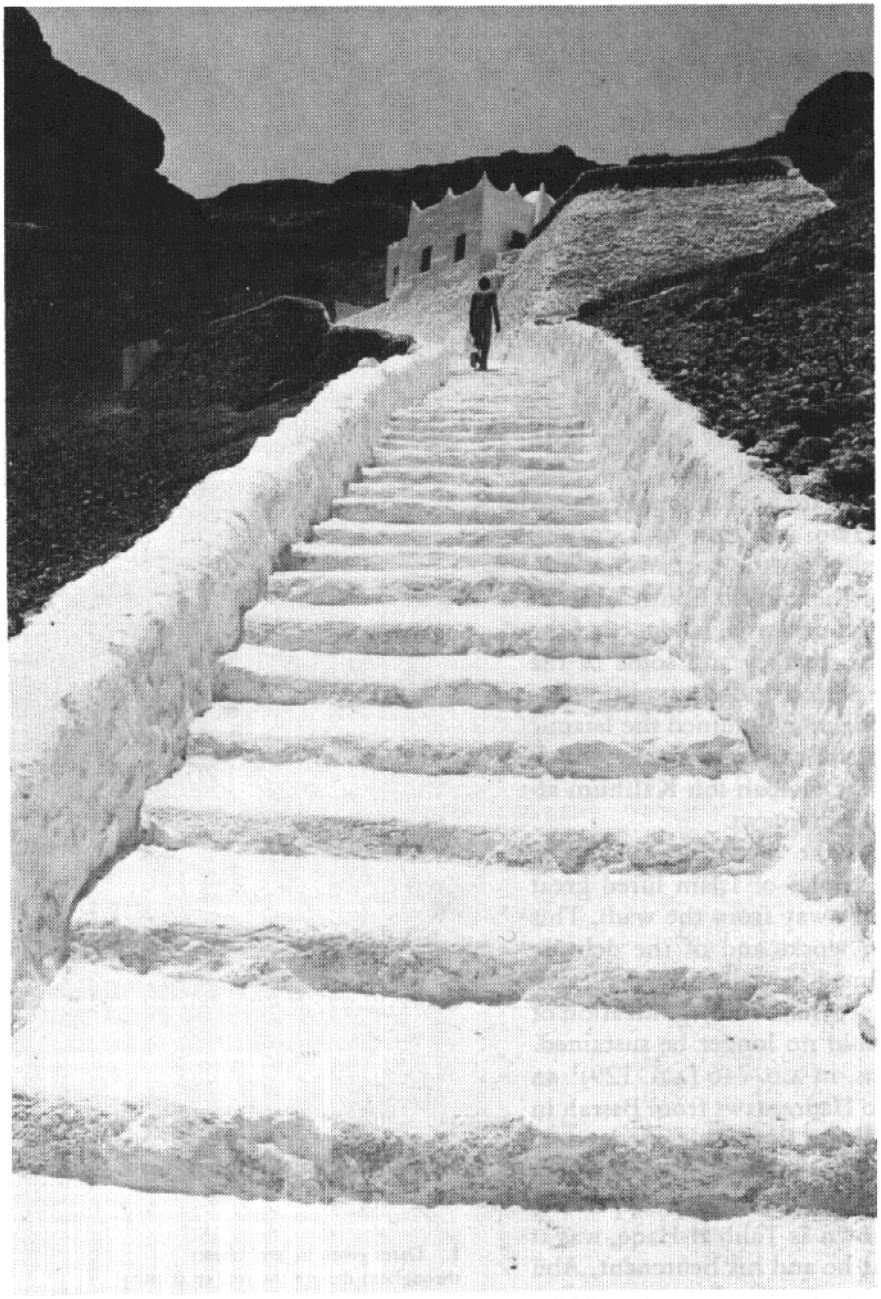
Islamic history

The presence of the Persians in Yemen brings us to the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad in Ḥijāz, and the steady conversion to Islam of the Arab tribes throughout the peninsula. Again, the details of the conversion of Ḥaḍramawt are not known. Professor A. F. L. Beeston of Oxford has drawn attention to a curious account of resistance to the conversion on the part of 'harlots', whom he interprets as priestesses of the ancient South Arabian religion in the wādī. There is also circumstantial evidence of the resistance to Islam of the ancient aristocracy and some of the tribes, extending over a considerable period. Indeed, tradition has it that at one time only the city of Tarīm maintained the Islamic faith. Nevertheless, one of the leaders of the Arab armies which conquered Egypt for the Calīph was Qaisabah ibn Kalthum al-Kindī, who came from Shibām in Ḥaḍramawt.

It is possible, indeed likely, that the incentives offered to Arabians in order to build up the armies of Islam lured great numbers of farmers and townspeople away from the wādī. This led to the neglect of the irrigation works and of the delicate balance by which nature had been tamed, as well as the depletion of the cities and towns to the point at which the organization of urban life as it had been known could no longer be sustained.

According to the local historians, in A.D. 746 (A.H. 129)[1] an Ibāḍī, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā, came to Ḥaḍramawt from Baṣrah in Iraq to spread the beliefs of the Ibāḍī sect. This moderately puritanical sect survives today, mainly in Oman and North Africa, for in South Arabia it was eventually largely suppressed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā, popularly known as Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq, was at first so successful in his mission that he and his lieutenant, Abū Ḥamzah, are said to have ruled the whole of south-western

1. Dates given in parentheses throughout denote the year or century of the Muslim era (A.H.)



4.
Ḥajrain. The tomb of Aḥmad ibn 'Īsā al-Muḥājir, buried in the tenth (fourth) century, the first Saiyid leader in the wādī. The tomb is not far from the mosque of Bōr, reputedly built by Aḥmad's son.

Arabia for a time. They were finally defeated by an army sent by Calīph Marwān. With their leaders killed, the remnants of their adherents were forced back to Ḥaḍramawt, where they regrouped under Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq's governor, who still remained in power. Marching out to do battle, somewhere near Shabwah, the Ibāḍī troops were cut off by a night march of the Calīph's forces. The latter took Shibām in the rear, and all the Ibāḍī supplies, before defeating them in battle. It appears, however, that there was some revival of Ibāḍism in the wādī when the Calīphate army was finally withdrawn.

In 951 (340) a descendant of the Prophet, Saiyid Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā al-Muḥājir, came to Ḥaḍramawt from Yemen. He was accompanied by his son and a party of companions (reputedly eighty families). Saiyid Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā had left Baṣrah twenty-two years previously, after he had been prevented from making the pilgrimage by a rebel faction, either the Qarmathians or the Negro Zinj. (The constant mention of Baṣrah and other places in Mesopotamia as sources for influences in Ḥaḍramawt serves to



5.
Bōr. Mosque of ʿAbd Allāh. The courtyard seen from the entrance, with the ruins of the south range of horseshoe arches on the left.

remind us of the relatively busy trade route that existed around the shores of the Arabian Gulf to the African coast.) It is believed that Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā and his companions, ancestors of all the later Saiyids in the wādī, played a leading part in driving Ibāḍism from Ḥaḍramawt—or at least to the western end of the wādī, where it is said to have survived until recently. At first the Saiyids settled around Ḥajrain, but later they moved to Husaiyisah, where the white-domed tomb of Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā is a centre of pilgrimage to this day. An early mosque founded by Saiyid ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā, the son of Aḥmad, survives in a ruined state at nearby Bōr.

There is considerable evidence that Ibāḍī power remained strong in Ḥaḍramawt—at least in Wādī Dawʿān in the west and Shibām—for a long period after the arrival of the Saiyids. Ibāḍī sources mention a 'governor' of Ḥaḍramawt on behalf of the Imām of Oman who succeeded in becoming independent in the second half of the eleventh (fifth) century. One historian records that Ibāḍism was only banished from the Friday mosque of Shibām in 1193 (590). This survival of Ibāḍism is important, for there are historical references to the fact that learning flourished in the wādī under the Ibāḍīs. Their scholars went to study at Janad in Yemen, and when the Saiyids first came to the capital city of Tarim, 'they found scholars there who consoled them for leaving their native land'.

Unfortunately, the climate of Ḥaḍramawt is inimical to the protection of manuscripts from insect attack and decay, and none, except a few fragments of the Koran, is thought to have survived from this period.

Retracing our steps a little, a well-documented benefactor of Ḥaḍramawt was the great Ziyādid Wazīr of Yemen, Ḥusain ibn Salama, who in the tenth (fourth) century constructed a string of mosques, minarets, shaded resting places for pilgrims, wells and milestones along the caravan route from Ḥaḍramawt to Mecca. (It is said that he built a mosque at the end of every stage, in other words, at the end of each day's journey of the pilgrimage.) The Friday mosque in Ḥuraiḍah is reputed to have once contained an old Kufic inscription identifying it as the work of ibn Salama. He is also known to have repaired the Friday mosque in Shibām, originally constructed in 750 (133) and rebuilt by order of the Calīph Hārūn al-Rashīd in 906 (294).

At some time the Saiyids became adherents of the Shāfiʿī

school of Islam (and were subsequently responsible for spreading Shāfi'ism to countries around the shores of the Indian Ocean). Until the arrival of the Saiyids, the holy and protected places (*ḥawṭah*) of the wādī had been in the hands of the ancient aristocracy, the Mashāyikh, who received the honour accorded to the lords of spiritual power in the region, and who used this privilege to exert some restraint upon the tribes and their sheikhs and sulṭāns. But the Saiyids soon began to found their own *ḥawṭahs*, which eventually led to the decline of most of the older ones.

At the end of the twelfth (sixth) century, since the two leading Saiyid families descended from the Baṣrah immigrants had left no male issue, the Banū 'Alawī gave their name to the Saiyid clan, who were subsequently known as the 'Alawī Saiyids. In the early thirteenth (seventh) century one of these Saiyids, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, known as al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam, turned to Sufism. He enjoined all the Saiyids to abandon arms and devote themselves to religious and moral pursuits. Henceforward the Saiyid class was characterized by strong Sufi influence in its thinking and way of life. Saiyid writers began to devote themselves to poetry, both religious and secular, and to the writing of genealogical histories.

The first record of Yemeni conquest of Ḥaḍramawt in modern times is of tribal occupations dating from 1019 (410). In 1219 (616) the ibn Mahdī, followers of the Ayyūbids who had conquered Yemen in the preceding century, captured Shibām and ruled much of Ḥaḍramawt. They retained a tenuous alliance with the Rasūlids of Yemen, successors of the Ayyūbids. They must have been thought too independent, however, for in 1276 (674) the great Sulṭān Muẓaffar of Ta'izz brought an army through the wādī on its way to conquer Dhofār, and left instructions to his general to take and hold Ḥaḍramawt. The tantalizingly scanty records suggest that, after the successful capture of Dhofār, the Rasūlid armies fought a long and difficult campaign to achieve the conquest of Ḥaḍramawt. It seems that, after the appointment of a governor, the armies departed; although Ḥaḍramawt remained nominally part of the Yemeni Sulṭānate, the strength of subsequent Rasūlid control of the wādī is uncertain. One historian records that the ancient fortress at the east end of the wādī, Ḥiṣn al-'Urr, was defended by Arabs, but was finally ruined and abandoned in 1258 (657)—under circumstances that are not made clear.

In another reference to the same era, this was said to be the period of greatest prosperity of the hilltop town of Ṣanāhījah, the ruins of which can be seen between Sai'ūn and Tarīm. The *minbar* of the mosque was recorded as bearing the date 693 (A.D. 1293). Presumably a secure life under fairly strong government led to the development of stable agricultural and commercial life in the wādī at this time.

The year 1488 (894) marks the arrival in Ḥaḍramawt of the Kathīrī tribe, originally from an area near Ṣan'ā' in Yemen. The Kathīrīs began by conquering territory for themselves at the west end of the wādī, and then along the coast. Within 100 years they had extended their power sufficiently to assume the title of independent Sulṭāns of Ḥaḍramawt, with their inland capital at Tarīm. (It is recorded that in 1504 (910) cannons were being used in local wars, and it may well have been the Kathīrīs' importation of this superior weapon that led to their rapid ascendancy.) Later the Kathīrī Sulṭāns appear to have preferred to reside in Sai'ūn and their finest surviving palaces are there.

In the sixteenth (tenth) century the Yāfi'ī tribes began to take over power in the wādī, to which they had been imported as mercenaries (from Yemen) by the Kathīrīs. Their efforts resulted in the creation of a new Sulṭānate at the western end of the wādī, ruled first by the Kasadis and then by the Qu'aiṭīs, with their seat of power in Qaṭn.

There is evidence from several sources that by the sixteenth (tenth) century the wādī's agricultural output had fallen to a very low level, and there were frequent famines due to drought.

In the year 1809 (1224) the Wahhābis, under the leadership of Nājī ibn Kamla al-Nājī al-Wahhābī, raided the wādī, 'to save Ḥaḍramawt, as they asserted, from idolatry'. The Wahhābis, who were opposed to all memorials to the dead and to much else, destroyed all tombs (and any fine buildings) wherever they went, and tipped cupboardfuls of books into the wells. Hundreds of ancient buildings and thousands of valuable manuscripts were lost in this way. The Wahhābi incursion was of limited duration, however. Soon peace returned and the inhabitants set about repairing the damage done to the tombs, minarets and houses.

In 1830 (1246) a dispute broke out between the Kathīrī Sulṭān of Ḥaḍramawt and the Qu'aiṭī Sulṭān of Qaṭn over the possession of Shibām. Originally, a sum of money had passed between the Qu'aiṭī Sulṭān and the Kathīrī, in exchange for

which control of the city of Shibām, with all its great commercial wealth, was jointly shared between them. But the Kathīrī soon took advantage of the absence from the city of most of the Qu'aiṭī men (they were at a festival) to murder those who remained. The resulting warfare lasted intermittently until 1857 (1274). In the interim, the Qu'aiṭīs besieged Shibām for sixteen years, during which time the inhabitants were reduced to eating leather. At length the Saiyids of the al-'Aidarūs family were asked to arbitrate; their finding was that the original agreement for the division of Shibām, with joint rule by the two Sulṭāns, should be reinstated.

Nothing daunted, the Kathīrī Sulṭān Mansūr, while at a feast, attempted to blow up the entire Qu'aiṭī leadership with gunpowder. Warned in time, the Qu'aiṭīs attended only in small numbers. In return, they invited the Kathīrī Sulṭān to one of their houses and slit his throat. All those Kathīrīs who managed to escape the ensuing massacre fled the city of Shibām. Thenceforth the city was under Qu'aiṭī rule, with the border between the two territories slightly to the east of the walled city. From that time onwards, until modern times, there was very little communication between Shibām and Sai'ūn, though the two cities are only 19 km apart.

This was the situation until Great Britain's strengthening of the central authority brought about a relative peace in the 1940s. The coming of independence for the whole country, with the creation of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and an end to the traditional institutions of government, finally resolved the century-old hostilities between east and west.

Ḥaḍramī links with Africa and Asia

The history of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt cannot be understood without reference to the continuous links which have existed between the wādī and countries abroad, particularly in modern times. Perhaps it was the very isolation of the country, cut off from the rest of Arabia by deserts, which led to the preservation of a unique traditional Arabian way of life in the wādī and yet also to a desire for contacts and trade with other countries by sea.

Saiyid writers say that the large migrations to Africa took place in the fourteenth and fifteenth (eighth and ninth)

centuries. (There is a tradition that in 1433 (837) some forty-four Ḥaḍramī Saiyids landed at Berbera in Somaliland.) Ḥaḍramīs have thus greatly influenced the development of Islamic culture on the East African coast. To this day guardians of *ḥawṭahs* in the wādī travel to Africa to collect money for the maintenance of shrines. The people of Wādī Daw'ān and the Tamīmī tribe have had particularly strong connections with Africa.

Ḥaḍramīs are first said to have gone to India to settle in important commercial, cultural and political centres such as Bijapur, Baroch and Surat in 1220 (617). Later, they spread to all the major centres of the west coast, and Ḥaḍramīs were among the senior officers in the irregular forces of Hyderabad in the nineteenth (thirteenth) century.

From the close of the sixteenth (tenth) century onwards, Ḥaḍramī businessmen, particularly 'Alawī Saiyids from Tarīm and Sai'ūn, were active in Java and the Indonesian archipelago. In the early nineteenth (twelfth) century they extended their activities to Singapore, and it was to these areas that the greatest Ḥaḍramī migrations took place, especially with the growth of anarchic conditions in the wādī 150 years ago.

It was unusual for a Ḥaḍramī to stay away for more than twenty years without paying a visit home. Although he often married a Javanese or an Indian bride, it being reckoned a disgrace for the women of the wādī to emigrate, he generally brought his wife and family back to live in Ḥaḍramawt when he retired. It was also a common practice for sons born abroad to be sent back to be educated, to spend five or six years becoming intimate with the family traditions and with the life of the wādī.

The returned businessman would devote himself first to the erection of a mosque, an act of piety which expressed his thanks to Allāh for his good fortune. (This has resulted in an enormous number of small mosques in the wādī and its tributaries.) Only then did he see fit to erect a new home, sometimes incorporating, as was conspicuous in the case of the numerous al-Kāf homes, fashions from India or Singapore. Generally, however, he was content to build in the traditional way, simply including furnishing or appliances, ranging from pressure lamps to motorcars, which revealed his contact with advanced technologies overseas. The revenues from abroad became the main source of what wealth there was in Ḥaḍramawt for hundreds of years, until the foundation of the modern state.

Traditional social structure

Because of its isolated position, inland from the coast and divorced from the major modern trade routes, Ḥaḍramawt was extraordinarily protected from outside influences; the society of the wādī remained virtually unchanged from the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods until the second quarter of this century. Scholars (such as R. B. Serjeant of Cambridge) have repeatedly stated their view that, until the revolution and the creation of the modern state, it bore 'an extraordinarily close resemblance to the society into which the Prophet Muḥammad was born'. Although the rate of change is now rapid, there still remain interesting traces of the traditional social structure and way of life, which illuminate the forms of the architecture and the towns.

Like the rest of Arabia, Wādī Ḥaḍramawt had a widespread tribal structure. Few of the tribes were nomadic; most were settled people, living in villages. Tribesmen living in an urban situation could do so for generations without losing their tribal status, provided they did not engage in demeaning work. The tribes were a sort of arms-bearing aristocracy; but they were not all equal, for there were degrees of social distinction between the tribes. Each tribesman believed that he had inherited the right to *sharaf*, or honour, the independent dignity of a man who carried weapons to defend himself and his dependants. His faith in the possession of this quality produced some of the characteristic features of the Ḥaḍramī: his fearless individuality and his ceaseless wrangling and disputes over 'rights', leading in many periods of history to a state of almost ceaseless warfare throughout the wādī, 'brother against brother, brothers against cousin, brothers and cousins against alien tribesmen' (in the words of an old Arab proverb).

The tribesman's honour was in some ways a liability, placing him at a disadvantage in relation to those who did not have to uphold the same rigid convention of traditional *sharaf*. He was 'disgraced' and his honour was 'broken' if, for example, he allowed anyone under his protection to be molested or if he killed a woman, or any person of inferior status to his own. The 'disgrace' could only be obliterated and the broken honour made whole again by the spilling of blood, or by payment of damages in money or kind. It was to obtain this redress, so important to the Ḥaḍramī, that the tribesmen so often engaged in fighting. Until

debts were felt to be settled, truces were of short duration, usually only one month. The sheikh or sulṭān of a tribe was elected from one or two of the families in which the office was hereditary.

The artisans and non-tribal cultivators of the wādī were always inferior to the tribesmen, and subject to them. Yet the growth of towns and cities was a natural outcome of the economic needs of the tribal peoples, and the townspeople were therefore protected by the tribesmen from robbery and violence. Such protection was often achieved by agreement between all the tribes in the region. In more difficult circumstances, protection might be provided by placing the town near a sacred enclave, a *ḥawṭah*, or even by creating a *ḥawṭah* within an existing town, thus giving it the protection of the sanctity of religion. Of course, if the tribal sheikh or sulṭān was strong enough, his word would guarantee the security of a market. It can be seen that towns and tribes were thus inextricably interdependent.

Some of the tribesmen still live today in the primitive way, Bedouin who engage in camel or truck transport across the desert, and dwell a good deal of the time in black camel-hair tents or other simple shelters. Other Bedouin are mountain tribesmen who live on the arid plateaux on either side of the wādī. They are rugged and tough, like the landscape. If we move down into the remote tributary valleys, we find tribesmen with better houses of mud-brick or stone, often several storeys high, and these people are generally in better circumstances. They have terraced fields and their crops of vegetables and millet are more profitable. They still live simply, their food coming mainly from their own produce (millet cakes flavoured with dried herbs, and marrows, dates and honey) and from supplies (principally *bunn*, the traditional coffee made from the husks imported from Yemen) they purchase on their rare excursions to the towns.

In the main wādī the tribesmen were always more sophisticated, and generally better off. Some of them were landowners who lived in the large towns and cities, others lived in villages scattered throughout the length of the valley.

There is evidence that before the Saiyids arrived in Ḥaḍramawt, another group of people, the Mashāyikh, acted as the principal leaders of the Islamic religious community, probably by right of descent from their position before Islam, when they may have formed part of the hierarchy from which the priests of the old religion were drawn. After the tenth (fourth) or eleventh

(fifth) century the Saiyids took precedence over them, but the Mashāyikh retained most of the same privileges. They have remained a very respected class, better educated than tribesmen, generally not bearing arms, and acting as arbiters in disputes.

In the principal towns of Ḥaḍramawt a religious, literary and legal society of very ancient type survives, headed by the Saiyids. Most of the latter gave up the bearing of arms centuries ago and began relying on their spiritual prestige to maintain their position in society. They formed a capitalistic class, providing loans to the tribesmen and agriculturalists, and thus they underwrote the share-cropping agriculture of the country. The wealthier among them were sometimes very public-spirited and paid from their personal fortunes for the building and improvement of roads, hospitals and schools. Other Saiyids were modest craftsmen, for example, blacksmiths or carpenters, neither of which was regarded as a demeaning profession.

The ʿAlawī Saiyid had to follow the path of his pious ancestors, 'acting with humility, piety and lofty motives, taking the Prophet as his model'. He had ideally to retreat from the world, courting obscurity and shirking any manifestation of wealth or importance. At the same time he was expected to be scrupulous in his religious observances, and travellers remarked that they had 'seldom seen the *salāt* performed with such devotion as among the *sada* in Ḥaḍramawt' (Van der Meulen and von Wissman, 1932).

The section of the population that did not bear arms was, with the exception of the noble classes (i.e. the Saiyids and the Mashāyikh), termed *ḍaʿīf*, meaning the weak ones, in the sense that they were not armed fighting men. The *ḍaʿīf* were regarded as protected by both the tribesmen and the noble classes; although they included merchants, artisans, craftsmen and petty traders, the majority were unskilled manual workers. Besides small shopkeepers, the merchants included an important class, the *dallāls* or brokers working on a commission basis, who acted as intermediaries with the tribesmen who had come in from the countryside to buy and sell. A whole section of the community was known as the 'workers in clay'; this included builders, potters and agricultural cultivators. They were regarded as inferior to the other artisans, such as weavers. Of the lowest rank was body service of any kind and unclean work, particularly the handling of human or animal soil.

Traditionally, all Arabs were agreed in the matter of *kafā'ah*, or eligibility in marriage. In other words, it was unthinkable for a woman to marry someone of a social standing lower than the one into which she had been born. In the case of the Saiyids it meant that marriage was possible only with other Saiyids or Sharīf. One of the ways in which the tribal and clan structure was kept strong was through the principle that a young man should marry his 'uncle's daughter'—incidentally ensuring that property was retained within the family.

Divorce was almost unknown. The repudiation of a wife without very good cause was held in high contempt; if a man did so reject his wife he would be unable to obtain another wife of the same social standing. Polygamy was likewise very unusual; if a man took a second wife, the first would leave his house immediately and return to her parents.

In Ḥaḍramawt all the large towns have a quarter structure; in other words, the towns grew up as a number of distinct quarters, each of which developed as a separate organic entity, with its own elaborate system of customary laws for regulating itself and for protecting its interests. In the city of Tarīm, for example, the quarters were managed by headmen who were selected, or elected by common consent, from among the leading citizens of the merchant or artisan classes (only rarely from labourers or agriculturalists). They not only acted to enforce customary law but were also in charge of organizing communal services such as fire-fighting and helping the poor to arrange weddings and funerals. Other leaders were elected to act as spokesmen and arbiters for each of the principal crafts or trades in the city. They were able to enforce certain rules agreed upon among the workers. (For example, a house owner could not dismiss a carpenter from his own quarter and employ one from another quarter; and only a carpenter was allowed to hang doors.) The scale of charges was also agreed upon and enforced by the headman of the craft.

The quarters were notorious for border disputes and other quarrels among themselves. These were usually settled by calling in a third party to arbitrate, generally a respected Saiyid. In many ways the members of each quarter behaved as though they belonged to a tribe, except that the men carried no arms, but a small knife and sometimes a stick.

Each quarter had its own special patron saint, and all the

quarters had their own cries, often featuring the name of the saint. They turned out *en masse* to compete with each other in chanting, song and dance and the composition of extemporary verse on every festive occasion, such as the celebration of the New Year, the end of Ramaḍān, or the welcoming of returning pilgrims.

Traditional way of life

Until recently all the social classes of Ḥaḍramawt wore costumes peculiar to their social groups. Even today, many of the traditional costumes are still recognizable.

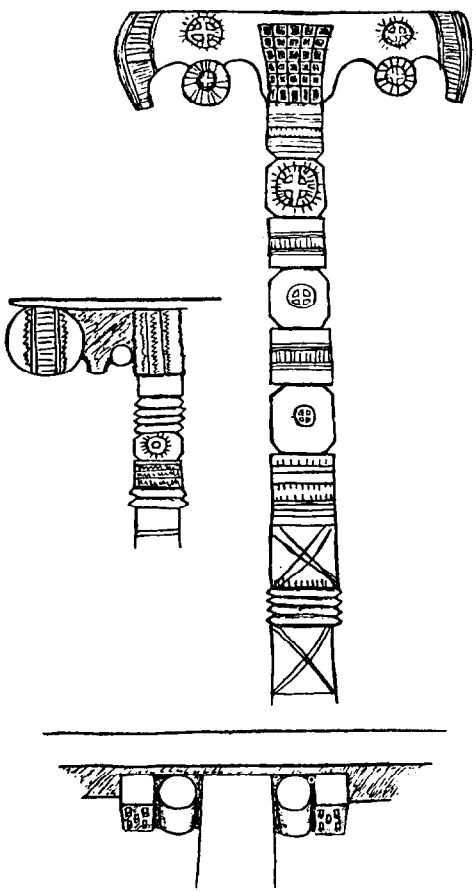
Tribesmen generally wore two basic garments: the first, a length of thick blue cotton, about 2 × 1.5 m, with fringes 50 cm long, was worn around the waist as a kind of kilt or *fūṭah*, and a second, of roughly the same character and size, was worn gathered, as a sash or belt above it; in cold weather the latter became a shawl. The better-off sometimes wore a short sleeveless waistcoat or jacket, which was locally woven of wool or cotton; it was sometimes striped. Recently, it has become fashionable to wear a short Western-style coat. Tribesmen also wore turbans tightly wound around their heads or loosely thrown over their shoulders, often made of fine cotton or woollen stuff from India or Kashmir.

There is ample evidence that cloth was traditionally woven in the wādī, although it has now largely fallen into abeyance. The blue cotton cloth was said to come from Shibām. Historians of more than 500 years ago describe how more clothes were woven in Ḥaḍramawt than were needed there, and the surplus was exported to Yemen (in exchange for 'needles for sewing, razors for shaving', and coffee husks for the popular beverage, *bunn*).

The hair of the Bedouin curls naturally, and the desert and remote valley tribes traditionally wore it very long and oiled with butter (ghee) or sesame oil. By contrast, the upper classes, the Saiyids, did not consider curly hair a mark of beauty and their men, like many of the other townspeople, often kept their heads shaved. Saiyid men dressed entirely in white, with a long cotton robe covered by a coat of heavy cotton or wool.

Women wore the same thick blue cotton cloth with a long fringe as the men, but they draped it from the bust downwards.

IV.
Shibām. Types of internal columns and capitals. (Drawing by Ronald Lewcock.)



Over it, when they went out, they wore a long bleached off-white cotton cloak, with a thin veil of a piece of blue (or black) locally woven cloth over their faces. On festive occasions the inner dress might be rust-coloured, and a blue or black dress was brightened by the insertion in the front of red, yellow or green silk patches from India or the Far East. At such times the most beautiful dresses of all were those dyed with indigo, polished so that it shone like silver. At the west end of the wādī, the men's shawls and the women's overdresses were also dyed with indigo in this way, which gave them an extra richness in the sun. The disadvantage, however, was that the indigo ran in wet weather or when it touched anything moist. The indigo dyeing was carried out until recently in Shibām. An alternative to indigo-dyed material for 'best' occasions was black cotton or velvet embroidered with silver, with a silver and gold bodice, sometimes studded with sequins.

The women wore bright silk headscarves of orange or red. Their hands and feet were generally painted with elaborate lace-work patterns in *hudha*, which turned the skin almost black wherever it was applied. The fingertips were hennaed saffron, and the women wore many layers of jingling necklaces, earrings, bracelets and belts, mainly in fine local silverwork. Nose-rings were sometimes seen in the olden days as well. Eyebrows were often dyed green, and the eyes outlined with *ḳoḥl* so that they seemed very bright—the *ḳoḥl* sometimes carried the line of the eyes to the temples.

Women's hair was often cut short and plaited into a mass of small oiled plaits, with a parting down the middle of the head, two subsidiary partings at right angles, one at the front and one at the back, and a carefully arranged curl on the forehead.

Townswomen sometimes wore their blue dresses short in front and trailing behind, with narrow white or blue trousers underneath, which hung in wrinkles round their ankles. Older women hennaed their faces and the whole of their hands saffron, or painted them with yellow ochre. Such customs varied considerably throughout the wādī.

Women working in the fields wore black outer garments and veils, and crowned their heads with large woven straw hats, looking like witches' bonnets with wide brims.

When one Ḥaḍramī met another, the greetings were often elaborate. A handshake was the normal greeting, signifying



6.
Shibām. The interior of a reception-room in a house more than 100 years old. Note the decoration on the wooden columns and the capital.

friendship and a safe relationship. But a Saiyid or one of the Mashāyikh was greeted by a respectful kiss on the hand, a tribute which even a sulṭān could not avoid bestowing. (The Saiyid would usually show his appreciation of the awkward situation in which the ruler was placed by drawing back his hand and pretending to kiss that of the sulṭān.) A profound greeting of respect was sometimes seen, when a young man kissed the knees of an older and venerated member of his own family. A more affectionate greeting in this case might be kissing the wrists, elbows or shoulders. Intimate greetings were exchanged in the Asian manner by placing the noses close together and making loud sniffing sounds.

Saiyids and Mashāyikh were always offered the place of honour in a reception-room. Tribesmen would often carry their weapons into such a reception and sit cross-legged with them on their knees. Coffee or *bunn* would be served, or the *madā'ah*, the water-pipe, smoked. Sometimes the room boasted a samovar, from which tea could be produced.

When greeting the company already seated, a newcomer to the reception-room usually bent to make the first greeting and did not straighten up between one greeting and the next, but walked gracefully in a stooping position to grasp each hand as it

was extended up to him all around the room, until having completed the circle, he would sit down.

Food included flat bread, baked inside one of the fire-clay ovens, porridge made of ground *dhura*, *ḥilf* (a plant like tall cress, used as a herb in cookery), raw meat, squash, roasted beans (either purple or green), aubergine, cucumbers and watermelons. Much of the food was spiced and cooked in ghee, and sometimes it was eaten with green chilli. As an influence from Indonesia, Singapore and India, rice was eaten whenever it was available. Ḥaḍramawt was famous for its honey, which had a rich, strong flavour derived from the desert bushes and the *elb* trees on whose blossom the bees fed. From it cakes were made with ghee and various grains.

Servants were practically unknown, even in the houses of the wealthy. The housework and cooking were done by the housewife, her daughters and other female relatives or, in times of stress, by neighbours. Some slaves had existed in the wādī, but only in the homes of the very rich, where they were treated as members of the family.

At celebrations there would be music and dancing, with drums, a type of guitar, a flute and sometimes a singer. The most



7.
Shibām. Men of the city dancing in celebration of a wedding in the town square inside the city gate.

favoured drum was a small round one which was either balanced on one knee or held in one hand. There was also a large oblong drum, beaten at both ends. There were two types of pipe: a single flute, the *madrūf*, a small short reed pipe with four holes for stops on one side and one on the other; and a double pipe, the *mizmār*, generally made of two quills of large bird feathers bound together with wire, joined by leather thongs to a short pair of reeds. The high-pitched, throaty sound of the *mizmār* was characteristic of Ḥaḍramī music, the piper leading the drummer or singer with a nod of his head whenever necessary. The melodies were simple and tuneful, the verses of the songs frequently impromptu and skilfully pertinent to the occasion.

Dancing tended to be limited to the Bedouin or tribesmen, the orthodox townsmen generally regarding dancing as somewhat impious. But dancing in honour of a wedding justified the involvement of most of the male guests. The method of dancing was almost always the same: two lines of men faced each other, keeping time with the drum and flute by clapping their hands, while two or three men, each dancing by himself, performed elaborate steps between them, alternately approaching and withdrawing from the musicians, changing as they danced, and always keeping the same distance from each other. The dancers frequently carried sticks or even flashing, triangular daggers. One impressive dance called the *Shabwānī*, which involved whole opposed lines of men acting out battles with sticks amid rhythmic stamping, was popularly believed to be derived from ancient Shabwah, although this is disputed by scholars. The *Shabwānī* was normally danced at weddings. When Bedouin were dancing, they considered it quite normal for women to join in.

Character of traditional buildings

'Architecture' is the one word that describes the quality which makes the Ḥaḍramawt different from any other country and gives it a peculiar cachet of its own.

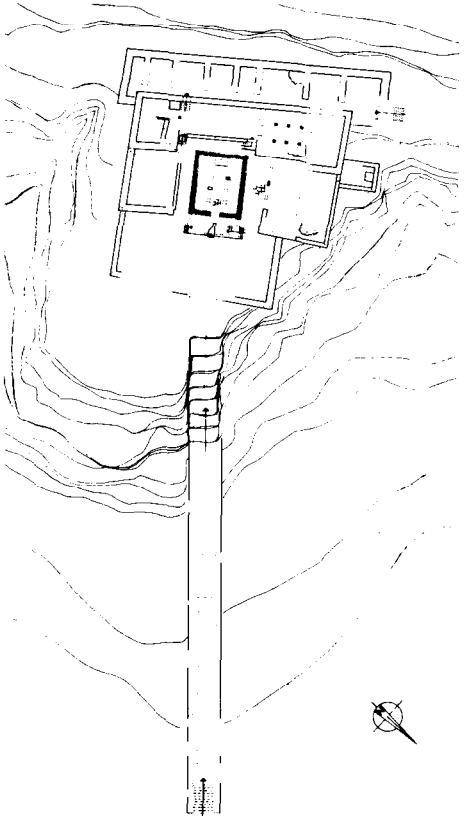
Harold Ingrams

Ancient architecture

In ancient times buildings in the wādī were of three principal materials: earth, stone and wood. It seems clear that at first all the

8.
Raybūn. The site of the ancient city, with the foundations of the pillared portico of the 'temple' in the foreground.

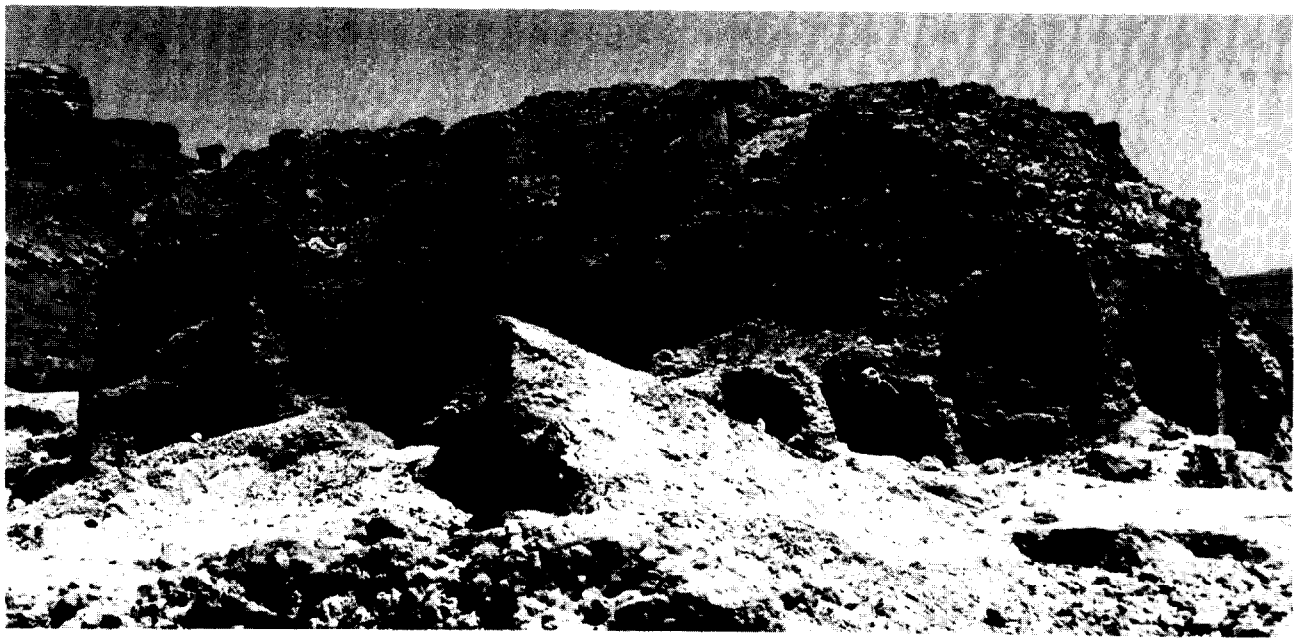




V.
Plan of the temple of al-Hajrah. (Drawing by courtesy of the French Archaeological Mission in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.)

buildings were of earth, in the form of sun-dried bricks. But temples and important secular buildings came to be constructed of stone, at least in their lower parts. By the fifth century B.C. the Ḥaḍramī temple was typically built at some height above the flood plain, with a small cella of wood and stone in the centre, or at the back of a flat platform. There was an open-air area for sacrifice in front of the cella. The sacred area was approached up a long flight of wide steps which usually led dramatically straight up the hillside from the valley floor. Sometimes there was space for circumambulation around the cella, but often not; in a few cases there were ranges of other rooms at the back or sides of the sacred area. The cella was usually large enough to house a statue on a raised platform, with a small number of worshippers. In a few cases the roof of the cella was supported on internal columns arranged on either side of a central axis. In two of the surveyed temples there were two large cella buildings, both containing columns on the same sacred platform. The lower walls at least, for that is all that ever survives, were of smooth-faced, fine-jointed ashlar work.

A second type of temple was built within the town precincts;



9.
Mashghah. Ruins of the lower levels of the three great houses in the centre of the site of the city.

the best evidence exists to date at Raybūn and Sūnah. In form these temples seem to have resembled closely those on the hillsides; they were elevated on stone platforms, with short staircases.

At some as yet unclear stage, Ḥaḍramī builders began to introduce extensive wood reinforcing into the stone and mud-brick buildings, undoubtedly as a preventive measure against damage by earthquake. The principle adopted involved wooden ringbeams outside and inside, tied together through the thickness of the wall with crossmembers and vertically by upright posts. The ringbeams were placed about 2 m apart up the entire height of the building.

The main evidence for this ancient form of earthquake-proof construction comes, first, from the deserted city site of Mashghah, where the lower levels of three large houses or palaces survive, and, second, from the French excavations at Shabwah, where a part of the courtyard façade of the 'palace' had fallen in antiquity and fragments were well preserved. At Mashghah the base of the wall was of rough river stones, which changed to the half-timbered system of construction 1 m or so above the original

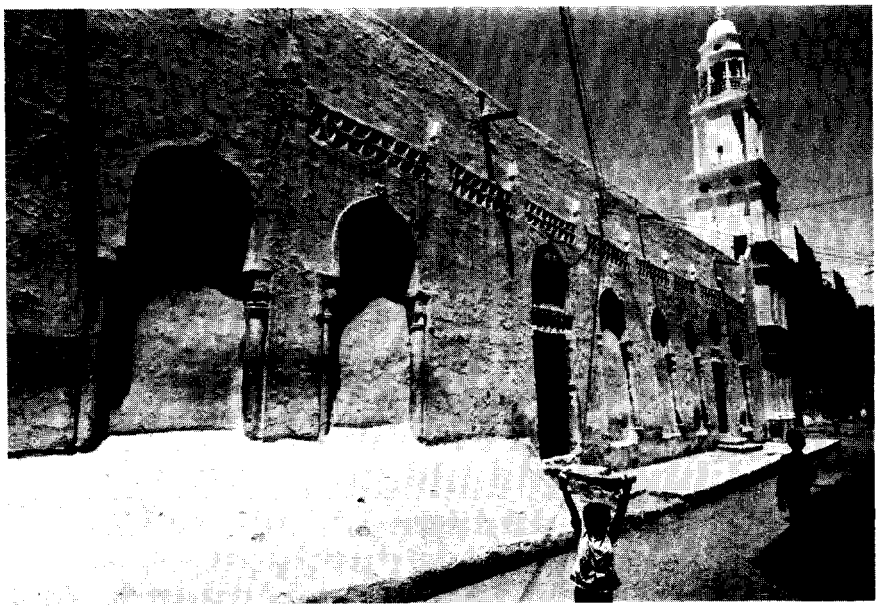
ground level. The buildings must have been entered by means of external stairs or ladders.

From remains of large houses at Mashghah and Sūnah it is apparent that ancient house planning was similar to that of recent times, at least on the ground-floor level: a wide central entrance lobby ran from front to back of the plan, ending in a staircase with straight flights around a strong rectangular pier. On either side of the entrance lobby there were smaller rooms, some interconnecting, like those used as animal stalls and storerooms up to the present day.

Islamic architecture

At some period the extensive use of wood reinforcing against earthquakes went out of use again. This probably happened a century or two after the last major earthquake recorded in South Yemen, which took place in the twelfth (sixth) century. It is not thought that any of the surviving Islamic buildings—even the oldest tombs and mosques—have any remains showing the use of the ancient system of construction. This may well indicate a more recent date than the twelfth (sixth) century for all the standing portions of monuments from Islamic times.

10.
Shibām. The Friday mosque. Parts of the building apparently date back to the fourth (tenth) century. The minaret was refaced and redecorated about twenty years ago.

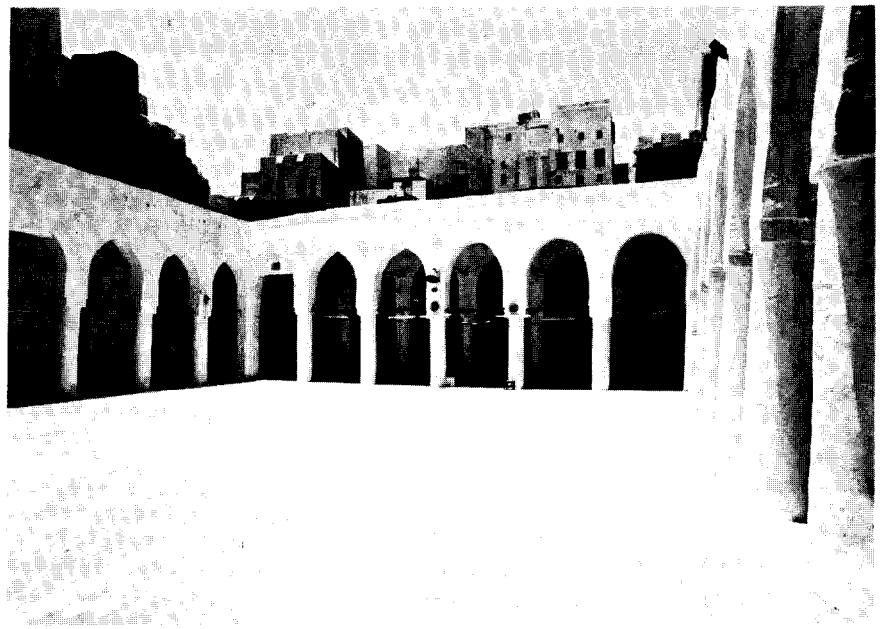




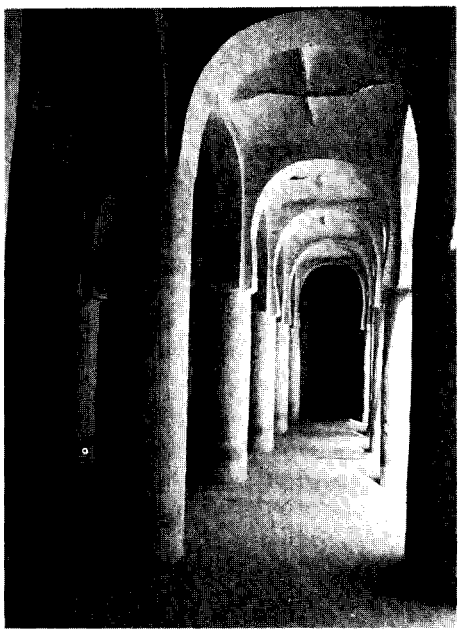
11.
Shibām. The Friday mosque. Situated in the centre of the old city, with the tall tower houses rising around it.

Mosques. The oldest mosques, like those at Bōr, in the old centre of Tarīm, and in Shibām, were flat-roofed ranges of open arcades around central courtyards. The main prayer hall, on the west or north-west side, was three or four aisles deep. A significant feature is that some of the older mosques, like that of Qaṭn, have no range of arches or columns on the entrance side of the court, but simply a plain wall, making them quite similar in form to some of the Sabaean temples excavated farther west, in the Yemeni highlands.

There is some evidence that parts of the present structure at Shibām date back to the early tenth (fourth) century, since red baked bricks, of a type wholly alien to Ḥaḍramawt, have been found low down in two of its corners. These red bricks are consistent with the legend that the mosque was built (or rebuilt) by architects from Abbasid Iraq during the reign of the Calīph Hārūn al-Rashīd. In their present form, the mosque arcades are thought to date from the fourteenth (eighth) century. The plan of the mosque at Bōr is believed to date back to approximately the same period as the plan at Shibām, although the present structure



12.
Shibām. The Friday mosque. The arcades of the courtyard show a curious mixture of round-headed arches and pointed arches, evidence of various rebuildings from the tenth (fourth) century to the fourteenth (eighth) century and beyond.



13.
Saiʿūn. The Friday mosque. The main prayer hall.

is a rebuilding of the fifteenth (ninth) century. The oldest surviving mosque building is quite possibly that of Masjid Sirjis at Tarīm, which scholars claim dates from the seventh (first) century; there is, however, no single architectural feature in the building that could easily be associated with the early centuries of Islam.

Several other phases of mosque-building activity can be surmised: the Friday mosque in Saiʿūn, with the most beautiful interiors of any mosque in the wādī, was first built in the eleventh (fifth) century.

Then, in the thirteenth (seventh) century, a number of mosques were built by Sulṭān Muẓaffar of Taʿizz, one of which is still standing in Tarīm.

The mosques of al-Ḥaddād in Saiʿūn and the Masjid Bāʿbath in al-Ghurfah date from the sixteenth (tenth) century. The latter has fine Taḥīrīd-type decoration over the three porches on the entrance side, and a *miḥrāb* with a shell decoration on its semi-dome. Its *minbar* is of the same date, or even earlier, incorporating beautiful arabesque work.

Subsequently, as mosques were erected near the tombs of

saints or by wealthy returned merchants, their number increased greatly, until in Tarīm alone there were said to be 360 mosques.

Mosques and tombs were always erected under the patronage of the Saiyid or Mashāyikh class, hence they were generally better built and ornamented than most private houses. They were maintained on an annual basis with scrupulous care, and therefore always seemed to be gleaming with fresh white paint.

Tombs. Cemeteries were found on the outskirts of towns—or even in the towns if they had expanded to encompass them. Within the cemeteries there were often tombs of Ḥaḍramī saints, each tomb

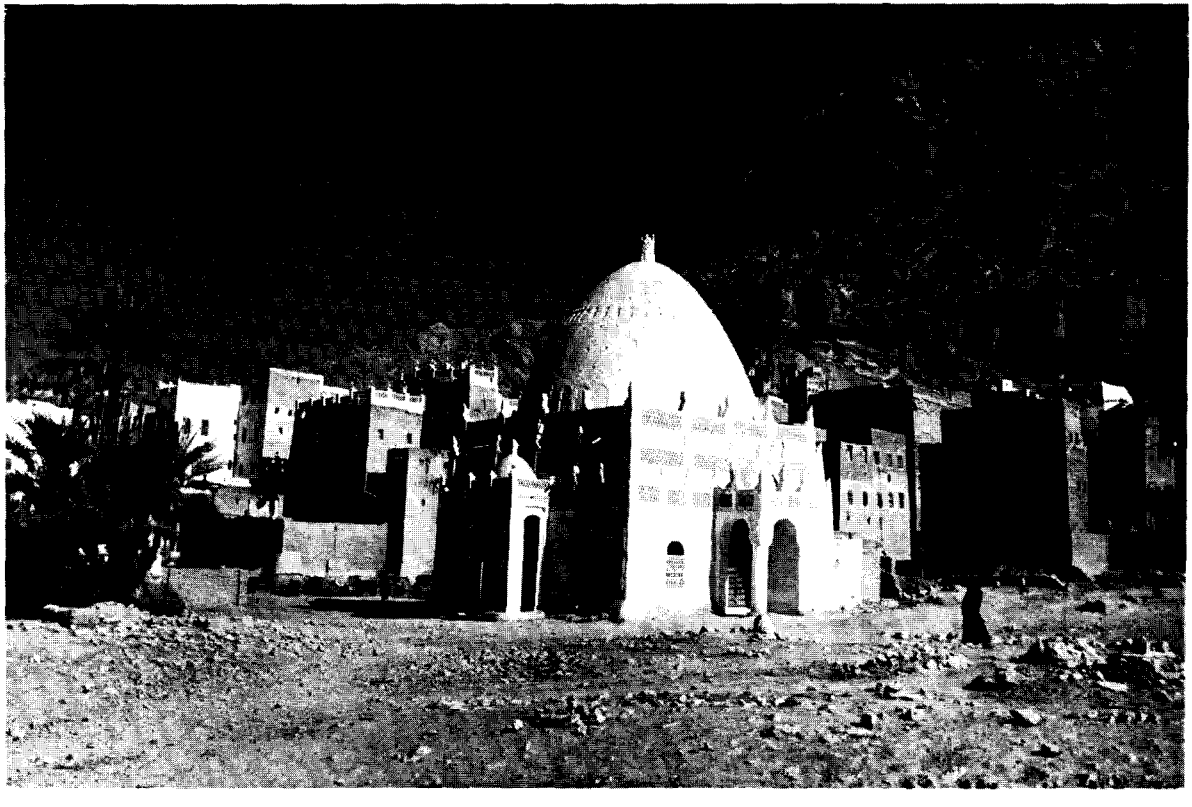
14.
Saiʿūn. The Friday mosque. The courtyard and the minaret.



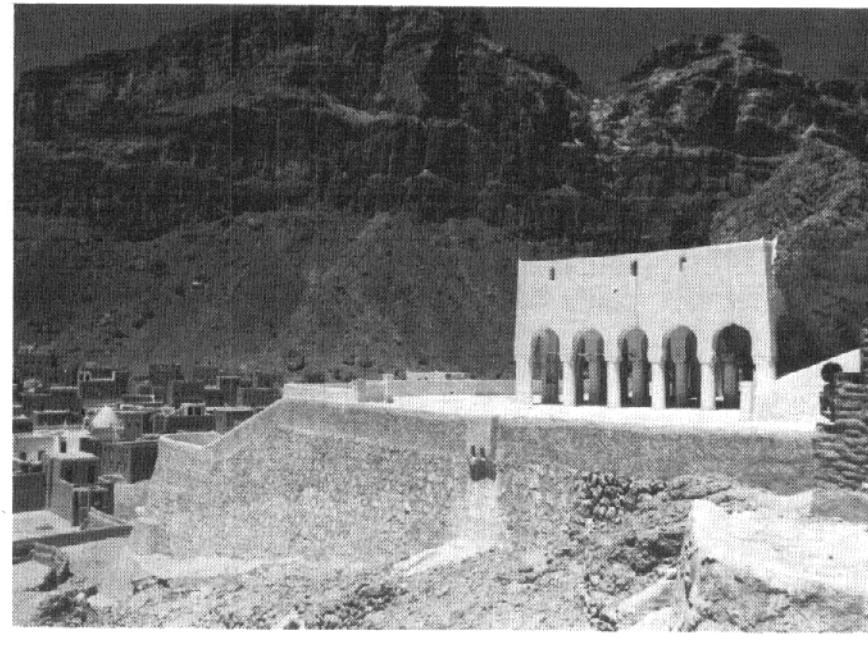
constructed in the first instance by erecting a dome on four pillars, which were afterwards closed in by grilles or solid walls to prevent damage by weather or animals.

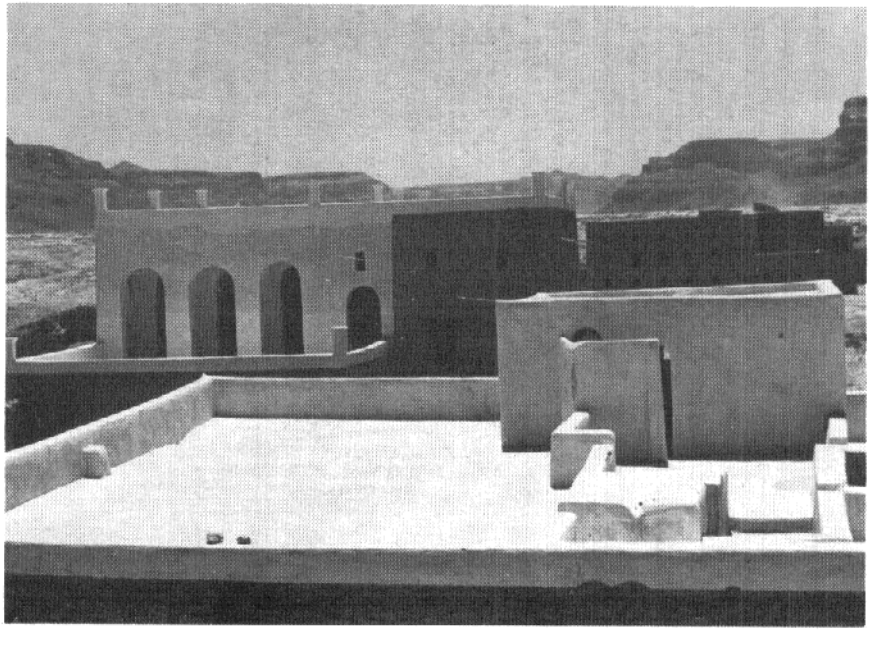
Tombs of saints were sometimes constructed in other ways, however. Leaders of families of Saiyids were often regarded as saints in their own lifetime—especially as many followed a regimen of abstinence and devotion. Such a man might demarcate a *ḥawṭah*, a neutral territory where men from various tribes could meet in safety for prayer, parley or trade. The limits of the neutral zone were indicated by erecting whitewashed pillars on the paths or roads leading into it. After the death of a Saiyid, his holiness and spiritual power were regarded as embodied in his tomb, which was administered by his family (the head of whom, as the administrator of the *ḥawṭah*, was known as *Manṣab*). As a sanctuary, the tomb was often rebuilt several times, until it

15.
Al-Ghurfah. One of the characteristic tombs of Islamic saints which are seen in many places in the wādī.



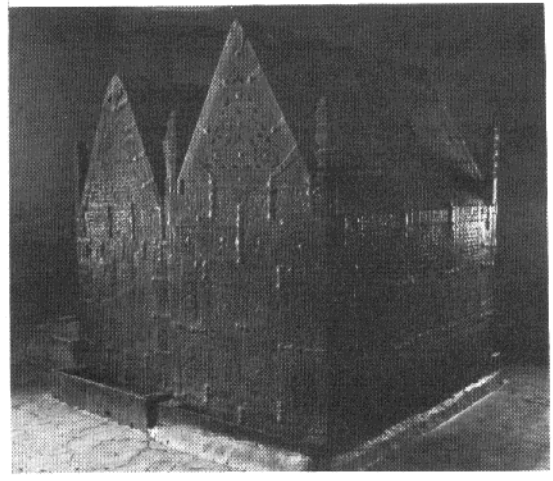
16.
Qabr Nabī Allāh Hūd. The lower prayer hall and the 'rock of the camel' on the right, with the houses, mosques and tombs of the deserted pilgrimage town spread out below.



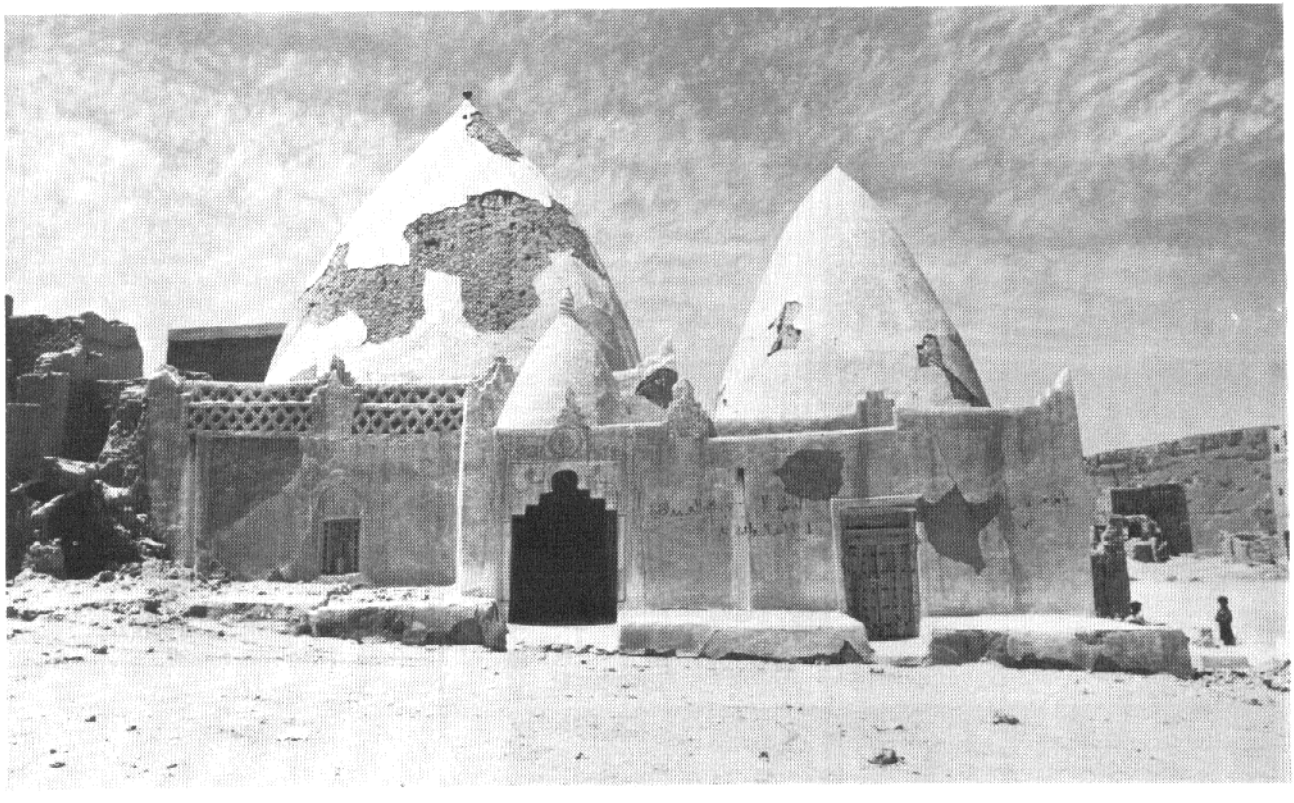


17.
Qabr Nabī Allāh Hūd. The rooftops of some of the empty houses in the town below the tomb, which are inhabited only for the three days of the annual pilgrimage.

18.
Mashhad. Interior view of one of the mausoleums, showing the tombs sheathed in bronze.



19.
Mashhad. Mausoleums, exterior view.



assumed the scale of the largest domed mausoleums in the wādī. Inside, the saint's coffin was often set within a richly ornamented wooden or bronze shrine.

Some of the finest tombs are Qabr Hūd and the mausoleum of the first Saiyid in the wādī, Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā. The oldest standing mausoleum in Tarīm is that of Masʿūd ibn Yamānī, dated A.H. 648 (1270), and presumably built at the time of the Rasūlid occupation. The large and beautiful tombs of Ḥabshī in Saiʿūn and of Qāḍī Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥaddād ibn ʿAlī at Qaṭn date back only seventy years. (The splendid tomb buildings of Mashhad are discussed on page 125.)

Minarets. The minarets of the wādī take basically two forms, square and cylindrical. Those that are square in plan are believed to be the oldest (e.g. al-Ghurfah, the original stone minaret of the Friday mosque in Shibām, and so on). The cylindrical minarets are said to have been imported as a type in the sixteenth (tenth) century, from examples seen in India. The latter are always crowned with a small colonnade, like a miniature classical circular temple, and the roof is shaped in a curving cone (rather like the crowns of the straw hats worn by the women workers in the fields). Minarets were mostly built of mud-brick, and were always whitewashed or painted a cream colour.

There is at least one square minaret of recent date: the extraordinary 41-m-high, white-plastered mud-brick minaret of al-Moḥdhar mosque in Tarīm.

Public wells. A type of building which is characteristic of the wādī is the covered public well, the *siqāyah*. It consists of a circular well and a cistern into which the water is poured when it is drawn, and from which it is taken by the people for drinking by means of a wooden ladle. Both parts are usually covered with a single dome resting on corner columns; the space between the columns is sometimes closed in on three sides with brickwork in an open herring-bone pattern, and the whole painted white. There is also often a drinking trough for animals outside the domed area.

Houses. In the plateau areas and the remote upper valleys, the buildings are of stone, with beams and lintels of rough local wood. Being of the same material as the mountainside, they tend to blend in with it from a distance.



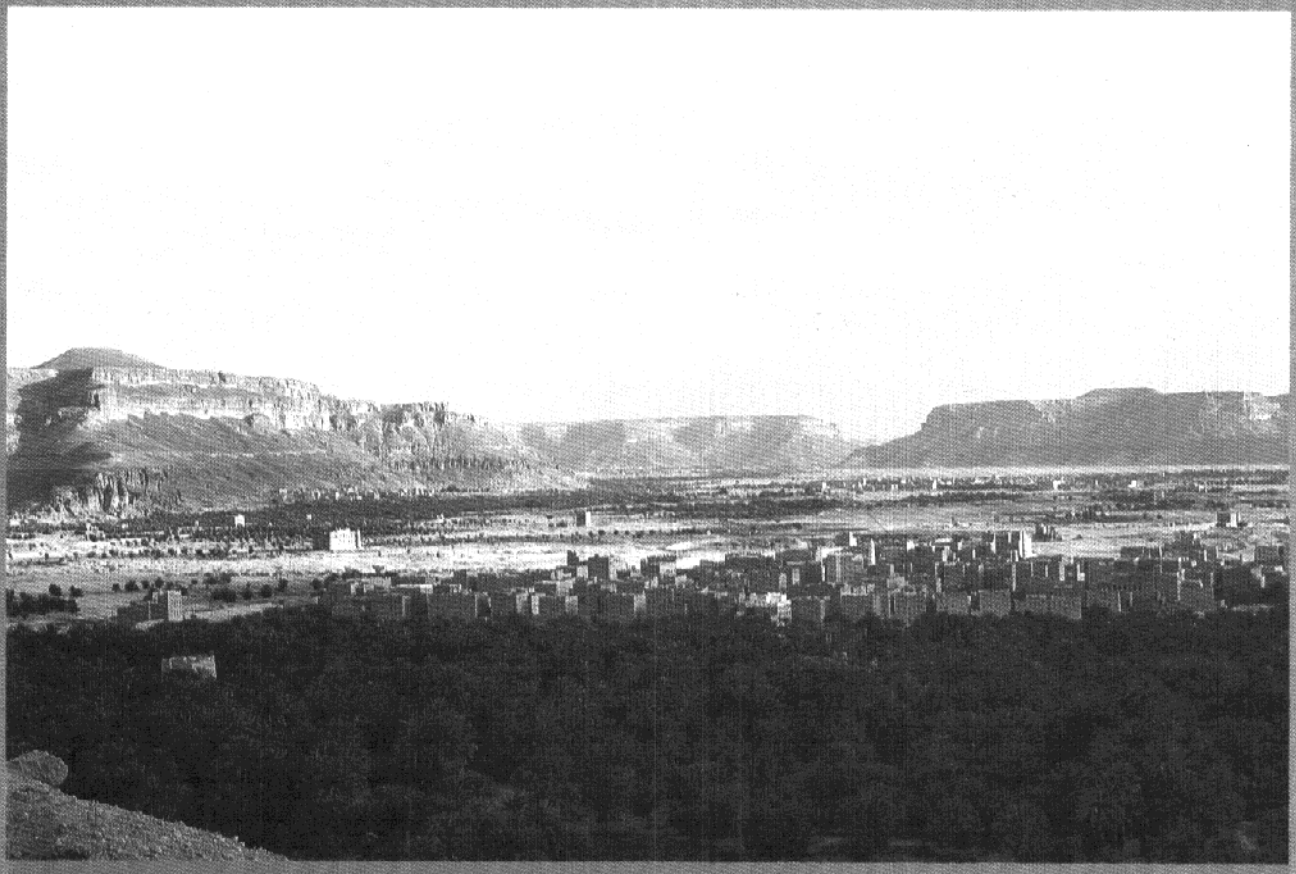
20.
Shibām. The central square in front of the Friday mosque (right), surrounded by tower houses.

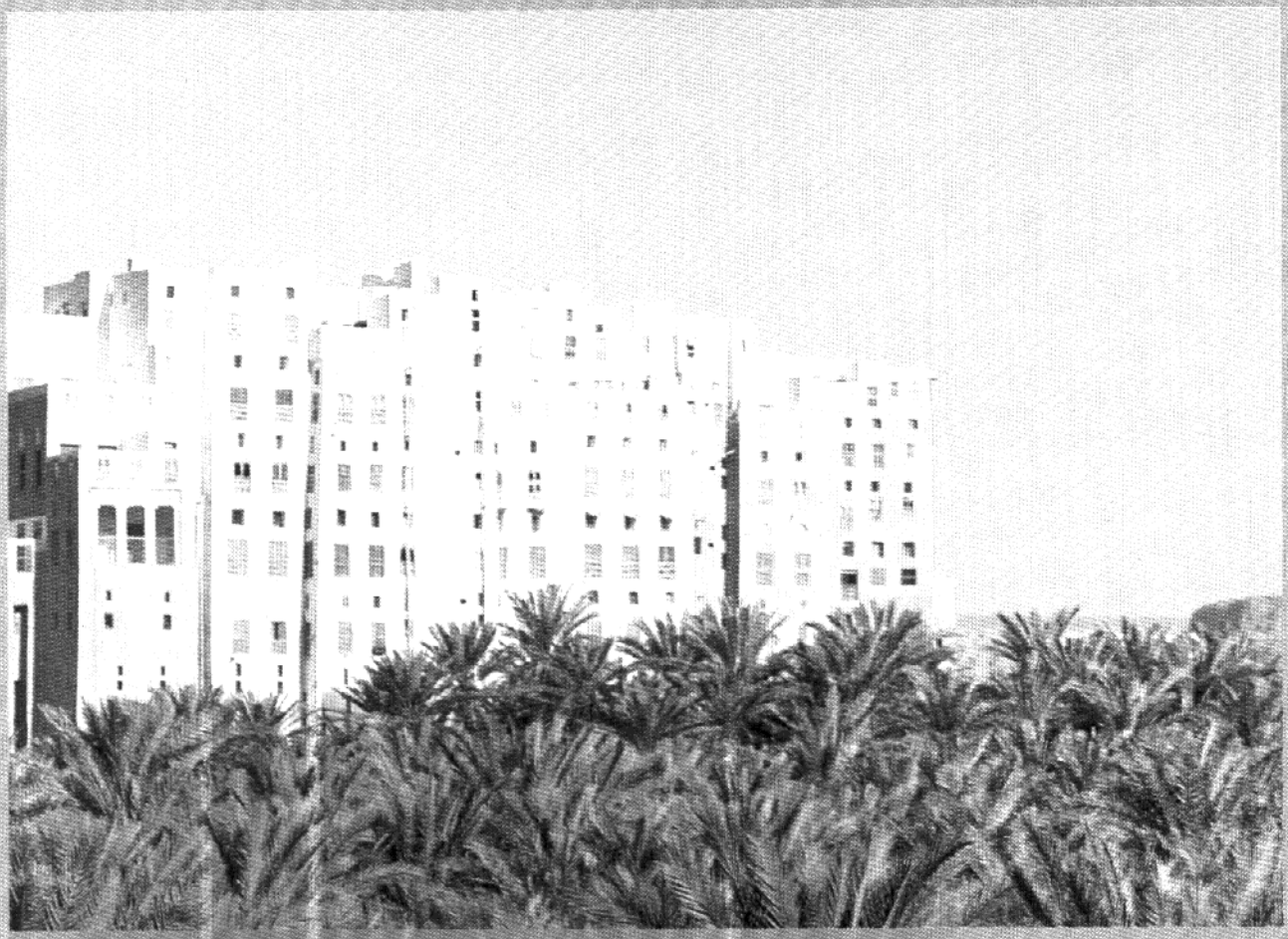
In the main wādīs, houses are generally built with tall sloping walls of mud-plastered mud-brick on foundations of stone boulders; their beams and lintels are of local or imported wood, often shaped and sawn.

The houses in Wādī Ḥaḍramawt are generally more than two storeys high, the main reason probably being the continuous tribal warfare and the threat of raids that formed the normal background of life from time immemorial. A second factor was the need to build on rocky slopes or outcrops due partly to insecurity and partly to the desire to keep the valuable agricultural land free of buildings; a sloping site made it difficult to erect a large spreading plan, and easier to build upwards. Once the basic concept of a building form like the tower house had become the established pattern in such a conservative society, it tended to persist even when some of the original factors which produced it had ceased to be important. Thus throughout the wādī, even today, most new houses are still being built in this traditional form.

The houses had many planning features in common. There

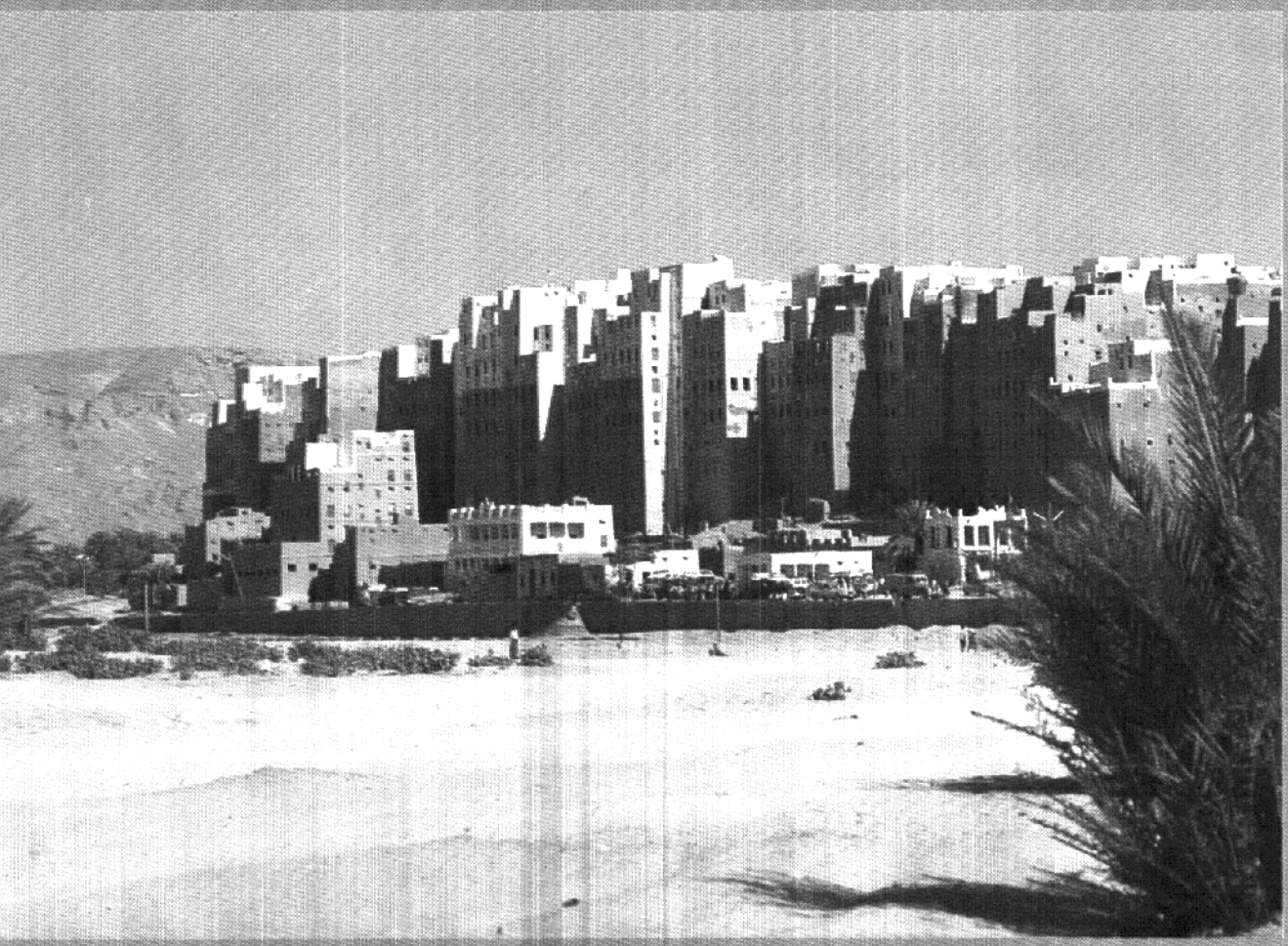
21.
Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, near Tarīm, the valley flanked by sandstone escarpments on either side.





22.
Houses on the north-east corner of the old city of Shibām, towering over the surrounding date-palm plantations.

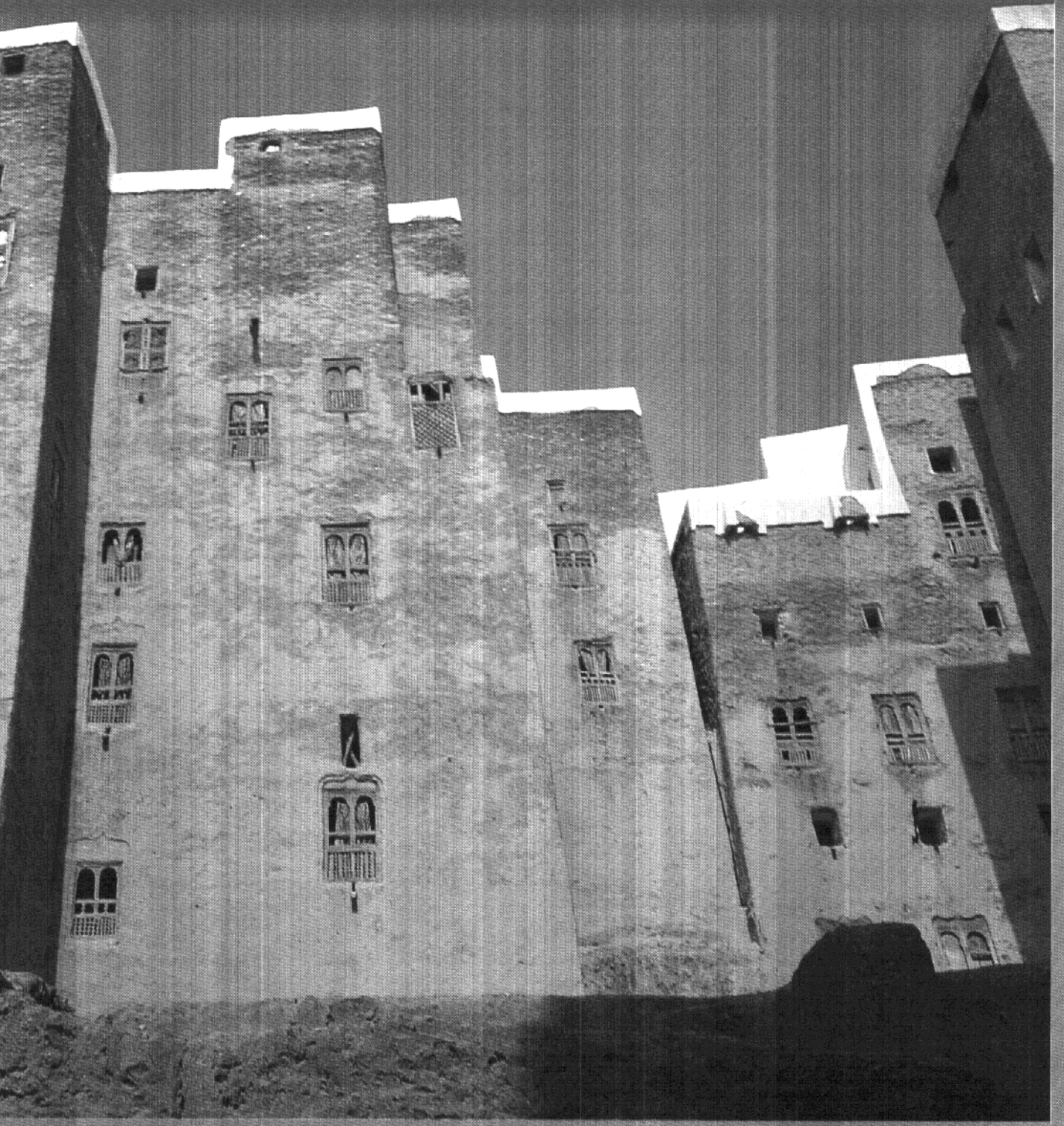
23.
The approach to the old walled city of Shibām, seen from the south-east. The houses tower over the dry bed of the wādī. In recent years, lower buildings have been erected outside the city walls.





24.
The rooftops of Shibām at sunset. Note the walled terraces of the rooms below the roofs in the neighbouring houses.

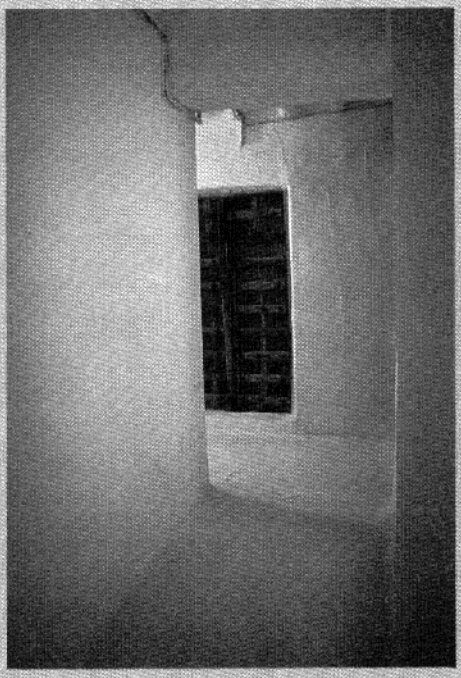
25.
Old houses on the south side of Shibām.



27.
The full height of a typical house in a narrow street.

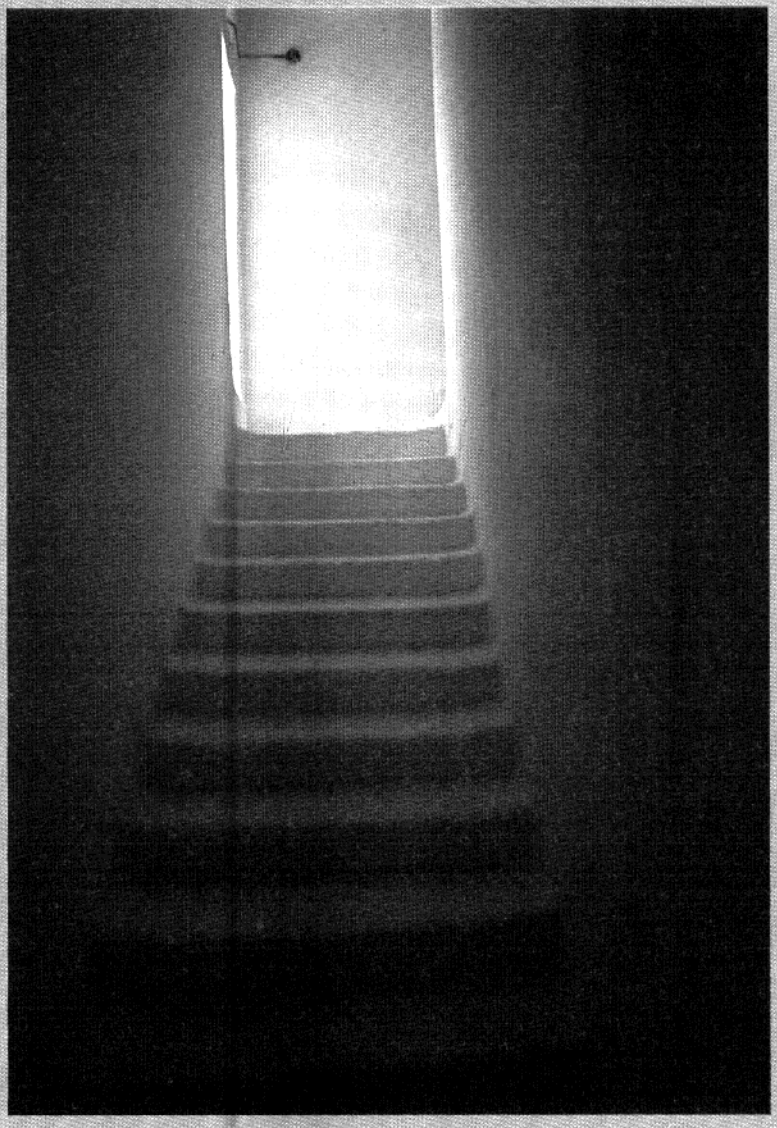
26.
Men of the city dancing in celebration of a wedding in the town square of Shibām inside the city gate.





28.
An upper passageway leading to the doors of the *majlis* in the tower house illustrated in Plates 32–5. Note the colour-washed floor.

29.
A typical staircase interior in the tower house illustrated in Plates 32–5.



was usually only one outside door, opening into a central passage flanked by almost windowless storerooms or stalls for animals (goats and sheep were often kept on the floor above); this passage ended in a staircase leading upwards. In the tall houses of the wādī the first habitable rooms were usually on the third floor; these were reserved for the business and social activities of the men, and for receiving strangers. The private rooms, lived in throughout the day by women and children, began above. At this level there commenced a series of roof terraces opening from the larger rooms, so that the floor area of a house was gradually reduced as it neared the top. Although they all had these features in common, the character and design of houses varied slightly throughout Ḥaḍramawt; they have also changed in small ways within the last few hundred years.

At the western end of the wādī, as far as Qaṭn, and up Wādīs ʿAmd, al-ʿAin and Dawʿān, houses were generally mud-coloured, with whitewash decoration around windows and doors, and white filigreed parapets and finials against the sky. The window-frames and shutters were usually painted red. Internally, the passages were plastered with light-brown mud and straw, although the interiors of rich houses were painted white. The floors and sometimes the walls were ribbed with designs of waving lines scraped into the wet plaster when it was first laid. Plaster dados were decorated with basket patterns. The pillars in the larger rooms were often made of small trunks, otherwise of shaped square timber, and the ceiling beams were split trunks of date palms. (Sometimes the fibrous date-palm wood was covered over with mud-straw plaster, and in this case it was often painted.) Above the beams were laid woven palm-frond mats, coloured rust-red, black or white, and the same colours were used on the layer of mud over the palm trunks; these colours harmonized beautifully with the brown wood and light-yellow straw mud of the walls.

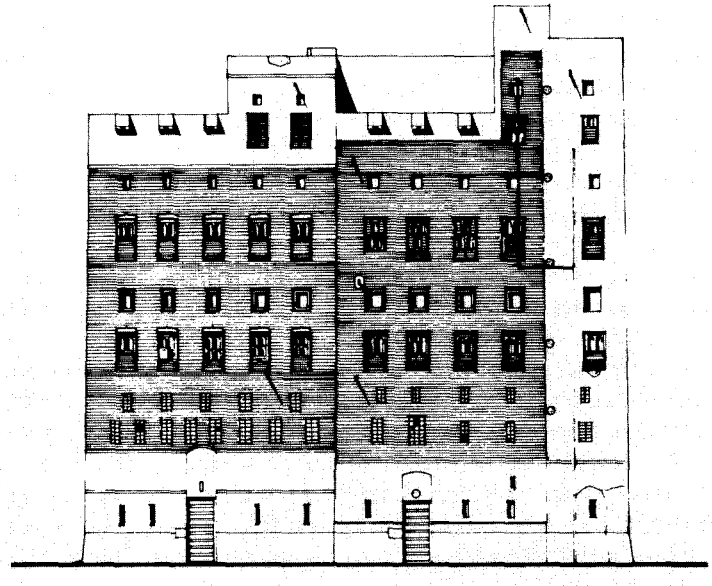
A large reception-room, a *majlis*, was usually entered through a door in the centre of its shorter side. Until the last century these doors were very low, not more than 1.2 m high. The frame was heavily carved, and the surface of the door was ornamented with iron nails with large flat heads 5 cm across, shining with burnished lead. On either side of the door stood great wooden chests, in which the sleeping mats and pillows were stored during the day. These heavy, carved chests, sometimes studded with brass

or tinned iron ornaments, were frequently the only furniture in the room. The windows were small and close to the ground; they had carved lattice-work screens, and the wooden framework and shutters were also decorated. Small rectangular openings above the windows gave light when the lower shutters were closed, without producing glare. The floor was covered with plain mats of plaited palm fronds over which rich people placed camel-hair rugs striped in rust-brown, white and black. Against the walls there were hard cushions on which one could lean when sitting. Coffee or food was served on large brass trays, around which the people clustered.

In the upstairs women's quarters the rooms were mostly small, and sometimes painted in brighter colours. Pots and trays hung on the walls.

The kitchens were large and airy. The cooking hearth had a separate flue, usually in a corner. Generally there was a washroom adjoining or opening off the kitchen.

Large houses were sometimes subdivided into small apartments (one or two to each floor), each with a single fair-sized room, a lobby and a washroom.



VI.
Shibām. Elevations of typical houses. (Drawing by J. Gire, taken from measurements by C. Darles.)

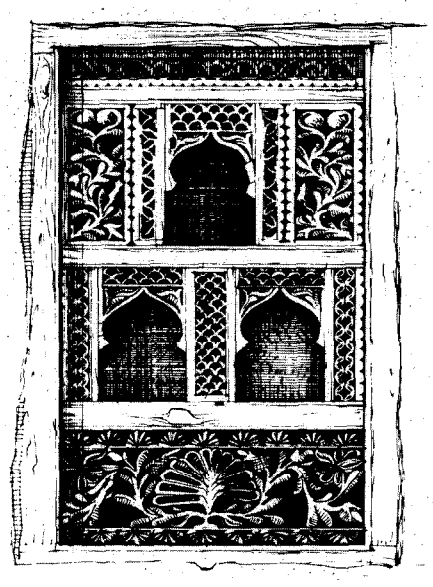
If a Saiyid erected a mosque next to his house, as was the practice of many who returned wealthy from overseas, an internal passage would usually connect the house to the interior of the whitewashed mosque, and to its roof; in the heat of summer, the sunset and evening prayers were always performed on the roof, and learned old men used to sit there in the evenings teaching the recitation of the Koran to a circle of boys and young men.

The age of the houses can be judged with any accuracy only from the decorated, and sometimes dated, woodwork. The Saiyids estimate that the oldest doors are about 300 years old.

Forts above the wādī were traditionally built of mud-brick like the houses, with small circular turrets at the corners. One such fort at Heinan is recognizable in descriptions by two Portuguese captives in 1590 (960), and there is no reason why forts of this type could not be of much greater antiquity.

Moving farther east, the buildings of the walled city of Shibām vary from those described above mainly in their towering height. They are discussed in detail on pages 71 et seq.

Some 20 km to the east of Shibām, the buildings of the old Kathīrī territory were noticeably different. The whitewashed houses were slightly smaller, without courtyards, opening on to wide streets and with windows on all four sides. The more modern houses had walled entrance enclosures, with vegetation planted at the sides. All the large cities had garden suburbs among the palm groves; these grew up in the second quarter of the twentieth (fourteenth) century. Here the wealthy Saiyids, returned from overseas, built modern villas, influenced by Indian and European colonial styles, and each with its swimming pool and its garden of cultivated flowering trees and shrubs. Many of these large new town houses were reputedly designed by one man, the distinguished Saiyid ʿAlawī ibn Būbakr ibn ʿAlawī al-Kāf. They were often divided into two parts, one for men and the other for women, each with its own entrance, kitchen, storerooms and granaries on the ground floor, and with its reception-rooms and wash-rooms on the first floor. There were more private rooms above that, and on the roof there were terrace rooms. The villas had similar arrangements, but were seldom more than two storeys high. The central terrace rooms, which could catch the breeze on all four sides, were the favoured living and relaxing rooms in the hot summer months.



VII.
Shibām. Carved decoration of a lattice window grille. (Drawing by J. Gire.)

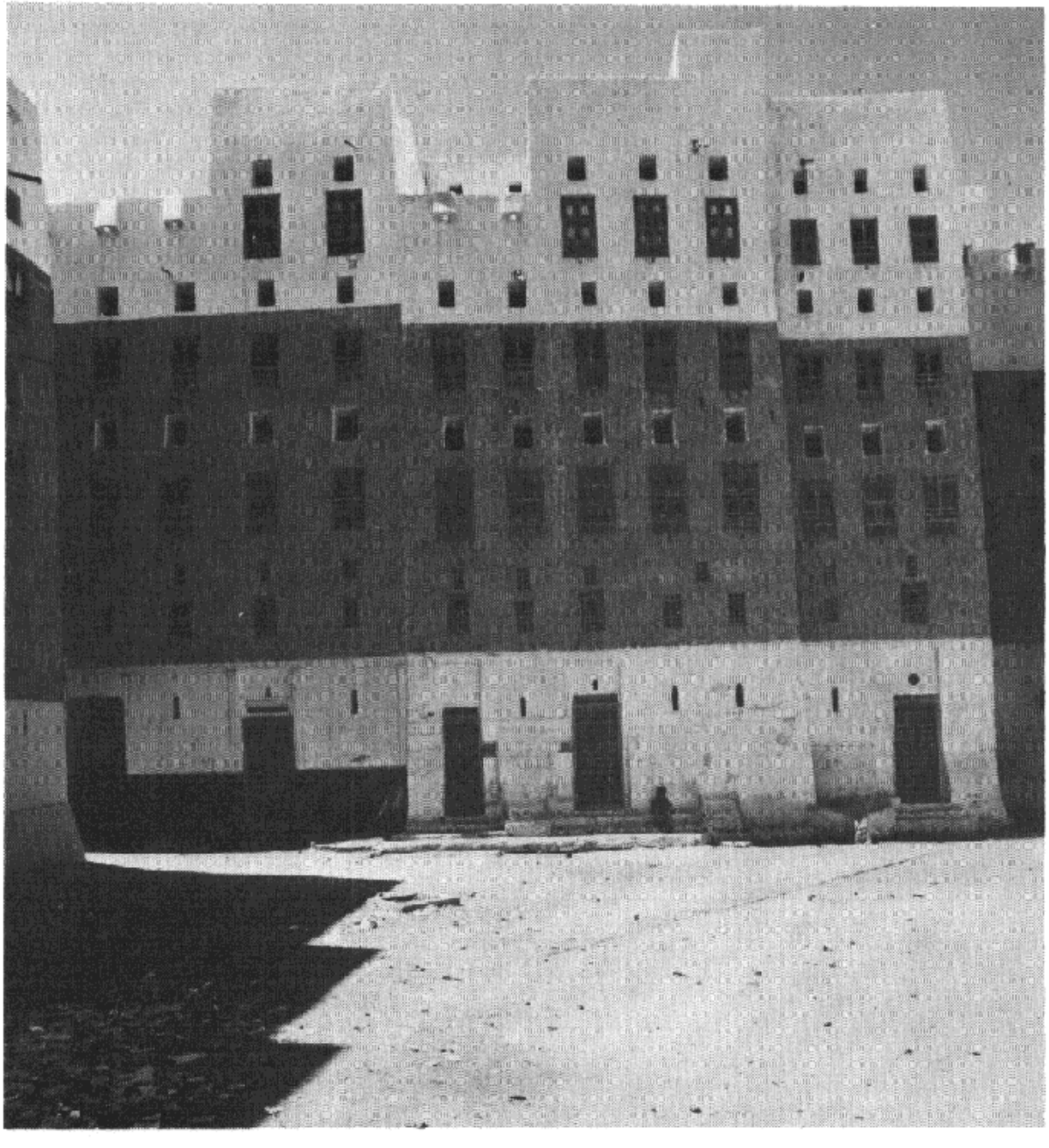
The old houses of Tarīm and of towns farther east had a unique distinguishing feature: the lower wall outside, up to a height of 5 or 8 m, had horizontal corrugations introduced into the mud-plaster, which resulted in a curiously sophisticated appearance. The entrance doors were generally emphasized by a rectangular white frame, which extended upwards to almost twice the height of the door to incorporate a large blind arch, containing a small pointed opening. Above the latticed windows there were frequently similar blind arches, in ogee or scalloped shapes, forming heads to the rectangular openings. A broad flight of mud steps led up to the entrance of each house.

The most splendid palace building, and indeed the largest building in the wādī, was the palace of the former Sulṭān in Saiʿūn. Like the palaces of Shibām, it was formerly plastered with warm brown earth and straw, and two white bands the width of the windows encircled its huge tapering bulk. A further thinner white line, on the parapet and roof terraces, and topped with pinnacles, finished the building against the blue sky. In the corners were domed round turrets. The palace rose from walled terraces, surrounded by guardhouses and noble gateways. A short distance away was the slightly smaller—but still grand and impressive—palace of the Sulṭān of Tarīm.

Internally, the old houses had corridors running right through the centre on every level. At the north end, where it was coolest, there would be a couple of skin bags hanging up containing drinking water, with a niche for cups in the wall near by. Below, a runnel in the floor took the water dripping from the skins to the outside. The upper floors which caught the wind were used in summer, the lower floors, which were better insulated, in winter. The reception-rooms had two, four, six or nine pillars; there were rows of three or four windows on two or more sides. There was no such thing as a bedroom; any of the rooms might be used for sleeping, by either men or women. During the daytime the bedding was kept in wall cupboards, the room being sparsely furnished with striped rugs and cushions around the walls. Wall niches contained brass and silver cups and samovars, and on the walls hung circular brass and woven basket trays for serving food and drink.

Bathrooms were generally spacious and had burnished white-plastered walls and floors, niches and pegs for hanging clothing and large earthenware water jars standing on the ground. People

30.
Shibām. Five tower houses facing onto a small city square on the northern side of the city.



washed themselves by using a water scoop with a handle, the water running out through a hole in the wall under the window. The bathrooms contained a lavatory with foot-rests and a neat wooden cover. There were at least two bathrooms of this type on every floor of a large Saiʿūn or Tarīm house; in addition there would be a small plunge-bath of masonry, about three metres square, usually near the room for private prayer, so that it could also be used for ablutions.

The newer buildings of the Saiyids who had returned from Singapore and Java were very ornate, with neo-baroque and neo-classical decoration executed in mud-plaster, but so well finished by Ḥaḍramī craftsmen in burnished whitewash, pastel colours and gold that it was indistinguishable from more expensive stones and stuccoes. These buildings were furnished with all the luxuries that could be brought in from the great colonial metropolises, laboriously transported on camel-back across the mountainous plateau from the Indian Ocean. They included floridly carved chairs, tables, mirrors and beds. The heavy, carved teak entrance doors and window-frames of these new houses were also imported from Malaya or Indonesia.

The walled city of Shibām

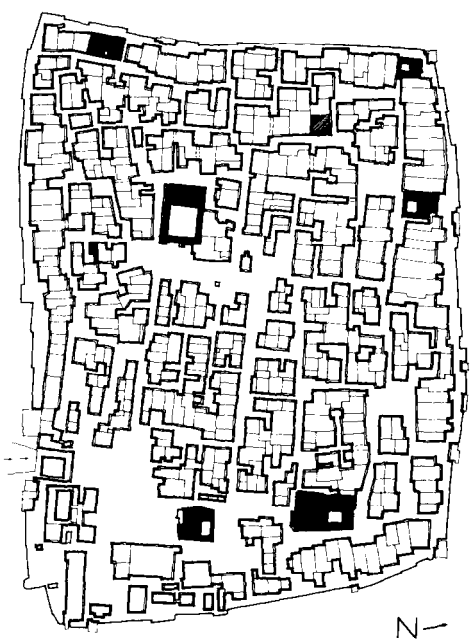
Character of the city

The old walled city of Shibām stands on an elevated mound to the north of the main wādī bed, not far below a point where a number of tributary wādīs converge. It is slightly on the west side of the 'middle lands' of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt. Its site is the best strategic situation in the whole area, at a point where the wādī narrows, and yet with an extensive hinterland of fertile side valleys.

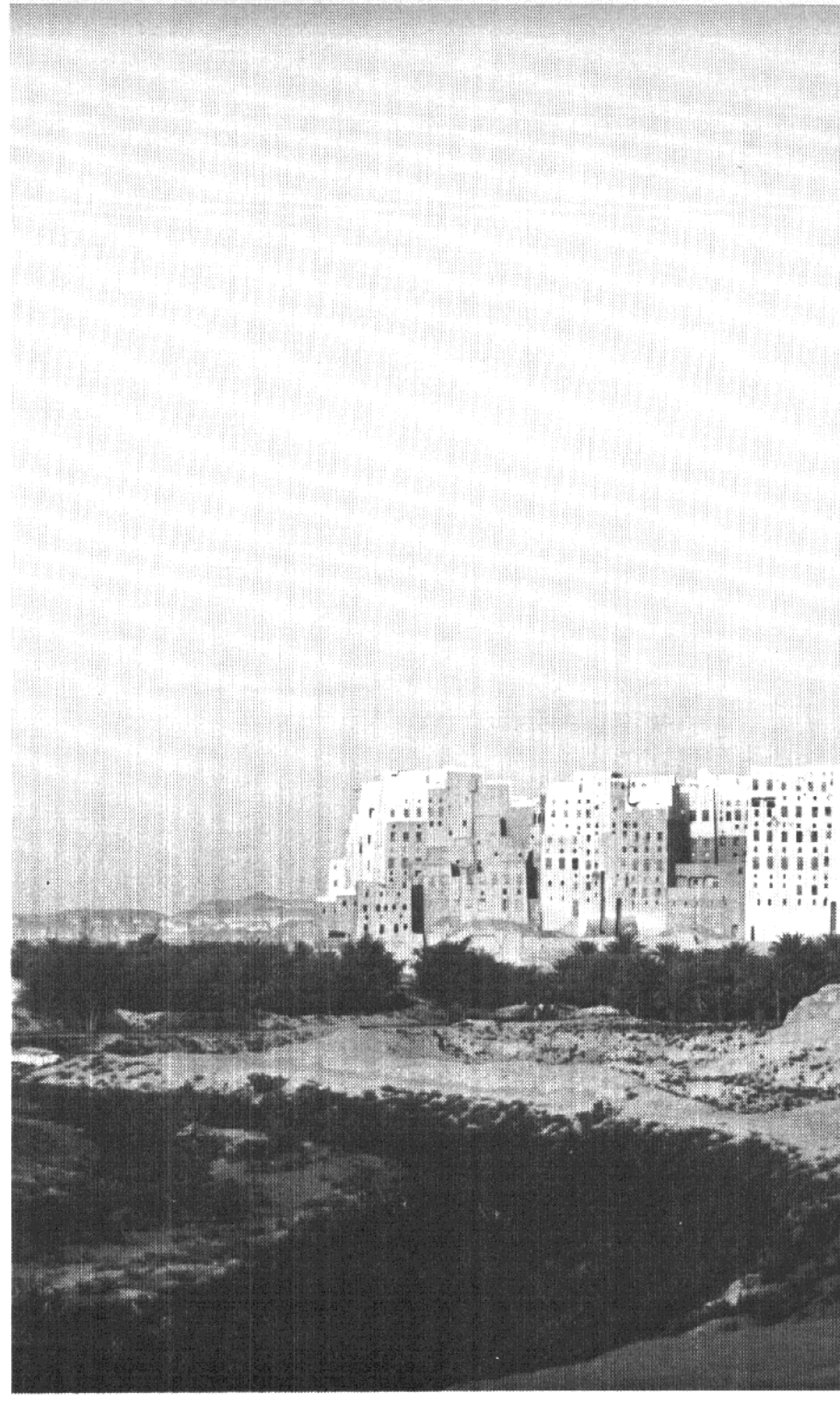
The city is unique in its concentration of tall houses upon the elevated mound that rises out in the valley floor; the mound is surrounded by a fortified city wall at its base. The tallest house rises 29.15 m above its entrance on street level and 36.51 m above the wādī bed. This house has eight floors; many others have seven storeys if they are on low-lying ground, but the average number of storeys is five. The highest houses crowd to the edge of the mound, to form more or less solid walls facing roughly east, south, west and north, of which the north and south sides are the longest. Surrounding the town on three sides are date plantations. On the fourth, the south side, lies the wādī bed.

The visual effect of the city has to some extent been marred within the last few years by the erection of a number of fairly high houses outside the walls on the wādī bed. One of the proposals contained in the plan of action of the international campaign for the safeguarding of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt is that the most recent of these buildings should be demolished, or at least reduced in height, to single-storeyed or at most double-storeyed buildings, so that they will set off, rather than mar, the extreme height of the buildings within the town.

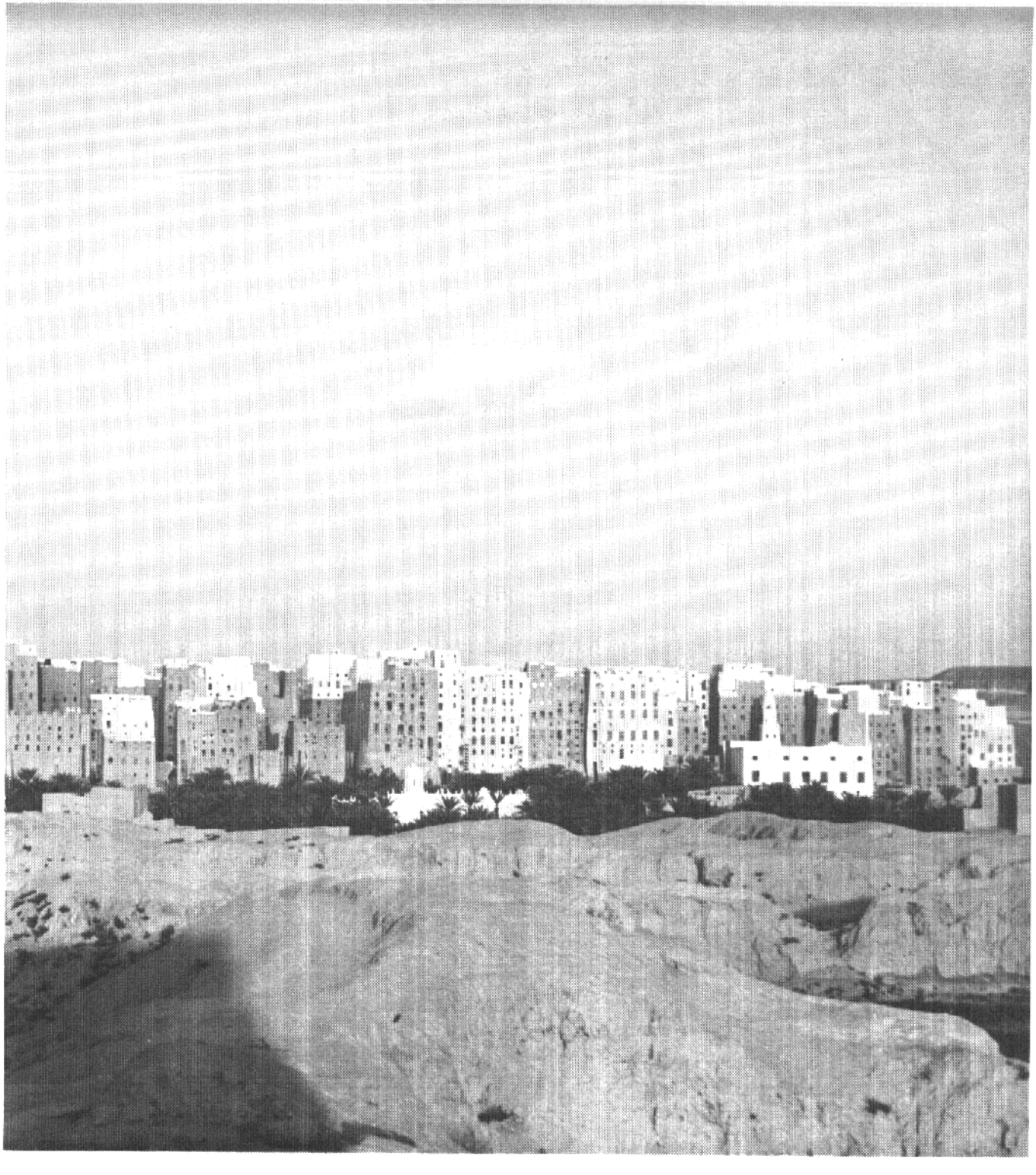
Across the wādī lies the suburb city of Siḥail, which was



VIII.
Plan of the old walled city of Shibām, with mosques indicated in black.



31.
Shibām. The west side of the old city seen from a distance.



earlier a garden suburb, but has become concentrated into an urban area in the last twenty years. It is not intended that this garden suburb should be included in the conservation area.

The walled city has slightly over 500 houses, and a population estimated today at more than 7,000. It is believed that this population is higher than that of a century ago, due to the subdivision of some of the houses into multi-family dwellings. There are at present five functioning mosques within the city walls, and one in ruins (which it is intended to restore). A further historic mosque, that of Sheikh Ma'rūf, situated in the date groves west of the city, will be included in the conservation zone.

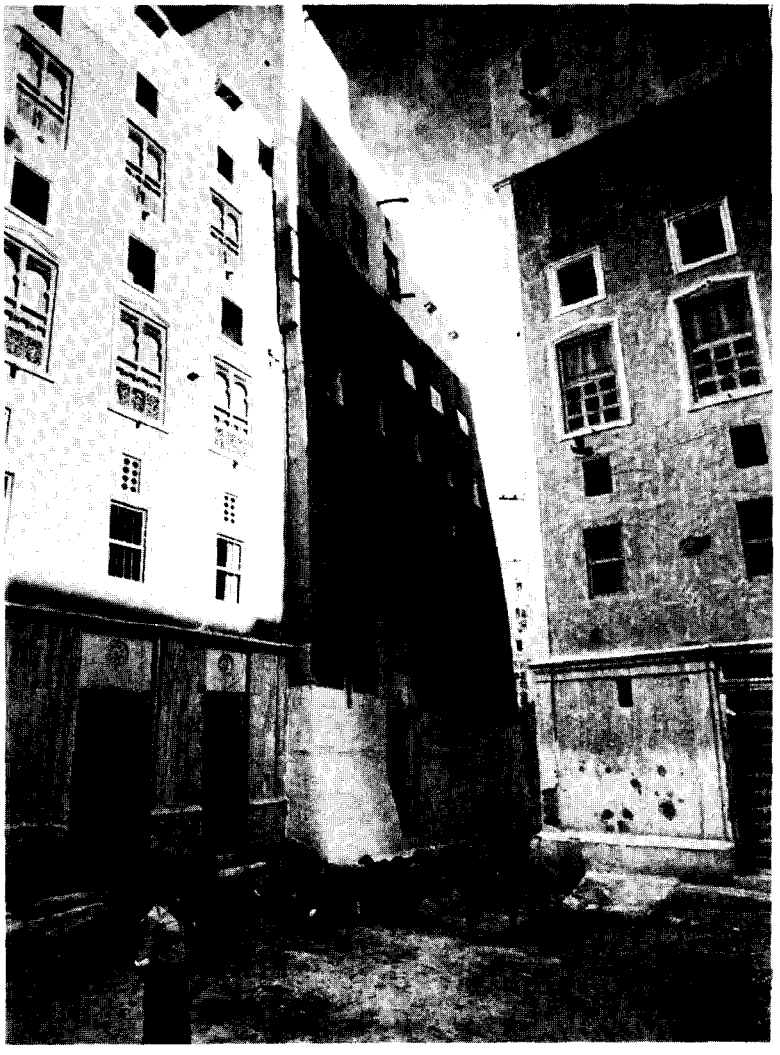
32.
Shibām. The staircase court of the house in Plate 33.



In addition to the tower houses and mosques, the old city has within it two palaces, one believed to be very old and to date in its present form back to its original construction in the thirteenth (seventh) century. The other is of more recent date, constructed around 1920 (1339). The city also has a school, a hospital, a traditional market and a modern market. The traditional market has been dismantled to some extent; it is hoped to reconstruct it in its original form, so that the modern market near the single gate of the city may no longer be necessary.

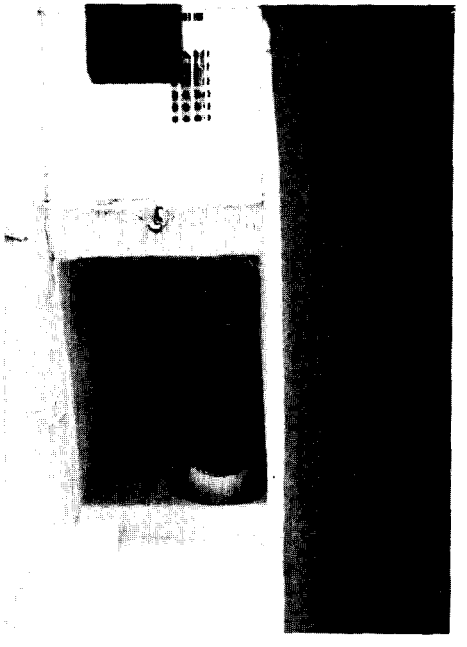
The traditional houses of Shibām are built of mud-brick, on stone foundations and with walls which taper on the outside from slightly less than 1 m thick at the bottom to less than 30 cm at the top. They are plastered externally with mud-plaster mixed with chopped straw, which shines when the sunlight strikes it. The top one or two levels of all the buildings are protected from rain by white lime plaster, which forms a continuous surface over all the roofs, parapets and outer walls, extending downwards in some cases about 5 m from the top. Hence the Arabs say that in the distance Shibām looks as though it is covered with snow.

No other town in Ḥaḍramawt is built so compactly or of such high houses as Shibām. A clue to the reason for this may be seen in the town plan, where streets which are more or less parallel cross each other at right angles. This kind of plan is likely to be the result of careful designing, probably at the time when the remaining available land of the city had to be reallocated after the disastrous flooding of the years 1298 (698) or 1532 (939). We know that in both cases the destruction of houses was widespread, and the present form of the city probably represents a consolidation of all the habitations on to the highest ground. Thenceforth the only possible expansion was upwards.

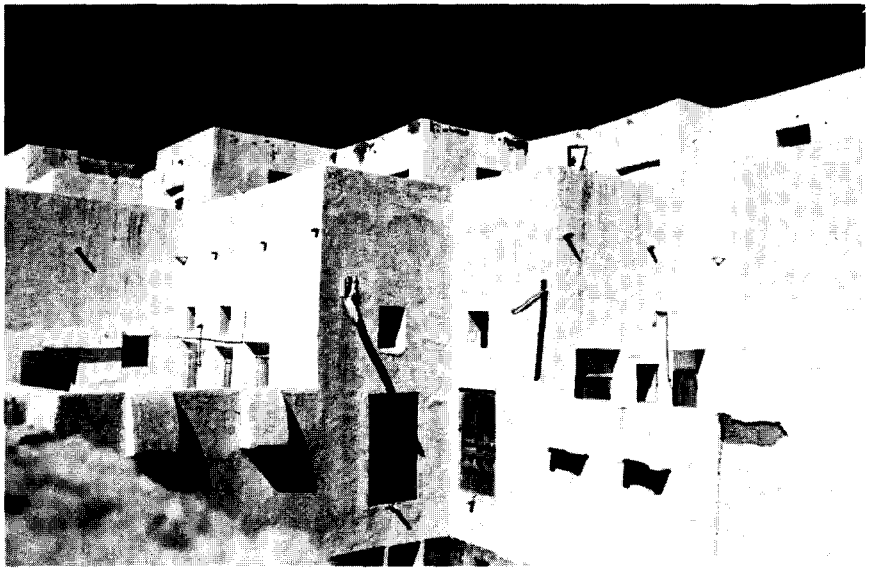


33.
Shibām. Looking up at the face of a recent house, built forty years ago.

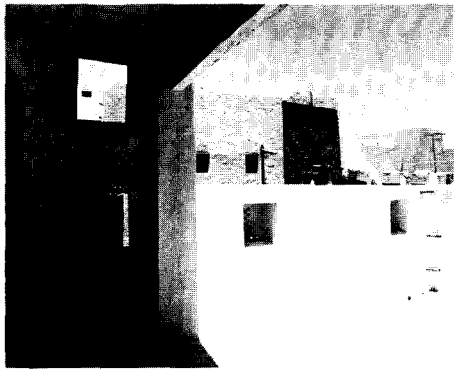
34.
Shibām. The base of the staircase court in Plate 32, showing the stone mills for grinding rock salt or grain.



Strict rules remained in force until recently in an attempt to control building within the area of the walls. No alterations could be made which did not conform closely to what was there before. Even the previous positions of doors and windows had to be exactly reproduced. This is one reason for thinking that, at least in form and basic disposition, the Shibām houses are likely to be close to an ancient type. But we may be certain that if owners



35.
Shibām. Roof terraces of the house illustrated in Plates 32–4, and its neighbours. Showing the manner in which the floors set back in the top two or three floors to create terraces on each level, screened by high walls.



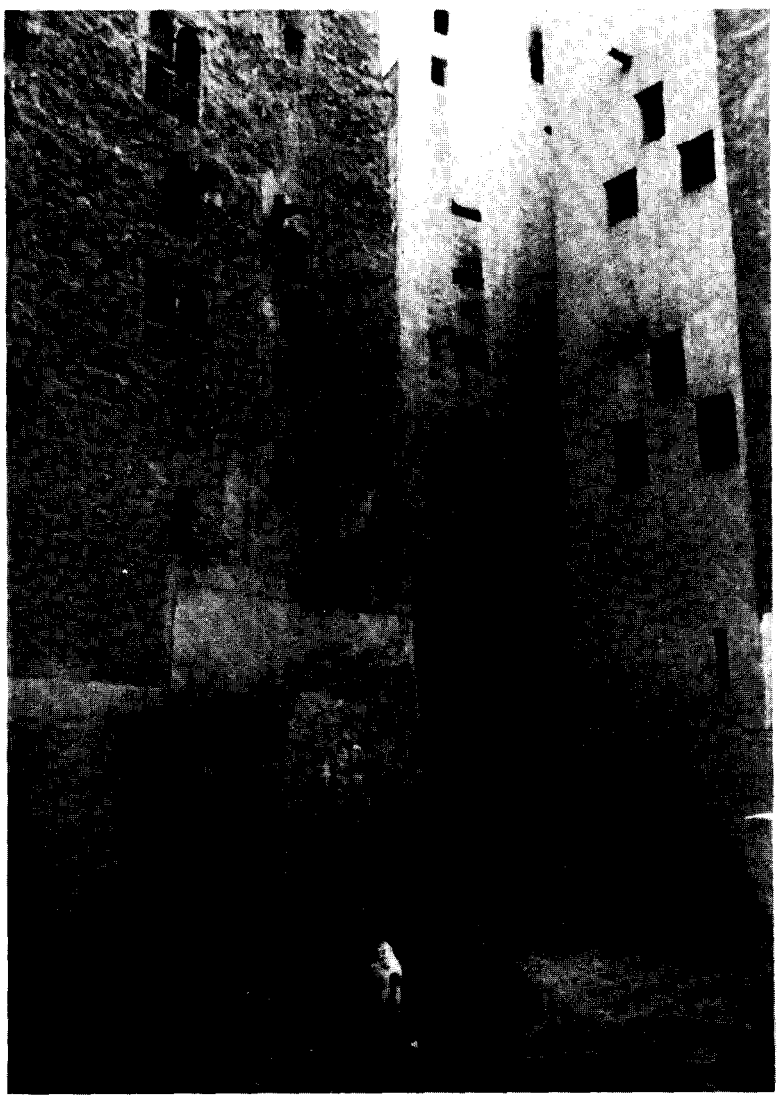
36.
Shibām. The roof terrace of a fine recent house. Opening off the main *majlis*, which is to the left.

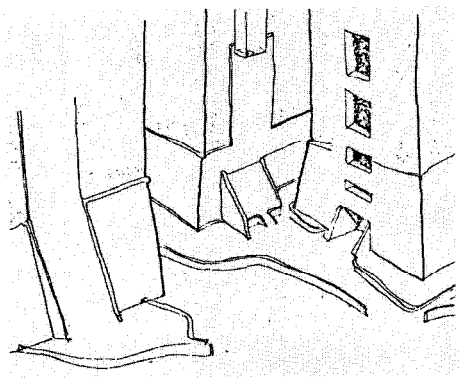
were persistent enough in persuading their fellow townsmen, some changes must eventually have been allowed, and these probably included extension upwards. Nevertheless, a view across the rooftops shows how remarkably uniform the building level is throughout the town. There is hardly any overlooking. Although the upper floors set back gradually as they near the top to allow the creation of terraces outside the family rooms, their privacy is more or less ensured by surrounding them with screen walls to above standing height.

In the sides or backs of the houses run sewerage chutes. These begin below the bathrooms as vertical ducts behind the outer wall; but some distance above the ground each begins to appear on the outside face, often as a series of rectangular openings of increasing size, or as a tall recessed niche in the wall of the building. Each ends at street level, above waist height, in a horizontal plastered platform where the waste matter collects. Traditionally, the solid waste was covered with ash night and morning by workers whose responsibility this was, and at periodic intervals it was cleared away to be used as fertilizer in the fields outside the town. In modern times the bottom of the chute was closed up with wire fly-screening.

Liquid wastes were discharged at bathroom level, away from

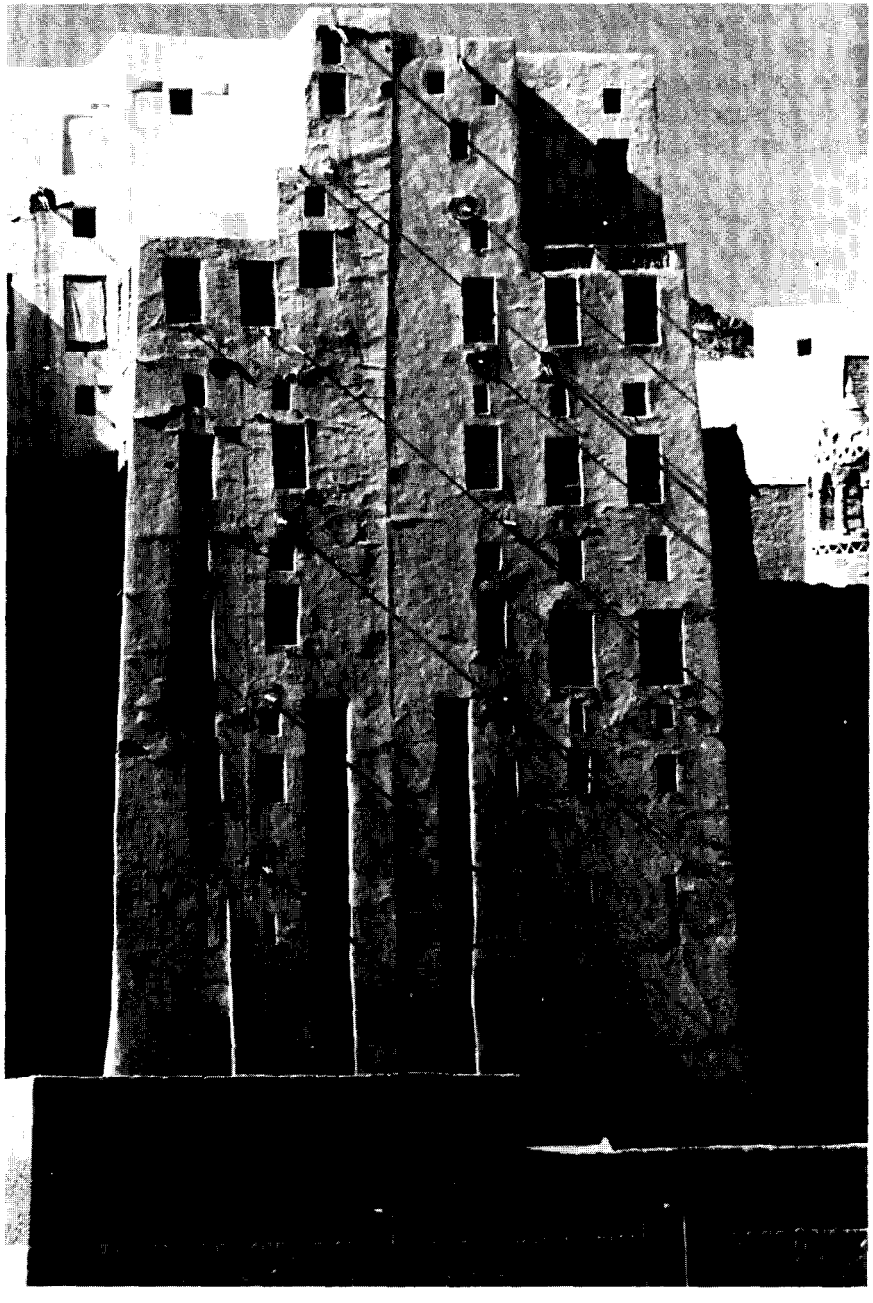
the face of the building, by the use of long wooden waterspouts, often made of split date-palm trunks. Where water was discharged in this manner at the sides or behind the houses, sloping plaster collecting platforms were constructed on the ground below the spouts, and the liquid was led away through





IX.
Shibām. The drainage system at the bottom of a house, with a chute for solid waste on the right. (Drawing by J. Seigne.)

37.
Shibām. A typical drainage situation in the old city, with waste water pouring from a wooden spout onto a splash-surface on the left, and the lower levels of a 'long drop' chute for solid soil on the right.

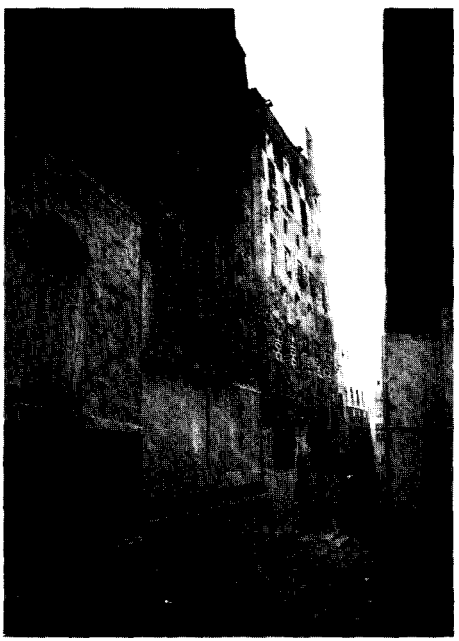


38.
Shibām. Characteristic tower houses on the northern side of the city, with the city wall in the foreground.

open drains to pass outside the city walls, or into cesspits. But in cases where bathrooms overlooked city streets, as may have happened through a lessening of strict controls at the end of the last century, foul water was sometimes allowed to fall unexpectedly on the heads of people below, and there were no proper means provided for draining it away.

The main streets, at least, were paved with stones. But as these became uneven through neglect, they were either removed or covered with earth. The paved streets were laid so that all water drained away from the bases of the houses and towards the



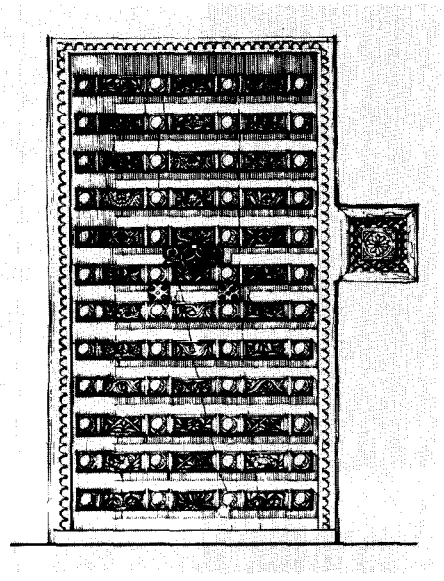


39.
Shibām. A typical city street. Note the splayed waterproof plaster dados, and the presence of some old overhanging storeys.

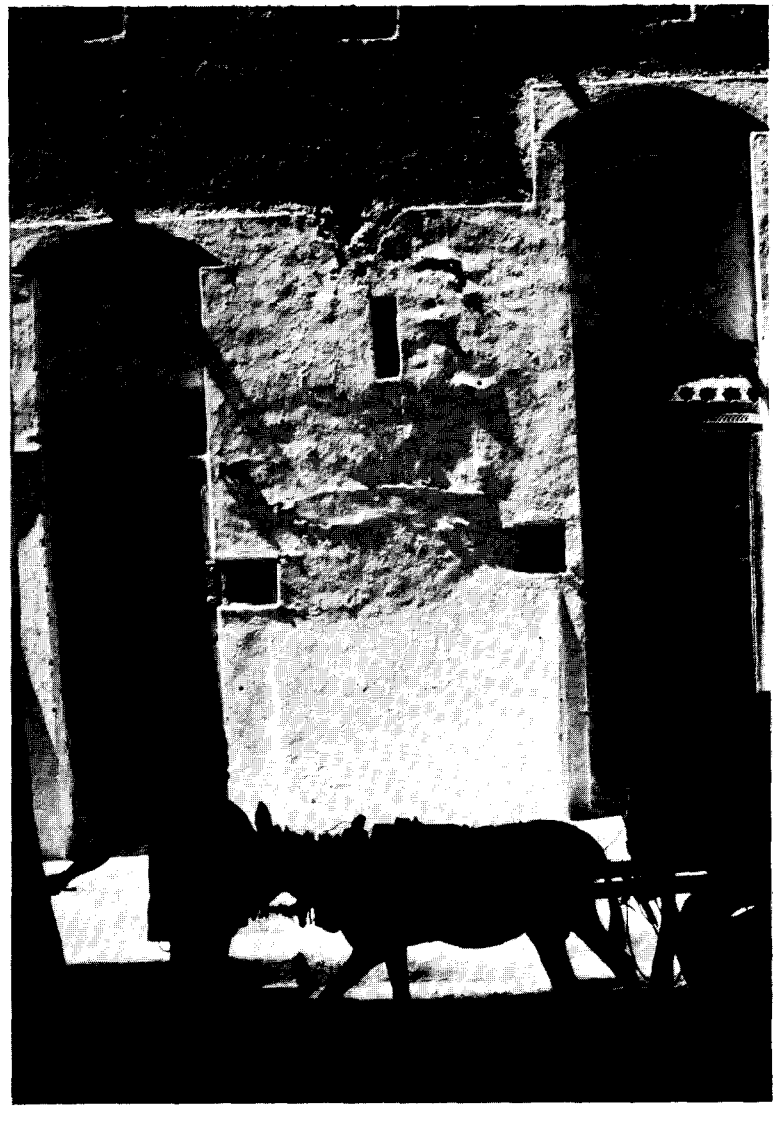
40.
Shibām. An old decorated lime/*ramād* plinth on one of the houses, commonly used to protect the lower wall surfaces against damage from rain splash and animals.

centre—an important provision in the event of heavy rains, when water soaking into the earth-mortared foundations and the clayey ground below them might cause major cracking and collapse.

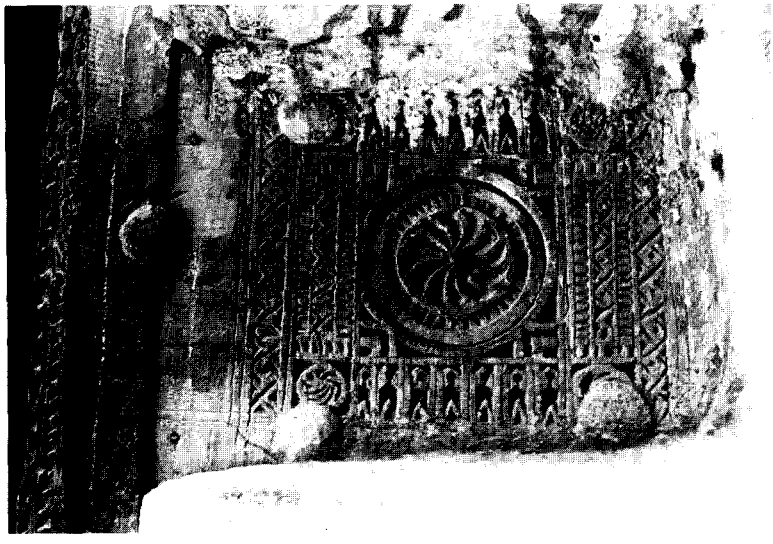
As further protection for the bases of the houses, it was the custom to face the lowest 1.5 or 2 m of the wall with a



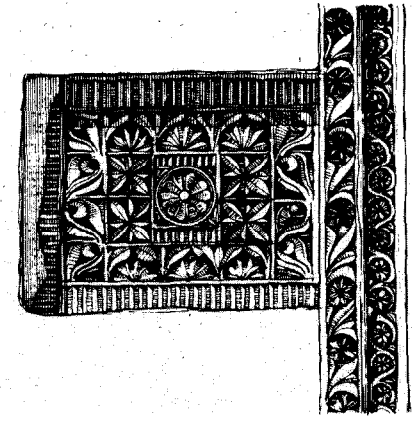
X.
Shibām. Carved decoration of a door with the adjoining unlocking box and its circular opening. (Drawing by J. Gire.)



41.
Two decorated doors in the narrow street in Shibām shown in Plate 27.



42.
Shibām. Carved decoration on the circular wooden cover and wall plate of a characteristic unlocking box next to a doorframe (cf. Plate 41).



XI.
Shibām. Carved decoration on the cover of an unlocking box and its frame next to a door. (Drawing by J. Gire.)

whitewashed dado of waterproofed plaster, made of lime and wood ashes, called *ramād*. At the base, the dado was taken out horizontally for a metre or so to complete the protection of the foundation. The dados were frequently given ornamental mouldings along the top edges and on the corners.

All the doors of the houses were closed on the inside by rough locks of wood or, very exceptionally, of iron. The heavy main door was closed by means of a large wooden latch which could be drawn back by a cord passing through all the storeys above, thus avoiding the necessity of the women going downstairs to open it. (Projecting masonry or wooden water cooling boxes high up in the buildings sometimes allowed the women to look down on the person at the street door without being observed. Otherwise they had to lean out of a latticed window opening or rely on a coded knock.) In the outside wall next to the street door was a small circular wooden framed opening, just large enough for the insertion of a person's arm. This allowed the wooden lock to be unlocked from inside with the traditional wooden pronged key, looking somewhat like a very large toothbrush; then the heavy bolt could be pushed back and the door opened. The decoration of the panel containing this circular opening, and its cover, provided an excuse for some of the most original and artistic wood carving in the city.



43.
Shibām. Characteristic inhabitants of the first floor above street level greeting their friends.

The disposition of accommodation in the Shibām houses was very similar to that described above. The ground floor was used for animal stalls and food stores, the first floor above for stalls for small animals (sheep, goats and rabbits), and for firewood, grain and vegetable stores. The second floor was reserved for business and for the entertaining of strangers by the men. The private part of the house began above that, the women and children usually having priority of use of the third and fourth floors above ground, and the men sharing with them the entertaining and relaxing rooms and terraces on the topmost two or three floors.

The *majlis*, or reception-room, was characterized in the older houses by the presence of a coffee hearth in one corner. This little plastered dais on the floor served as a platform for the charcoal or wood fire which heated the coffee pots, and here the host or hostess squatted to grind the coffee beans or husks in a mortar and to serve the guests. Behind, in the corner of the walls, were niches specially shaped to take the pestle and mortar, the charcoal box and the cups, and one niche had a lockable door so that the precious ingredients could be kept safely. The function of the coffee hearth was subsequently replaced by a large brass or silver tray kept prepared with cups, urns and samovars.

The rooms were lit by pottery or stone lamps containing wicks and burning sesame oil. The walls of the rooms had niches and wooden hooks on which the men might hang their coats, shawls and turbans, and weapons if they were carrying them.

The staircases and corridors of the house were covered with white or cream-washed plaster; it was made with egg-whites and burnished with flint so that it shone like marble. The same colour and material spread across the ceilings and floors, so that the visitor was cocooned in a single, dazzling colour. These spaces were frequently repainted, and kept spotless, for the housewives prided themselves on the cleanliness of the floors and steps, a laborious daily task in such high buildings.

At high levels in many of the houses small doors allowed access through to neighbouring houses, so that the women could visit each other without the inconvenience of veiling and descending into the street.

In two of the houses of Shibām, belonging to the family of the imāms, there were large rooms used for gatherings of devout citizens for religious instruction and discussion. One of these, in a large house on the southern wall, was a fine room with six

columns supporting the roof, known as *'umm al-sitte*; at the western end it had a *qibla* containing a *miḥrāb*, decorated in plaster. It was used by the men of the city. In a house on the western wall was a similar room, slightly smaller in size, used by the women.

There were schools within, or in one case above, many of the mosques. They have mostly been replaced in recent years by centralized government schools. The double-storeyed mosque-madrasah, that of Ḥārah, in the north-west corner, was neglected and has collapsed.

The encircling city wall was, on the rampart side, originally higher than a human being; it was subsequently reduced in height until it exists now only at waist height.

The city wall had a double-storeyed guard post, a *kut*, in each of its four corners. These *kuts* have not been used for some years and have fallen into ruin; two, at the southern corners, have disappeared. Here, until quite recently, it was still possible to hear the sound of the watchmen's conch-shell trumpets.

The original gate of the city was a small whitewashed building overlooking the *sā'il*, the bed of the main wādī. The gatehouse had two openings, a large one to the east for camels, horses and other animals and a small doorway to the west for



44.
Shibām. The entrance hall of Bayt Ṣalāḥ Bāzuhayr, one of the oldest houses in the old city.



45.
Shibām. A reception-room in Bayt Ṣalāḥ Bāzuhayr. Note the decoration, including a niche to indicate the direction of prayer. In the foreground, a tray prepared to entertain visitors to tea or coffee.

pedestrians. There were rooms above for the guard and a customs post between the two gateways, for every camel-load of goods entering the city was taxed. In front of the gatehouse a stepped ramp led down to the wādī bed, where women collected water in goatskins from wells for use in the town.

Within the gate to the east, the palaces of the two sulṭāns (for in the mid-twentieth (late fourteenth) century control of the city was shared) were of brown mud-plaster, decorated with wide white bands at the level of the windows like the palace at Sai'ūn. Opposite the gate was the whitewashed mosque of al-Khokha with its ancient square minaret surmounted by a later cylindrical one. The mosque and its minaret were rebuilt in the 1940s (1380s), as was the gateway to the city. The latter now has a much grander design, with a large arched outer gate, flanked by square



46.
Shibām. The north-east corner of the city wall, showing the deserted, ruined buildings of the guards at the corner of the ramparts.



towers, one containing the pedestrian doorway, and an inner gateway of the same design. Between the two lies a square court, flanked by arcaded shops, no longer tenanted.

In the wādī bed indigo dyers once plied their craft, using dried powdered indigo leaves soaked in water from the wells. The camel trains stopped in the open sandy grounds, where their characteristic black tents were pitched. On the western side of the city, beyond the date-palm groves and the beautiful outlying mosque of Sheikh Maʿrūf, were the dusty wastes of the cemetery, each grave marked with a modest pile of stones. Even today, when buildings have begun to sprout outside the walls on the south and the drawers of water and the dyers are gone, there remains a pervading sense of immutability and timelessness about this ancient, soaring, proud city.

47.
Shibām. The east end of the old city seen from the southern escarpment. The gate of the city is seen right of centre, with al-Khokha mosque behind it, and further right the two buildings which were once Sulṭāns' palaces. The houses in the foreground, on the near side of the wādī, are those of Sihail.

History of Shibām

The earliest reference to Shibām is that made in a pre-Islamic inscription of the third century A.D., as reported by Grohmann in his *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. According to the tenth (fourth) century historian al-Hamdānī, Shibām became the capital of Ḥaḍramawt after the destruction of Shabwah (see pages 26–8), and it was to this town that the people of Shabwah fled, 'calling the place Shibām, which was originally called Shibāt'. It is not known whether the town at that time stood precisely on the site of the present city, although the existence of the raised mound on which the walled city is built, rising more than 6 m above the surrounding flood plain, suggests the accumulation of ruins over a long period. On the other hand, this raised knoll has not been excavated by archaeologists, and it may yet be proved simply a natural outcrop of the mountain spur behind it.

Close to the walled city of old Shibām there are two major archaeological sites. Jūjah, 3 km to the north-west, has been at various times a quarry for large squared building stones; Gabusa, 3 km to the north-east, was the site of the discovery of a large and splendid Assyrian-style bronze lion's head (now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, United Kingdom). It is clear that only archaeological excavation will indicate the original nature of these sites and the location and extent of ancient Shibām.

A king of Ḥaḍramawt, Qaisabah ibn Kalthum al-Kindī, said to have been born in Shibām prior to the birth of the Prophet, played a prominent role in the conquest of Egypt by the Arab armies in 648 (27). An agent of the Prophet Muḥammad made Shibām the seat of Islamic government of western Ḥaḍramawt.

In 746 (129), under the leadership of 'Abd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā, Shibām rejected the authority of the Umayyads and thenceforth remained a base for the opposition of western and central Ḥaḍramawt to Umayyad control. The city subsequently became the seat of Ibāḍī rule, which prevailed until the eleventh (fifth) century.

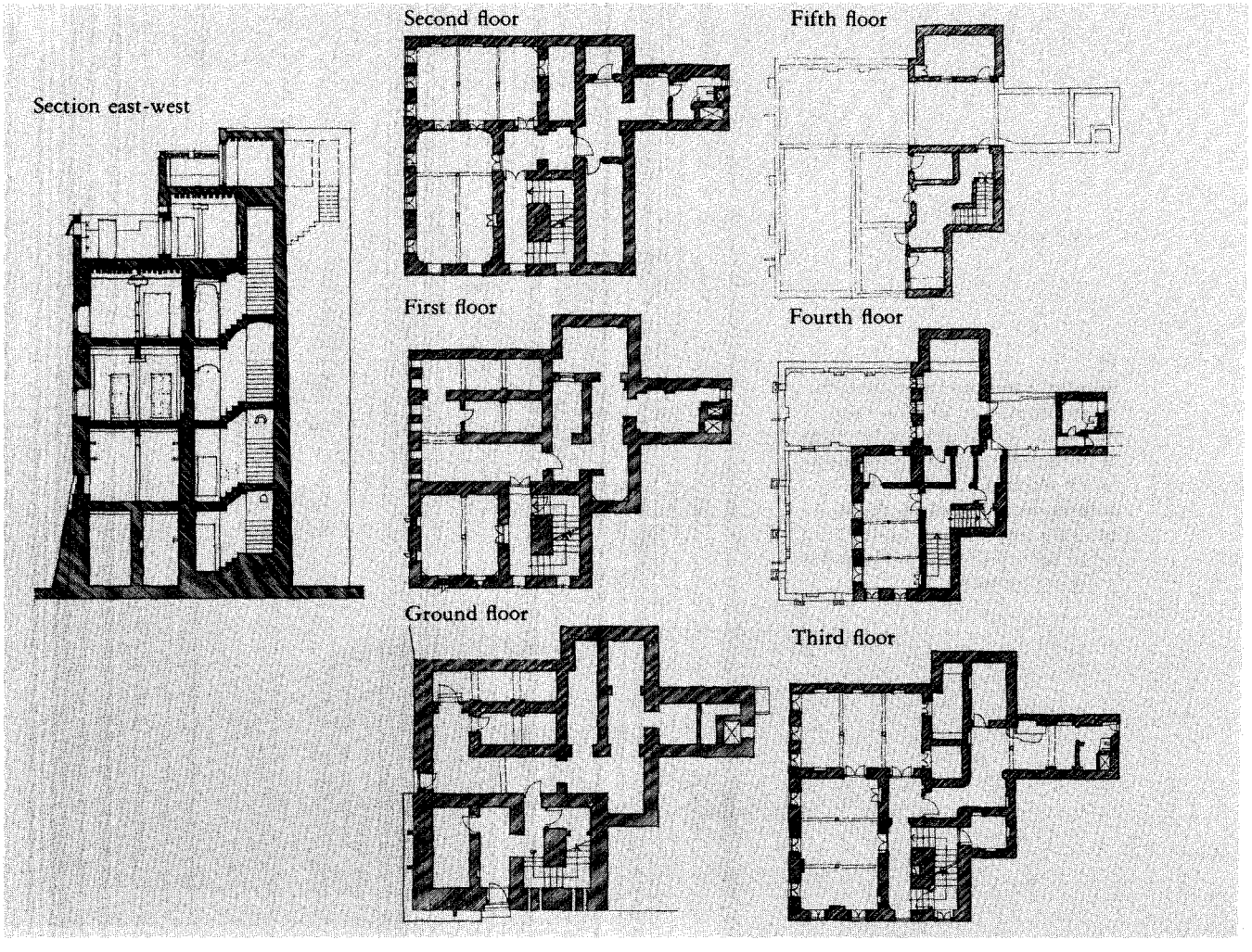
The city in the early tenth (fourth) century was very large. But it was pillaged and razed to the ground by the Kindah tribes; at that time, according to al-Hamdānī, it was the commercial centre of the wādī and had thirty mosques which were destroyed. It must have recovered, however, for in 1055 (47) the city resisted the invasion of Sulaiḥids from Yemen.



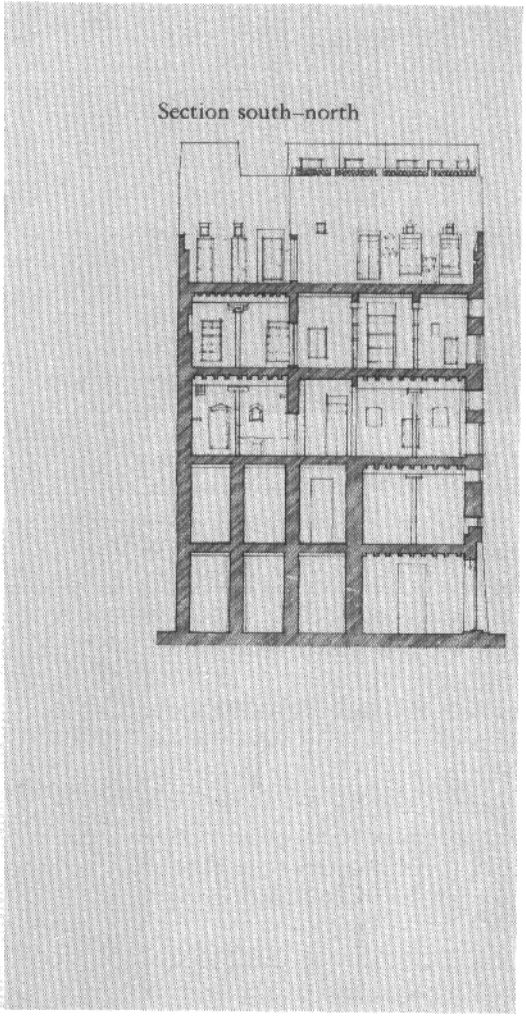
48.
Shibām. Exterior of Bayt Jarhūm, a house believed to be more than 400 years old. At the bottom right is an example of recent propping of the old houses in the city, necessitated by cracking due to groundwater. Vertical baulks of wood have been used, supported by a sloping buttress.

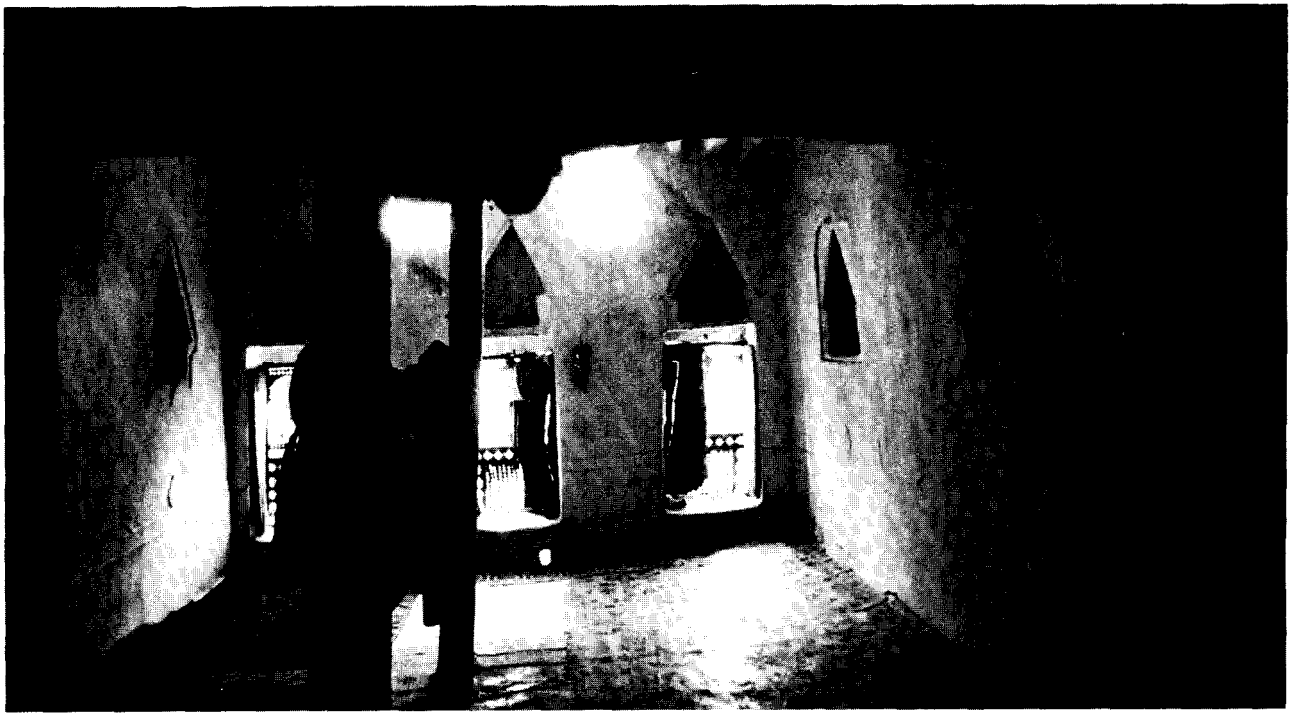
In 1065 (460), the Banū Addaghār established Shibām as their capital. In 1219 (616) forces led by the ibn Mahdī, followers of the Ayyūbids from Yemen, conquered the city, which remained the seat of the ruler of western Ḥaḍramawt until 1520 (927); then Badr Abū Ṭwaireq shifted his residence to Tarīm, which thus became the first capital of the Kathīrī Sulṭānate. Throughout its history Shibām was the commercial centre of the wādī: dates and textiles were sent from there to the port of Shiḥr for export.

XII.
Shibām. Plans and sections of Bayt Jarhūm, a house reputed to be more than 400 years old. (See also Plates 48, 50–3, 55, 56.)



49.
Shibām. One of the oldest surviving houses, dating from the mid-eighteenth (late twelfth) century. Note the archaic forms of fanlight above the windows on the second and third storeys at right.





50.
Shibām. Interior of a *majlis* in Bayt Jarhūm.

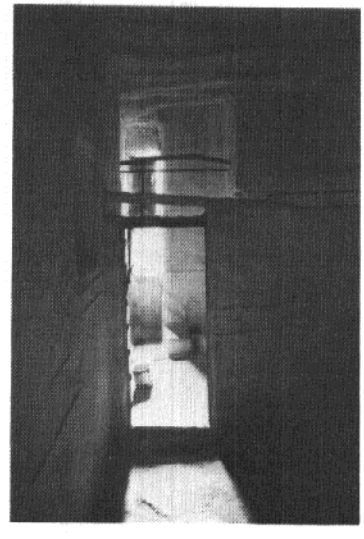
The earliest known building in the city is the Friday mosque, apparently first erected on the site in 753 (133) and rebuilt by order of the Calīph Hārūn al-Rashīd in 904 (294). The construction of the lower wall at the north-west corner and in the centre of the eastern side is of baked brick—very unusual in Shibām. It appears that this mosque was subsequently damaged several times, for it is recorded that it was repaired by Ḥusain ibn Salama from Yemen in 981 (371) and rebuilt between 1319 (719) and 1346 (747); the arches of the arcades and the east façade stylistically confirm these dates. It is possible that the columns survive from the earliest mosque or from that of Hārūn al-Rashīd, particularly the column to the south of the *miḥrāb* in the first arcade of the prayer hall. The old square stone minaret of this mosque was rebuilt around 1965 (1390). Another mosque, that of al-Khokha, is also known to date back in its foundation over 1,000 years.

The old castle (*ḥiṣn*) of Shibām, later one of the Sulṭāns' palaces, is thought to have originally been used as the seat of

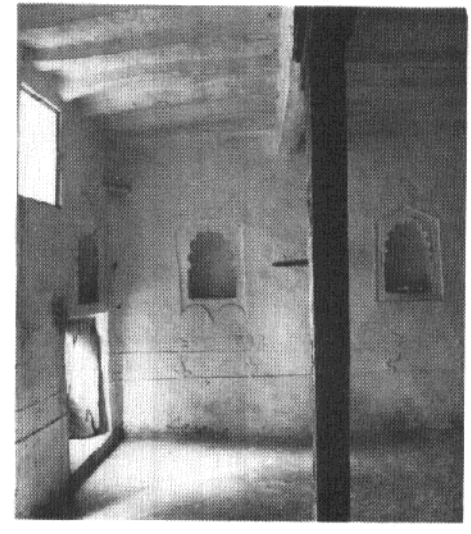


51.
Shibām. The interior of the corner room on the fourth-floor level in Bayt Jarhūm.

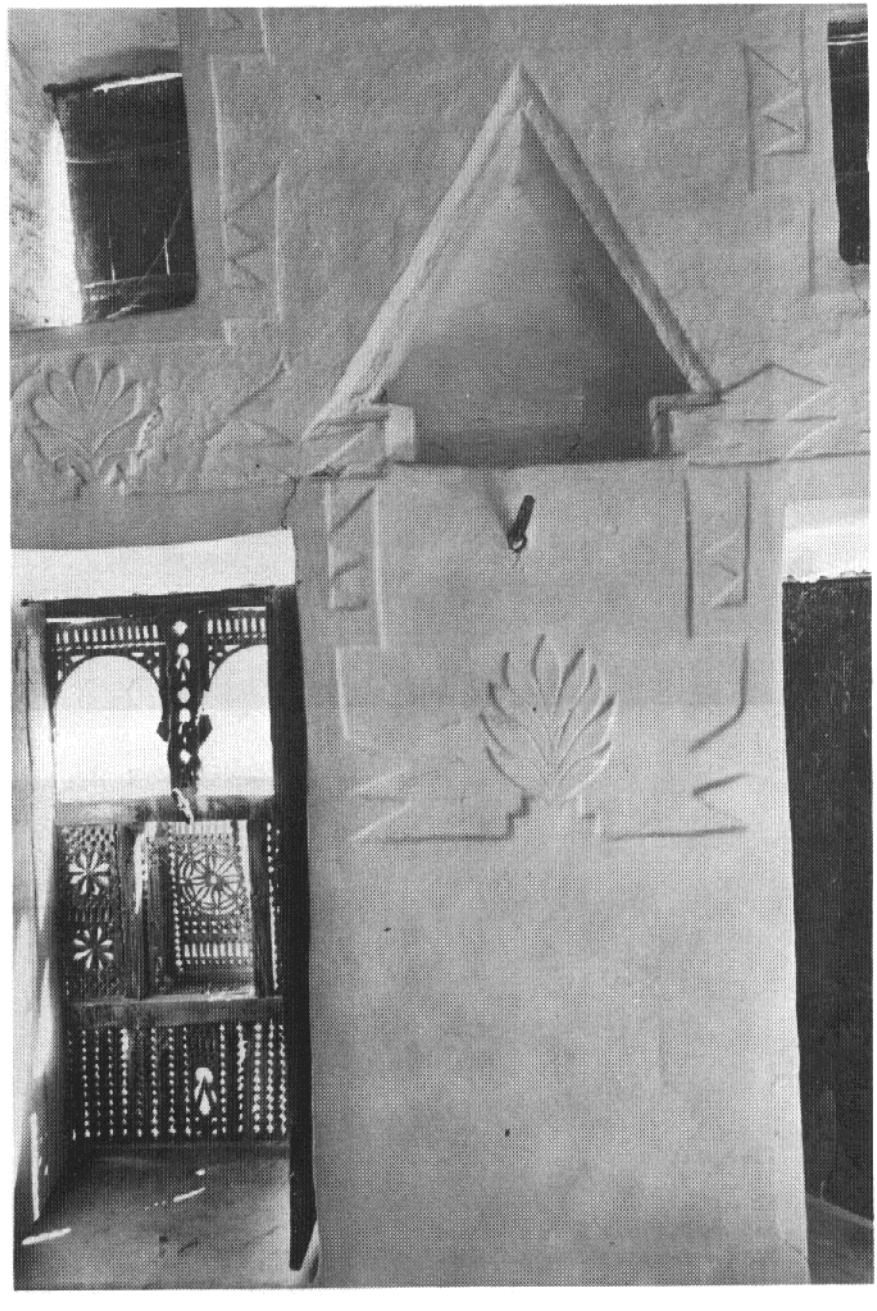
53.
Shibām. Part of an upper room in Bayt Jarhūm, with its windows at floor level to permit people sitting on the floor to look down.



52.
Shibām. Bathroom in Bayt Jarhūm. With lavatory to the right, inside the doorway.



54.
Shibām. Latticed window, wall niche, plaster decoration and shuttered upper fanlights of an old house.

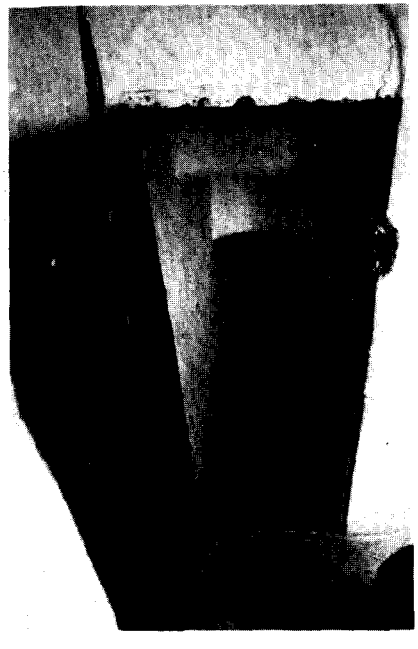


government in 1220 (617), and is said to have been enlarged a year later by the ruler ibn Mahdī. It was renovated, but apparently not markedly changed, in 1909 (1327).

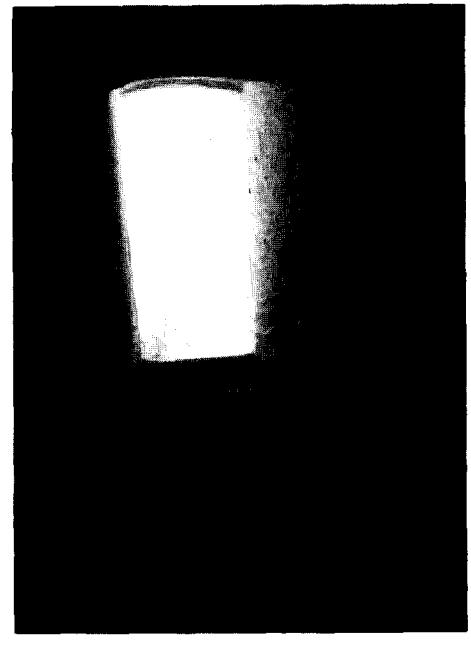
The thirteenth (seventh) century city is believed to have been much larger than it is now, but a series of flash floods, in particular two devastating deluges in 1298 (698) and 1532 (939), destroyed a considerable part of it. The earlier of these two floods destroyed fields as well as parts of the city, including three mosques. After the second great flood a system of dams was built to deflect future flood waters. The lowest was the Muza' dam, which has been continually repaired ever since, so that no major damage has been done by flood waters since the sixteenth (tenth) century. The walled city is believed to have essentially retained its form since that time.

The mosque of Sheikh Ma'rūf outside the wall in the palm groves to the west of the city is said by historians to be 400 years old, although it has been rebuilt several times.

The oldest house is reputed to be Bayt Jarhūm, variously claimed to be 400 or 500 years old; there is no direct evidence of its age, though its decoration, which is very fine and extensive,



55.
Shibām. Staircase going up to the topmost level of Bayt Jarhūm.



56.
Shibām. Staircase in Bayt Jarhūm. With the characteristic plaster dado.

seems to date stylistically from the late sixteenth (tenth) century. The oldest house doorframe dated with certainty is that of Bayt ʿAlī ibn Ḥayāsa, dated A.H. 1130 (1717), while another old door is that of Bayt ʿAbd Allāh bil-Faqīh, dated either A.H. 1118 or 1180 (1706 or 1767). A number of other houses have slightly later dates. There is considerable other evidence to show that the mid-eighteenth (twelfth) century was a period of prosperity. At the end of that century a new wave of emigration to Indonesia *c.* 1820–80 (1237–97) resulted in there being many extremely wealthy overseas Ḥaḍramīs. Many houses can be dated ranging from 1880 (1297) to 1915 (1333). Old houses were still being carefully restored and renewed by their owners up to twenty years ago.

In modern times the city suffered from warfare between neighbouring sulṭāns. As a result, it did not experience the wealth and expansion of Saiʿūn and Tarīm, which is one of the reasons why it has remained relatively unchanged. The other main reason is the tight-knit, ultra-conservative way of life within the city walls.

Many poets have praised the beauty of Shibām. One verse goes: 'O sublime city of Shibām—thou art the city of Ḥaḍramawt.'

Traditional building construction

The buildings use local earth/straw brick covered externally with earth/straw plaster as their universal method of construction. Sometimes timber beams are inserted in the walls for reinforcement, but they and the windows and doors are vulnerable to attack by insects if the wood is not properly selected. Only at the top and bottom of the building is waterproof lime plaster used.

The earth. Tests have shown that the material of the bricks and mortar is of excellent quality, unusually high in its content of binding agent, clay (about 10 per cent). This is because the earth was traditionally gathered from around the roots of the date palms, a practice which the government has now prohibited. The builders are therefore using earth gathered from the non-agricultural parts of the wādī, where there is less clay and humus. It is hoped that further study will permit the discovery of natural

clay deposits with which to strengthen the bricks and mortar again. In the meantime, an inferior practice of reusing fallen earth from old buildings is being discouraged, since it has generally lost its clay and is full of salts.

The wood. The principal structural difficulty in building the Shibām houses was the problem of finding timber long enough. There is some evidence that in ancient times teak imported from India was used, at least in some of the buildings. In recent decades, the importation of teak, and also of wood from Africa, has revived. But for much of its long history Shibām had available only two woods for building, *elb* or *sidr*, known as *himr* when it gets old and hard, and *ithl* or tamarisk. Neither species grows to any great height, so the beams of the rooms tended to be limited to about 3.5 m. Longer beams, to cross large rooms on columns, were sometimes jointed longitudinally, or *'ariata* wood was used, obtained from the few areas where this taller species grew (although long beams were extremely difficult to transport over the rough terrain on camel-back—so beams of great length were rarely employed). There were ancient restrictions against cutting trees in many areas of the wādī, and the government today is enforcing the protection of the indigenous flora, so that *elb* wood can now be obtained only with extreme difficulty and at great expense. Traditionally, this wood was also used for all the doors, window screens, shutters and cupboards. In the most exposed situation it lasted fifty or sixty years. But internally it was regarded as indestructible. If the trees were felled in winter, the preferred season, there was little sap rising in the wood and it was accepted as insect-proof. Termites were rare in Shibām, and since the main beams were mostly of this wood, they were almost never replaced. (The only exceptions were splitting due to settlement, or overloading due to building higher storeys carelessly over the beams.) The small beams, which spanned crosswise, approximately twelve in each bay, were sometimes attacked or became rotten. This would happen if *ithl* had been used for them rather than *elb*. If four or five were rotten in a single section they were replaced, or perhaps the whole floor construction was redone and the beams replaced.

If exposed to the weather, *ithl* wood lasted only about fifteen years. It was consequently a much cheaper wood, used only in poor houses.

The foundations. The site was cleared first and trenches for the walls dug down until a hard layer was reached, usually about 1.6 m below ground level. The trench to receive the foundations was one and a half times to twice the dimension intended for the wall thickness at ground level. The bottom of the trench was first covered with a layer of animal droppings 3 cm deep. On top of this, rock salt was laid to a depth of 8 cm, which made the ground very strong. Then wooden (*elb*) logs 10–20 cm in diameter were laid parallel to the length of the wall, and of the same width as the trench. Small stones were used to fill the interstices between the logs and to bring the foundation footing up to a uniform level. Then a layer of *ramād* (lime/ash mortar) was laid, on to which a first course of rubble stones was placed. Successive courses of stone brought the foundation wall up to above ground level. In the best-quality work all the stones were laid in *ramād*. Only in work of inferior quality was the core of the mortarwork of earth, with merely the faces on the outside of the foundation wall plastered with *ramād* or lime mortar. The width of the stone foundation wall tapered inward slowly until it reached the intended width of the mud-brick wall. But the stonework continued up above ground 50 cm to 1 m before the first brick course was laid.

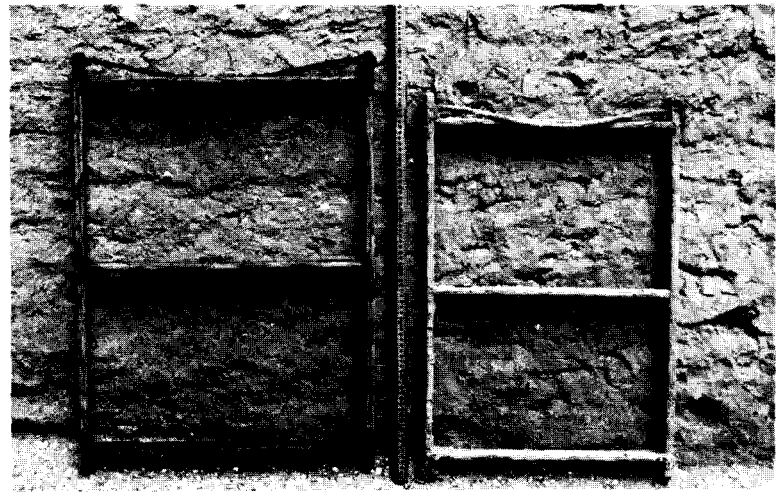
The foundations described above were of the very best types for the highest houses. Lower and poorer houses might omit the *ramād* mortar and use only clay. And in the poorest constructions there were no stone foundations at all, but unburnt clay bricks were used instead, rising from the *elb* logs.

The building unit of measurement. The unit employed by the builders was the *dhirāʿ*, which may have varied here, as it did elsewhere in Islam. But in the last forty years it seems to have approximated 45.8 cm. All parts of the building were referred to by the builders as fractions or multiples of the *dhirāʿ*.

The staircase pier. The strongest part of any house was the central pier of the staircase, the *ʿarūs al-bayt*, often built throughout most of its height of rubble stonework even when all the remainder of the structure was of mud-brick. It was usually at least approximately $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3$ *dhirāʿ* (1.5 × 1.25 m) in plan. In the best work the stone pier was reputedly set in lime/ash, i.e. *ramād*, mortar. But the majority of the staircase piers were probably of



57.
Shibām. Workmen repairing a plaster wall high above the street; the rope cradle is fixed to the parapet at the top of the house.



58.
Shibām. The frames for making two of the five sizes of mud-bricks used in the construction of the tower houses. (Each of the frames is a mould for two bricks.)

stone laid in earth mortar, and many changed to mud-brick at quite a low level.

The mud-bricks. The bricks were made from sandy soil containing some clay, which was mixed with fine chaff or chopped straw. Enough water was added to produce a malleable mud, and the bricks were cast immediately, without any puddling process, using a wooden frame of the type illustrated in Plate 58. Five sizes of brick were normally used in a house. At the ground-floor level, the dimensions of the bricks were $1\frac{1}{10} \times \frac{7}{10}$ *dhirāʿ* (50.5 × 32.75 cm), the second-size bricks were $\frac{9}{10} \times \frac{2}{3}$ *dhirāʿ* (42.5 × 30.5 cm) and so on to the fifth-size bricks which measured 0.55 × 0.53 *dhirāʿ* (25.5 × 23 cm).

The thickness of the wall. This was correspondingly: on the first or ground floor, $1\frac{7}{8}$ *dhirāʿ* (86 cm); on the second, $1\frac{1}{2}$ *dhirāʿ* (69 cm); on the third, $1\frac{1}{4}$ *dhirāʿ* (57 cm); on the fourth, 1 *dhirāʿ* (46 cm); on the fifth, $\frac{3}{4}$ *dhirāʿ* (34.5 cm); on the sixth, $\frac{5}{8}$ *dhirāʿ* (28.5 cm); and on the seventh, $\frac{1}{2}$ *dhirāʿ* (23 cm). These dimensions would naturally vary from builder to builder and from house to house. The resulting slope on the wall occurred on the outside face, the inside being vertical.

Plaster. Mortar and plaster were of two types: that made with earth and that of lime.

The earth plasters and mortars were made in very much the same way as the bricks, but with a greater admixture of chaff or chopped straw in the external plaster, and especially careful selection of the earth to ensure that it had a good admixture of clay.

The lime plaster, or *ramād*, used externally, and as a mortar in best foundations and stair piers, had a large quantity of ground wood charcoal as a setting agent, as well as coarse and fine sand.

Ramād plaster was laid on a subcoat of earth/straw plaster, and the mixture was beaten very laboriously into a fine powder before being mixed with water. After being applied, it was finished with whitewash.

Internally, the lime skim coat was used without ash; it was laid over the mud/straw subcoat and burnished with a smooth flint until it was polished and reflective.

59.
Shibām. Plasterers applying a new waterproof dado in *ramād* at the base of a tall house.



A more sophisticated version of this internal polished plaster used egg-white as a binding agent, which was said to impart a greater sheen. Householders used to boast of the large number of eggs that had been used in the finishing of the house.

The lime was burnt in small mud-brick kilns, using dung as a fuel, either in some open place in the city or on the outskirts. When the lime was sufficiently baked, it was mixed with water in a trench, and from ten to twenty men then beat it with heavy sticks to break up all the lumps, standing on opposite sides and smacking it alternately, chanting as they worked.

Elaborate rituals were observed in the building of a house. For instance, a goat or a sheep was slaughtered as soon as the stonework of the foundation was finished to full height, and the blood was spilt over one or more corners of the building. A devout man usually attended the ceremony and the carcass of the slaughtered animal was afterwards divided, most of it going to the stonemason and the other workmen, and a fifth to the owner of the house.

A similar sacrifice used reputedly to be made at the beginning of the whole building operation, after the trenches had been excavated and the animal dung and salt laid in place.

The owners provided several feasts for the builders at various stages in the erection of the lintels and floor beams, and on the completion of the building.

Protecting and conserving the cultural heritage of the wādī

Dangers threatening the sites and buildings

Most of the pre-Islamic town sites are badly eroded from the action of flash floods because of their location on the wādī bed, or alongside it. One of the first steps that has to be taken is to construct diversion dams.

Some of these sites are also exposed to the ravages of man—for example, farming after the floods is being carried on in the fresh silts of the gullies eroded through the sites, debris soil is being removed by farmers for use in their fields, ancient dressed stone blocks are being removed by builders for use in modern constructions and, in some instances, the sites are being levelled, ploughed and put under agriculture. It is essential that these sites should immediately be fenced and provided with police guards.

The hillside temple sites are suffering the same kinds of problem, as are the ongoing excavations in the wādī. Not only are ancient finishing blocks of fine ashlar being stolen, but recently excavated material is disintegrating from exposure to the diurnal extremes of temperature and from radiation by the sun. Conservation of all these sites is urgently needed, as well as fencing and police protection, if the heritage of the ancient past is to be protected for future generations to enjoy.

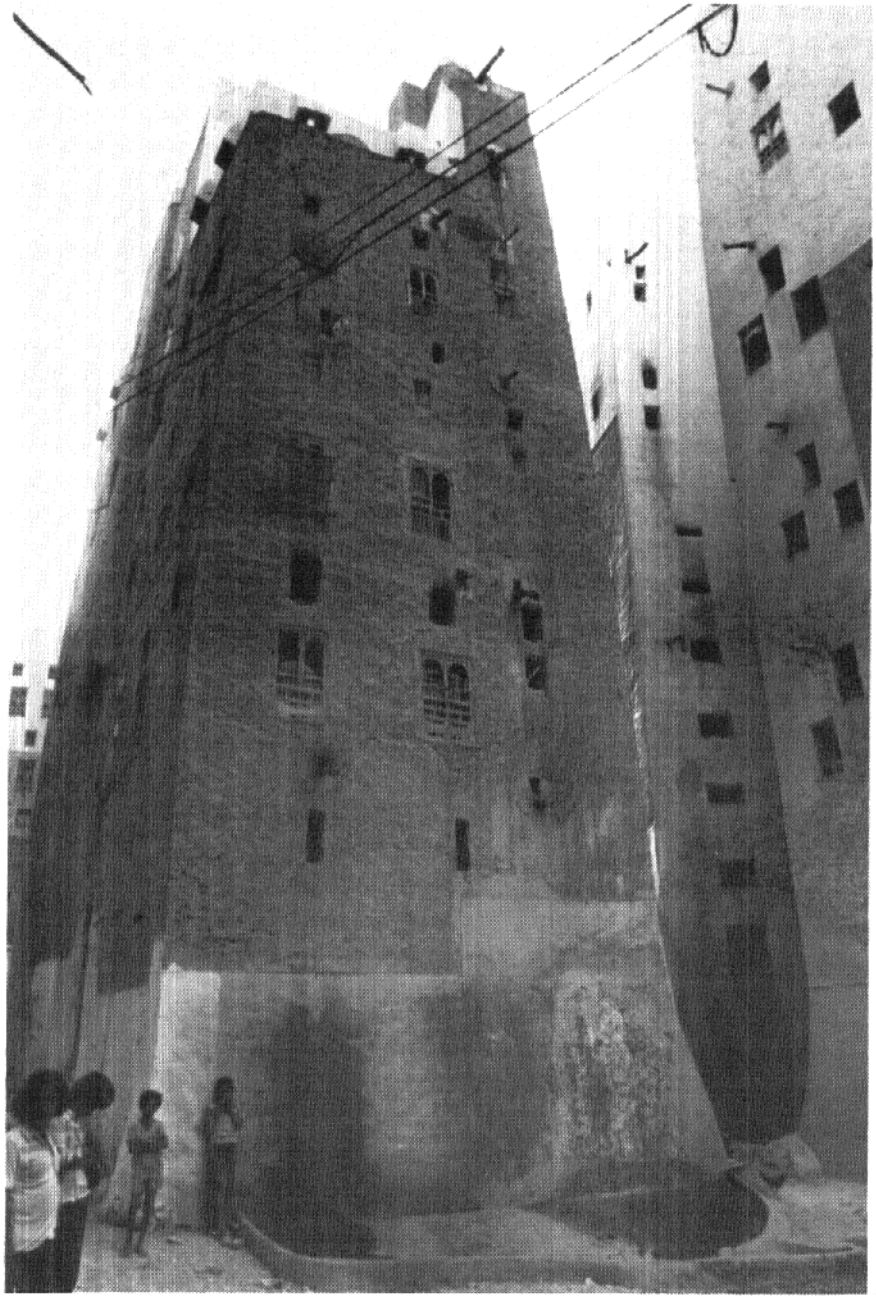
Islamic monuments, many of them very old, are not always receiving the care and maintenance that their antiquity demands. In many examples, such as the mosque at Bōr (see pages 122–3) and the city wall of Shibām (discussed on pages 83 and 115), repairing the ensuing damage is a relatively expensive undertaking.

In other cases, however, the threat to the monuments is caused by new factors in the environment, the most severe of

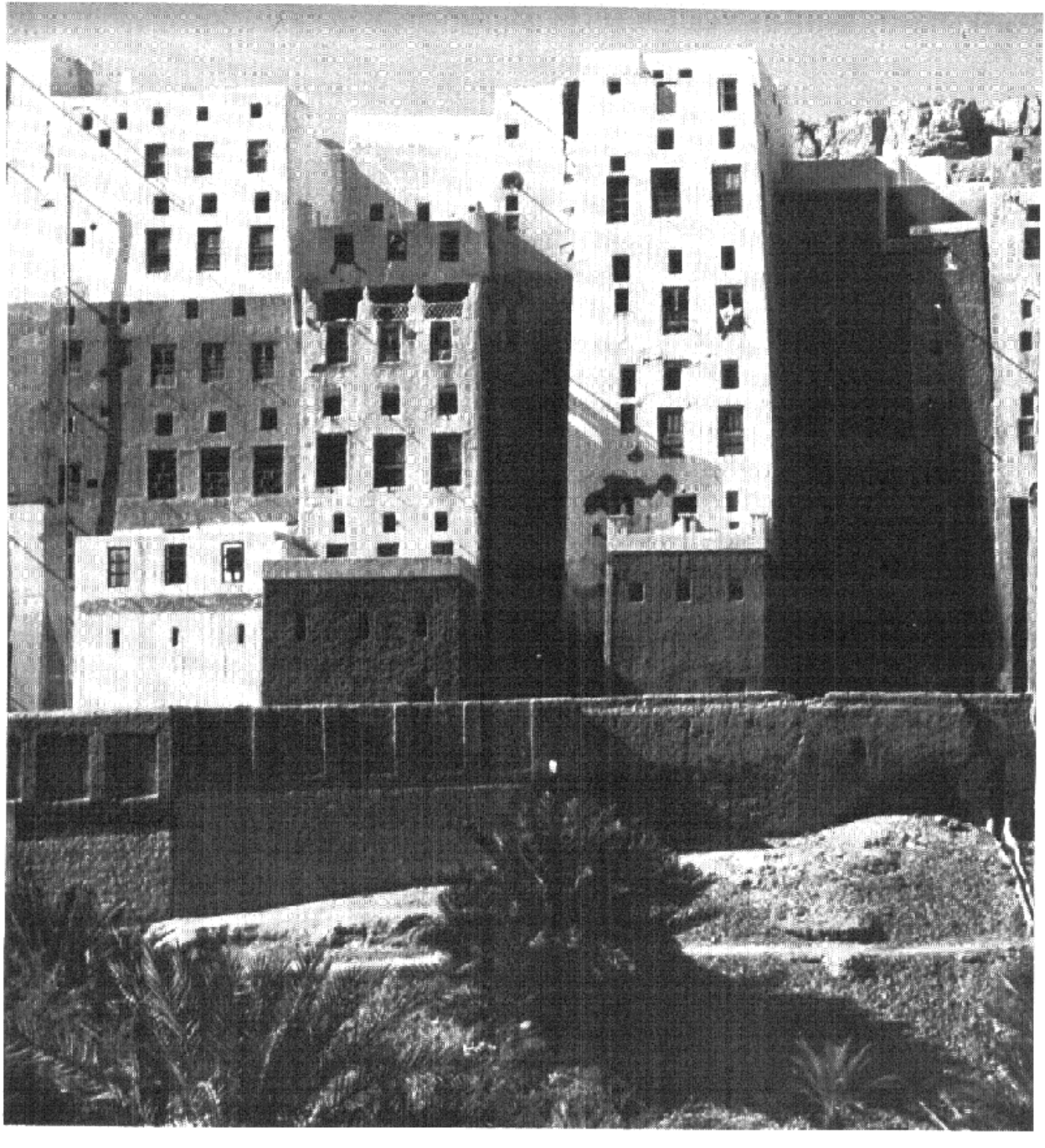
which is water in the ground: piped water has been brought into the towns and cities without adequate means being provided to take it away—there are usually either no sewers or they are undersized, cracked and leaking. The resulting effects on the clay buildings which stand on soluble clay subsoils have been continuous settlement, cracking and collapse. A second serious problem has developed from the easy availability of water, which has encouraged house owners to install equipment using ever larger quantities of it—showers, water-closets and washing machines. Any leak in the equipment, the water-pipes or the drains out of the houses has immediate and disastrous consequences for the soluble wall and floor materials of the clay-brick tower houses. Finally, the open drains which lead the waste waters away from the traditional houses have, in many cases, not been properly repaired with materials which matched the original. Instead, their repair has either been neglected or the work has been done using cement; the latter has simply cracked away within a few months, leaving the leaks as bad as they were before. (The same kinds of problem from the inadequate or technically careless repair of the old buildings has also produced serious consequences for the roofs, allowing them to leak badly during rains.)

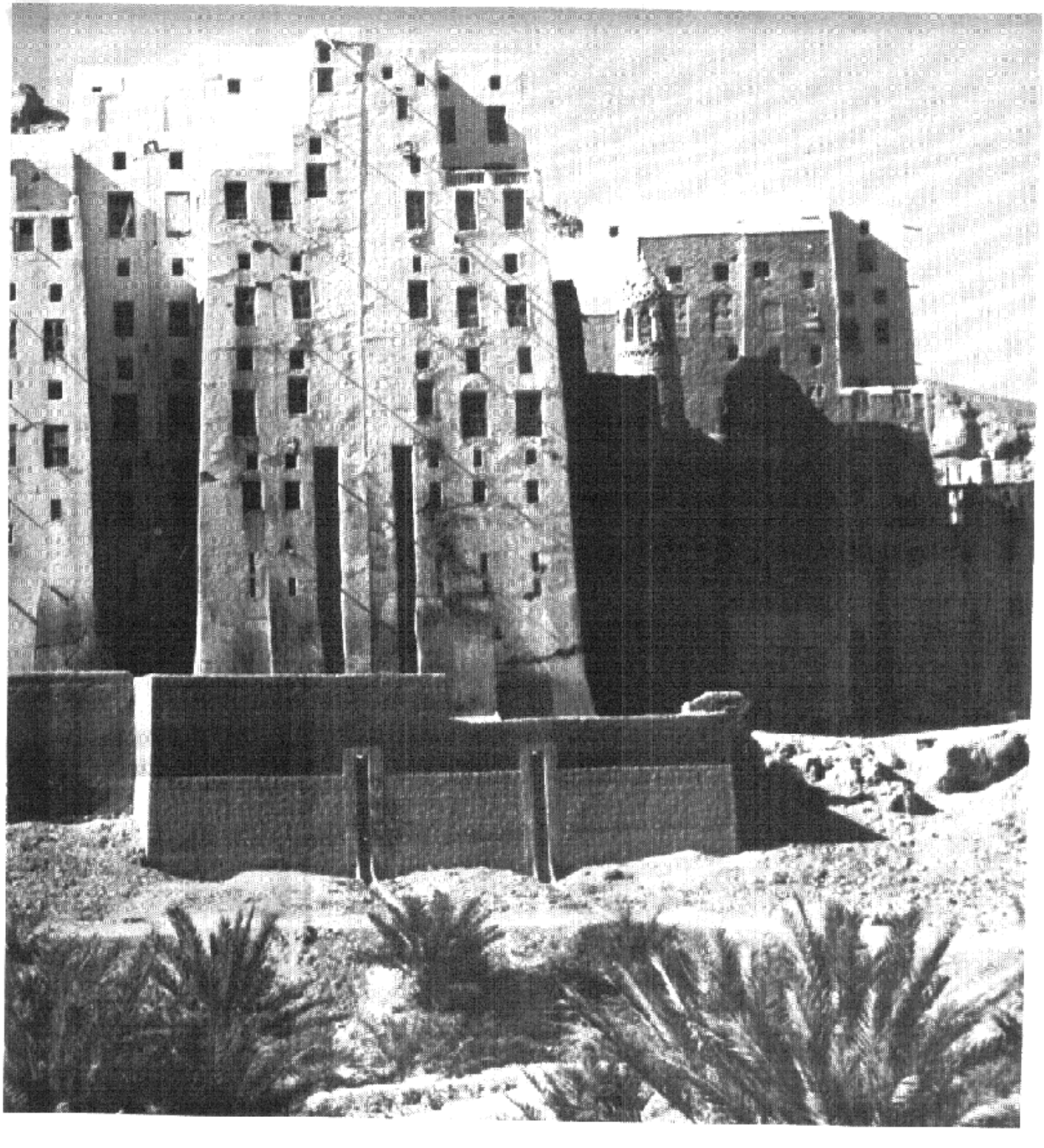
Measures that must urgently be taken include the provision of adequate drains and sewerage, both within the buildings and in the streets; the safeguarding of the water-pipes and equipment against leaks; studies of methods of improving the amenities of the buildings without introducing such large volumes of water; technical improvement of the materials and methods used to repair buildings; and action to conserve neglected buildings before it is too late, encouraging private owners to act on their own behalf wherever possible.

The visual character of the buildings and towns is also under threat; the ready supply of electricity has meant the introduction of unsightly electric wires draped across the buildings in all directions, and the same has happened with telephone wires. Television aerials are beginning to disfigure the roofs. Car access is making pedestrian circulation difficult and unpleasant in some areas, and there is an increasing threat that tourist and visitor parking will clutter up and interfere with the traditional life of the people. Acculturation is a steady process, too, which can only be halted by carefully planned action now.



60.
Shibam. Looking up at the full height of the house shown in Plate 37, with unsightly electricity wires above.





61.
Shibām. Houses crowding above the city wall on the north-west corner of the city. Note that the corner itself on the right is completely broken.

Worse still, there have been a number of ill-advised alterations to Islamic monuments which have seriously damaged them, perhaps irremediably. Expert guidance is needed here as to how such buildings should best be protected and conserved.

In the case of an entire urban environment being judged worthy of protection, such as the old city of Shibām, careful strategies have to be developed which will permit conservation without stultifying the existence of the inhabitants. If such a programme of conservation is to succeed, it must encourage rehabilitation and revitalization not only of the buildings but of the economic, cultural, social and private lives of the people.

The international campaign plan for safeguarding Wādī Ḥaḍramawt and Shibām

The plan of action aims at a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach, through action in the field of preservation, by conservation, by the enhancement of historic monuments and sites, by archaeological studies, by the encouragement of folk art and crafts, and by the reactivation of cultural traditions.

While the main efforts for implementing this project will be undertaken by the people of South Yemen and the Government of Democratic Yemen, international co-operation will be requested to complement these efforts. It will be especially necessary to supplement those resources which are lacking in the country itself.

The international campaign will contribute to the project by making available expertise, fellowships and sophisticated equipment, in addition to stimulating and collecting voluntary financial contributions from other national governments and from international aid and philanthropic organizations.

The Ḥaḍramawt campaign will concentrate on the valley as a geographical unit, emphasizing both within the country and outside the unique qualities of this great valley as a centre of civilized life from prehistoric times up to the present day. The aim will be to focus on the preservation of its most remarkable features, its principal pre-Islamic sites as well as its principal Islamic monuments. In particular, the campaign will have as its goal the protection and conservation of the ancient walled city of Shibām.

The campaign will take as one of its targets the growth of a sense of participation by all the people of the country in the spirit of a national cultural identity, symbolized by Shibām. At the same time, it will help to generate an awareness at an international level of the historical and cultural significance of Shibām and the wādī, and thus encourage understanding and appreciation between differing cultures.

As part of the campaign, brochures, books and cinema and television films are being prepared to disseminate knowledge about Ḥaḍramawt, its history, its culture and its heritage in sites and buildings. No method is to be overlooked which might contribute to the campaign: articles in magazines, international radio programmes, the publication of tourist brochures and serious works of research on the subject, the preparation and sale of postcards, special postage stamps and posters.

A strategy for conservation

The government has established a High Committee of the Cabinet to assist the international campaign. As aid funds become available, it is hoped to set up an office for the protection and conservation of the sites and monuments in a central town in the wādī. This will be headed by a Director-General, a distinguished South Arabian, aided by an administrative staff and an executive technical organization. The latter will be composed of executive technical officers, specialized technical consultants and laboratory and research staff. For practical reasons it will probably be necessary to utilize the services of internationally trained and experienced men for some of these tasks.

Priorities for immediate action will be established quickly, and resources directed at these targets first. Among them, the saving of the threatened portions of the old walled city of Shibām will take an important place.

A policy for action

Protection from further deterioration or destruction will be the first aim of the campaign. Only when this is ensured for all the major sites and monuments can attention be given to upgrading

and rehabilitation. Finally, the presentation of the sites and antiquities to the public and the provision of amenities for visitors will be considered.

Protection from deterioration and destruction may necessarily involve the introduction of some amenities, such as dams, diversion banks, canals, sewerage systems and storm-water drainage. The second phase will involve the introduction of certain other amenities, such as the provision of permanently secure piped water supplies, underground electricity and telephone cables, communal television aerials, and so on.

Solutions to parking and traffic problems must be tackled as part of the third phase of presentation of the sites to the public.

Pre-Islamic antiquities

The largest pre-Islamic sites are usually located either in the middle of the wādī on the silt or close to the cliff wall. Some of them are very extensive, with archaeological levels reaching 10 m in places. Because of their location on the silt, all sites are badly eroded from the action of flash floods (*sā'ils*), with the result that each site consists of a series of small mounds separated from each other by intervals of varying depth, each mound preserving the remains of one or two buildings.

Natural erosion exposes the dressed blocks of ancient monuments, which are immediately carried away for use in modern construction. The remaining debris is then often removed by local farmers to create agricultural fields, which are frequently levelled for ploughing!

It is therefore going to be of the greatest importance to take immediate steps to prevent pillage. This will involve demarcation of the protected area with fences and the employment of resident guards.

Protection of the sites will further necessitate the urgent study of measures which might be taken to prevent flash flooding of the sites, followed by the erection of diversion dams, banks and channels wherever necessary. At the same time the exposed monuments will have to be conserved against further decay.

Subsequently, a systematic survey of the entire wādī will be undertaken in order to locate, map and survey on the ground all pre-Islamic sites which can be identified. This will lead

to a programme of further archaeological study and excavation.

All those excavated sites judged interesting enough will be consolidated with a view to their permanent preservation and their presentation to the public, for which purpose roads, parking areas and paths will be built, together with suitable planting and labelling of the sites. Finally, the provision of amenities for visitors will be undertaken.

A selection of some of the most important pre-Islamic sites to be conserved in the first stage of the work is discussed below.

Raybūn

An extensive, major ancient town site built in the middle of the wādī, on silty soil. Noticeable among its ruins are the bases of three of the four vertical pillars of the portico of a temple, at the top of a broken flight of stone steps leading up to it. Many fragments of South Arabian inscriptions may be found lying on the surface of the area which might have been the cella.

Conservation. The problems are twofold: (a) flash floods are coming down annually and seriously undermining the site; and (b) the heavy rains are cutting gorges and gullies through the archaeological deposits.

The first problem has to be investigated by a hydraulic engineer specializing in the design of deflection dams. In the meantime a temporary rock-cage deflecting dam might be built at an angle of 30 degrees at the southern edge of the site. Water which reaches the deposits when the wādī is in flood will still have some undermining effect, as the clays are obviously partially soluble on this site. For economic reasons, steps to prevent this will have to be limited to areas known to be important.

The second problem is not easily solved. It is proposed that experiments be carried out in the use of binding grasses of the type that grows naturally in the sand-dunes. They should be placed, in the first instance, on the sloping sides of the gullies to prevent their spread. Subsequently, if the grass roots are sufficiently shallow, the whole site might be protected from surface erosion in this way.

Ḥuraiḍah

The archaeological site identified as ancient Madubum was excavated in 1937–38 by a team led by G. Caton-Thompson. It is

situated in Wādī ʿAmd, a tributary of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, a few kilometres north-west of the modern town of Ḥuraiḍah.

The site was noticed owing to the unnatural banking of drift sand, indicating an accumulation of occupation levels. This bean-shaped sandy knoll, raised some 4 m above the silt floor of the wādī, lies in mid-plain and commands extensive views up and down the valley.

A large structure, later identified as a temple dedicated to the moon god, Sīn, was uncovered. It consisted of an oblong stone-paved platform resting on a deep layer of boulders. Few elements of the superstructure were found, but there were traces of partition walls and stone-pillar bases. Two flights of stone steps gave access to the platform. The orientation of the building follows the Mesopotamian practice of setting the corners to the four cardinal points, with the main façade looking south-west.

The original temple, dated to the fifth century B.C., had twice been extended without the destruction of its predecessors. Clustered round the podium, a series of shrines and altars was probably used after the final abandonment of the temple, some time during the Seleucid period. At present, nothing of the above-mentioned structures is visible except a few upper slabs belonging to the south façade. It is difficult to assess what the stone-robbers have left of the uncovered remains, as the site is completely covered with drift sand.

Conservation. According to the excavators' descriptions, plans and photographs, the Temple of the Moon, the first to have been excavated in South Arabia, is worth preserving. The first step should be the clearance of the site in order to expose the construction phases of the temple. This would require about two weeks' work for a team of six skilled men under the supervision of an archaeologist.

The same team should proceed immediately afterwards to the protection of the walls and other stone structures brought to light by means of a thin layer of locally made *qaḍāḍ* or *ramād* (waterproof plaster). This would help to consolidate the friable sandstones used by the builders and constitutes a necessary precaution against possible stone-quarrying. The site should subsequently be fenced, and a method of guarding it be arranged. The final preventive measure would be the stabilization of the surrounding sand-dunes by planting a thick, broad fence of

specially chosen desert grass roots which are capable of growing wild.

Tombs. Eight artificial rock-cut caves are to be seen in the vicinity of the Ḥuraiḍah temple. They were used as sepulchres over a considerable length of time in antiquity. Two of them were excavated thoroughly by the Caton-Thompson expedition and were dated to the same general period (fifth–third century B.C.) as the temple. The remaining six were plundered comparatively recently and are being used as shelters for sheep and goats or as storerooms. The local tribesmen should be persuaded to discontinue their harmful treasure-hunting and despoiling, and the caves should be fenced off and guarded.

Sūnah

The site lies on the eastern bank of Wādī ʿIdm, near the modern village bearing the same name. Flash floods and local farmers have taken a heavy toll of its structures, which consist of isolated mounds topped by stone and mud-brick walls. The site has recently been partially surveyed by the French expedition, which has exposed mud-brick walls down to a depth of 2 m below ground level.

A wādī, which is a branch of the main wādī, runs right through the site, bisecting it. This will have to be controlled by the construction of a deflection dam, and the tell consolidated by the planting of suitable grasses.

There is a hillside temple which faces due north and also looks straight down the valley at the site of Mashghah.

Mashghah

This settlement on the western bank of Wādī ʿIdm is only a few kilometres from Sūnah. Its type and date are exactly the same but it covers a much wider area. On the whole the site is fairly well drained. The wādī passes on the east side of it and is slowly cutting into the mound a little on that side, although it is still some considerable distance from the high central monuments.

The changes in the course of the wādīs will have to be studied carefully in order to establish whether they are encroaching on the site. If so, measures will have to be adopted in consultation with a hydraulic engineer to curtail this erosive action. Grasses which are suitable for binding the surface of the archaeological

deposits and protecting them from erosion by rains will have to be planted.

The steps leading to the temple have been exposed by the archaeologists and include fine inscriptions. But there is some evidence, on the analogy of Timna and sites in Ḥaḍramawt, that these freshly exposed white limestone slabs may not survive very long unless careful conservation works are instituted.

Ḥiṣn al-ʿUrr

It is difficult to assign any precise date to the well-preserved remains of the fort which tops an isolated hill in the middle of the wādī, half-way between Tarīm and al-Ṣawm. Ḥiṣn al-ʿUrr appears to have been more or less continually occupied for 1,000 years, with successive garrisons always busy rebuilding the fallen walls with old blocks. The main structure stands in the north-eastern corner with a plaster-lined cistern quite close to it. The cracks in the outer stonework of the main building do not seem to threaten collapse, as there is a good batter to the walls. The cistern at the top of the site is showing some signs of disintegration, and needs consolidation.

There is evidence of many kinds of occupation. The oldest is pre-Islamic, with a number of surviving fragments of inscriptions lying around on the site and a great deal of architectural ornament in fine-cut stones. There was apparently a temple, from which some of this material came, on the western edge of the Jebel. There seems to be a concentration of fragments of the inscriptions and of the ornament of the north side of the temple site.

Two different types of stone were used on the site, the higher ones being better cut and set in lime mortar. Great damage is being done to the buildings by the removal of the stones for breaking up and burning for lime. This will have to be prevented by installing resident guards.

Some of the original flooring or roofing slabs of fine-cut limestone are still in position at the north-east end. The same limestone slabs are found in two staircases, one going down to the lower level of the north-east building, the other leading up, apparently into a tower which has since disappeared. Both are set in lime mortar, but as they are exposed to the sun they are cracking and spalling, and need urgent conservation.

Other pre-Islamic sites

Other important pre-Islamic sites which warrant urgent conservation include the following:

Sadd al-Khalfah. This great dam distributed water for irrigation at the eastern end of the wādī.

Ḥiṣn al-Kays. This important temple site, close to the town of Ṣan'ā', preserved a fine stone staircase leading up the mountainside until sixteen years ago. Since then, however, it has been despoiled by stone-robbers and many of the fine dressed limestone treads have disappeared. Only parts of the flanking walls remain to indicate the former splendour of the staircase. The remains of the twin temples above have recently been surveyed. Fencing and guards are urgently needed.

The temple at al-Hajrah. This hillside temple complex, above an ancient town site, is one of the most interesting and well preserved of the ancient religious sanctuaries. It has recently been surveyed and now warrants proper protection.

Preliminary plan of action and estimates of cost

Phase 1: 1983–84	*Yemeni dinars*
Protection of major archaeological sites:	
(a) from flooding—by construction of deflection dams, where necessary, for Mashghah, Sūnah and Raybūn	2,500,000
(b) from pillage or vandalization—by surrounding the sites with fences and/or introducing 24-hour guarding	500,000
(c) from the weather—by conservation of the exposed buildings	500,000
Phase 2: 1984–86	
Presentation of archaeological sites to the public—by beautifying them with planting, arranging parking areas, routes through the sites and facilities for guide services	500,000

Islamic antiquities

As with the pre-Islamic antiquities, the first phase necessarily involves identification of the antiquities most threatened, either by deterioration or by the risk of destruction through natural or human agency, and then setting in motion measures to counteract these hazards. Only later can a comprehensive survey and record be made of every antiquity worth listing in the wādī, followed by the systematic conservation and presentation, in order of importance, of all the monuments.

The following examples have been selected as representative of the types of antiquities which need protection and conservation in the wādī.

The old walled city of Shibām

In the decades before the formation of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Shibām did not experience the wealth and expansion of Sai'ūn and Tarīm. This is one of the reasons why it has remained relatively unchanged, the other being the tight-knit, ultra-conservative way of life within the city walls.

It is probable that the traditional way of life is so closely allied to the environmental framework that the survival of both can be mutually supported as a complete 'structural' pattern. There may even be a tendency for it to be self-regenerating, so that gaps in the environmental system will be reconstructed in an adjusted version of the traditional pattern. (Evidence for this may be found in the old city of Cairo and in the urban centres of other medieval Islamic cities, into which motor vehicles, with their devastating effects, have not been able to penetrate very far.)

The increasing poverty in modern times primarily affected three classes of people. The farm workers, who traditionally lived in the town and farmed the land outside it, were unable to make as good a living as they had earlier. The building workers and craftsmen were affected by the decline in private expenditure, so that they were often unemployed. The third category was that of building and street cleaners. The increasingly low incomes of these people were paralleled by greatly increased food and building costs. The results of this poverty are attested, first, in the thirty-odd houses (out of approximately five hundred within the city) that are in a ruinous condition because their owners were unable over a long period to afford to maintain them, and second,

in the far larger number of houses now showing signs of neglect, together with the decayed and collapsing parts of the city wall.

The following are some aspects of the conservation of the old city of Shibām.

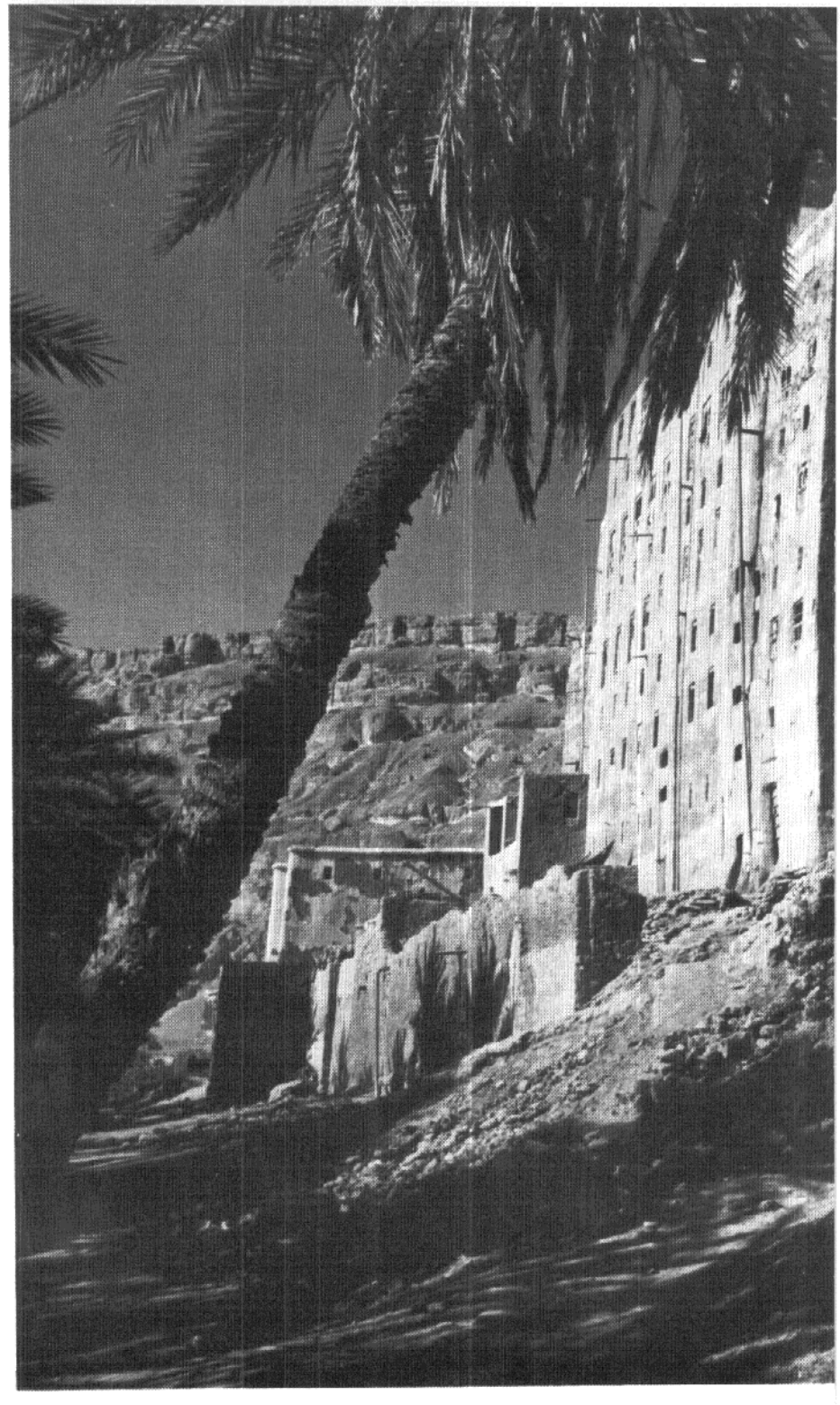
Damage by flooding. Over the centuries, the city has been continuously exposed to damage by flash floods. Historically, this was dealt with by the creation of an elaborate system of dams and diversion barrages, extending back up into the surrounding tributary wādīs. Over the ages this system has deteriorated, partly because some of the dams and diversion banks have broken and been inadequately repaired, and partly because the whole system has silted up until the ground level behind the barriers is now 3–5 m higher than it was intended to be to accommodate the peak levels of flood water.

For these reasons, the design of a new system of damming and diversion to protect the city has already been undertaken by Unesco, as part of the international campaign, and an early step in the conservation of the city (when funds are available) will be the implementation of this work.

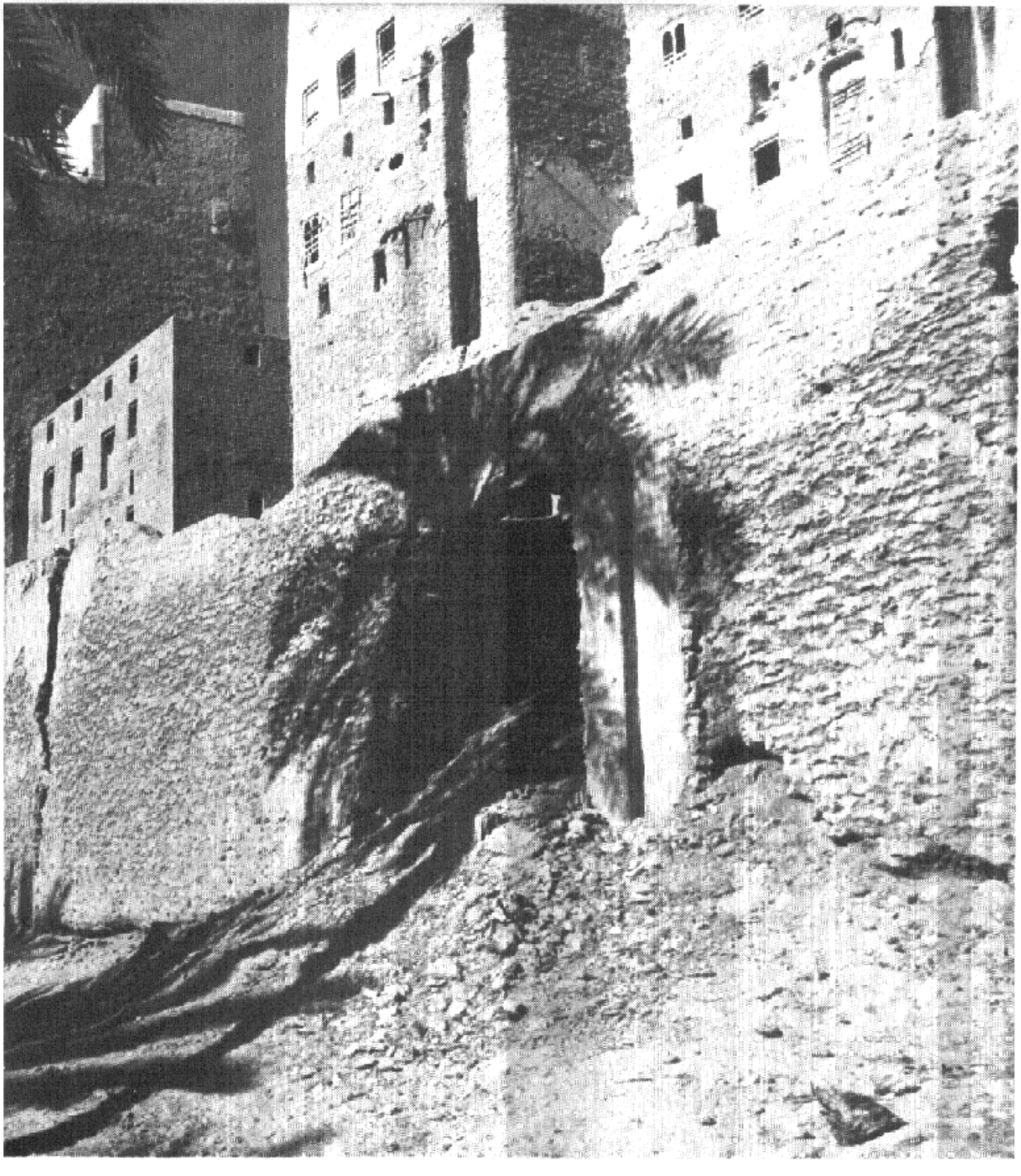
The wall of the old city. Lack of maintenance of the stretch of city wall below each house belonging to an impoverished worker, or below a deserted house, had led to extensive decay of a corresponding stretch of the city wall, even when neighbouring stretches of the wall, in front of wealthier houses, were well maintained. This was aggravated by the floodings of 1976 and 1982, which undermined those sections of wall that were already weak.

The wall has been placed under further stress because of the poor system of drainage outwards through the wall from the nearest houses. In some cases there has been seepage behind the wall and in other cases nitrates and chlorides have attacked the base of the wall on the outside. Once cracking began the problem was further aggravated; the pipes were frequently pulled apart as the wall moved and seepage became much worse.

Not all the city wall has to be rebuilt. Some of it is substantially constructed in stone set in *ramād* or cement and seems well tied back into the ground behind. Approximately three-quarters of the city wall needs to be completely rebuilt with a substantial waterproofed section of stone below and an upper



62.
Shibām. The houses from outside the city on the eastern side, showing the ruined state of the city wall.



part of clay, both sections tied back into the ground behind by cross walls at regular intervals.

Inadequate drainage of sewage. The present system of open drains running, in the centre of the city, into an inadequate circuit of underground pipes and, on the outside of the city, outwards through the walls, is a major cause of deterioration of the house foundations and the city wall. One of the first targets of the conservation programme will be the installation of a permanent drainage system, together with a system for the removal of surface storm water from the old city. As it is important not to excavate into the ground more often than is necessary, in order to reduce the movement of the foundations of the houses to a minimum, it will be necessary to integrate the laying of all other services at the same time, i.e. electricity, telephone lines, and communal television aerial cable.

Solid sewage disposal. The traditional 'long-drop' lavatory is a very sensible one, as it is clean and odourless within the house and dispenses with the need for large quantities of water, always a precious commodity in the wādī. It has the disadvantage, however, that the solid waste lies exposed at the bottom of the vertical shaft until it is collected. It was traditionally the custom to cover the solid waste with ash twice a day, and to screen the mouth of the opening with a fly-proof cotton mesh, but the maintenance of this system has to some extent lapsed in the last few years. A method of retaining some aspects of the traditional system, while improving its hygiene and utility to the community, has to be investigated and implemented.

Houses. It is planned to conserve all the houses in their original external appearance, or in that of twenty years ago, before pipes and electric wiring disfigured the exteriors. This conservation may be achieved either by the government repairing and conserving the buildings directly, or by grants-in-aid and loans being made available to the owners and/or tenants for specific works, further grants-in-aid or loans to be given only when those are complete. Experience in other countries has suggested that the second method will prove far cheaper and more satisfactory.

The interiors of the houses will be repaired or conserved at the expense and discretion of the owners, with the exception of a

small number of houses which will be selected as 'national treasures' and conserved internally under expert supervision in their original state. It is intended that the latter should be accessible to the public, and will be furnished as 'museums of traditional culture', at least in part.

While no external changes would normally be permitted within the old city, the conservation commission will consider each application to make internal changes on its merits. It is hoped that permitting this future flexibility will help to maintain the vital spirit of the community, so that people do not feel stultified because they are living in a conservation zone. The preservation of the daily life of the people is an essential aim of the conservation programme.

Considering the practical problems of conservation, deterioration of the houses takes place in six principal ways:

1. The earth/straw plaster over the external brickwork is not being replastered once it has begun to decay; it should usually be done after twenty-five to thirty years of life, or after signs of damage have appeared following exceptionally heavy rains. If this repair is not carried out, then the plaster begins to break up because the soluble clays have been washed out of it and it rapidly falls away, exposing the earth brickwork of the wall to the weather.
2. The lime/*ramād* protection of the roofs and parapets is not maintained during the early years of its life, when any hair-cracks must be painted over annually with lime to seal them.
3. The lime/*ramād* protection of the roofs and parapets is not replaced once it has begun to develop cracks and blisters, which usually takes place after about fifty years of life, according to the builders of Shibām. If this repair is not carried out, water can enter the earth/straw brick walls at the top, dissolving the clay that gives them strength, entering the ceiling beams from above and rotting them, and so on.
4. The lime/*ramād* dado at street level is not replaced either. Its decay is usually more rapid at this level than on the roof, so that it may need replacing much more often. One of the reasons for this rapid decay is attack from the nitrates and chlorides in animal and human soil.
5. The main foundations may settle, resulting in serious cracking of the main fabric of the building. This is caused either by the outer wall of the city cracking or collapsing or, more often, by

water in the clayey ground undermining the foundations, or by acids formed by the nitrates and chlorides in human and animal sewage leaching down through the ground to attack the lime which bonds the stone foundations together. Hence both types of major cracking of the buildings are caused largely by the same things—inadequate removal of human sewage, leaking water supplies and inadequate storm-water drainage.

6. Wooden parts of the house may be attacked by termites or rot. The former, termite attack, is uncommon if good wood is used, but frequent where cheaper wood is employed. The latter, damp rot, is found where water has been able to penetrate. In general, some repair of ceiling beams is necessary every twenty years. External windows and doors may need replacing after fifty years if they are in good wood, but after as little as fifteen years if they are made of poor-quality wood.

As indicated above, some twenty-five houses, out of approximately five hundred within the city, are in a ruinous condition, many because their owners were unable over a long period to afford to maintain them. A far larger number of houses (close to fifty) are now showing serious signs of neglect and call for urgent maintenance if they are not to deteriorate rapidly. Furthermore, at least half of all the houses have not been repaired during the past decade because of the inability of their owners to cope with the extraordinarily rapid increase in building costs; they now require attention or the number of major repairs necessary will increase sharply. Approximately ten of the houses need urgent buttressing to prevent their collapse.

The first step in the conservation of the houses will be to keep standing those which are in danger of collapse. For this purpose a structural engineer with particular experience in saving tall masonry buildings has studied these buildings, about twenty-five in number, and the collapsed sections of the city walls. In consultation with the structural engineer, a conservation engineer working with architects will have to prepare a schedule of urgent works, including underpinning, buttressing, rebuilding parts of structures, introducing new wooden beams, and replastering walls, plinths, roofs and parapets. The second phase, the conservation of the whole of the built fabric, involves first a detailed survey of every building, with the preparation of measured drawings wherever necessary, the selection of the most

historic or important buildings to be fully conserved as 'house museums'. At the same time, an architectural and structural survey of the city wall must be prepared. Third, a detailed study should be made of all the technical aspects of conservation, from prevention of termite attack to the most satisfactory building technologies. In order to reduce the future maintenance of the buildings to a minimum, it is important that the earth raw material, the bricks and the plaster should be thoroughly analysed. Possible modifications in the technology can then be considered in the light of modern knowledge of the chemical breakdown and deterioration of earth building materials. Fourth, attention will have to be given to the best means of achieving conservation, from financing and public relations to the provision of the necessary skilled labour force—which will certainly involve special training programmes.

Mosques. All the mosques are in need of repair and maintenance. One mosque-madrasah, that of Ḥārah, dated A.H. 1279/80 (1862–64) (see page 83), has fallen into complete ruin. This mosque fell into disuse after the modern school was built in the opposite corner of the city. The upper storeys and rooms for students were neglected and at last the roof fell in, damaging the mosque on the ground floor at such a rate that it ceased to be used; eventually its ceiling caved in as well.

Although this building is now only a shell, it retains its doors, windows and columns, and might be restored without excessive expenditure. Clearly a new communal use could be found for the madrasah on the upper level, although this would need consultation with, and the co-operation of, the *awqāf* authorities. The students' rooms, in the adjoining building on the corner of the city, could presumably be converted for use as a separate private house or utilized for some other purpose.

Preliminary plan of action and estimates of cost

Phase 1: 1983–84	*Yemeni dinars*
1. Installation of underground services in one co-ordinated operation: sewerage drains, storm-water drains, water supply, electricity, telephone and television aerial wiring (estimated 9 months)	2,000,000

2. Construction of a stronger, permanent city wall (estimated 12 months)	1,500,000
3. Construction of (a) a new diversion dam and (b) a new diversion channel to the north of the city (estimated 21 months)	1,000,000
4. Installation of sewage disposal system for each house (estimated 6 months)	750,000
5. Conservation of the most seriously damaged buildings; demolition and reconstruction as necessary (estimated 18 months)	1,125,000
6. Rebuilding of demolished houses, barracks on the corners of the city wall, and the mosque of Ḥārah	1,875,000

Bōr: mosque of ʿAbd Allāh

This mosque was founded by ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad ʿĪsā, the son of Aḥmad ʿĪsā, who is buried in the famous tomb near by, which is still a centre of pilgrimage. Both men came to Ḥaḍramawt from Iraq in 955 (340).

According to the historian ʿAbdul Qāder Sabbān, there is textual evidence that the present mosque was built in the fifteenth (ninth) century above the earlier mosque, so that the construction became double-storeyed. The lower mosque became subdivided by foundation walls, although some attempt was made to keep open a section near the deep rectangular *miḥrāb*.

If the textual evidence is correct, the history of the upper mosque could be explained as follows. The fifteenth (ninth) century mosque was built with baked-brick columns for the three rows of the main prayer hall. Above the column level the construction was in layered, rammed clay, except for some baked brick in the superstructure of the courtyard side, where it was exposed to the sun. The arches of the main prayer hall were apparently of horseshoe shape. One of them remains in the first range of columns from the *qibla* wall, next to the eastern wall.

The minaret on the south-west corner begins on a square plan, with a square staircase round a square central post. The outer walls gradually change to a circular plan as the minaret rises. The upper storey has a series of arches on columns carrying a pointed dome. It is entirely constructed of unbaked earth.

The mosque is now in a ruinous state, with the *qibla* wall

completely fallen, the north-eastern wall missing from the courtyard and rear hall, and the entrance wall partly fallen, so that only one jamb of the original doorway remains. Most of the columns and arcades are, however, in good condition.

Further damage was done to the mosque by the demolition of the south-west wall and parts of the arches abutting on it, to make way for the construction of the north-east wall of a new mosque on its foundation. The minaret of the old mosque was thus adapted in its entirety to serve as the minaret of the new mosque, and its decorated horizontal courses have been painted in an unsightly green oil paint.

Conservation. As the ceilings form an important relic preserved in this mosque (such ceilings are rare in Ḥaḍramawt), their protection is of considerable importance and urgency. This can only be done by protecting the integrity and stability of the arcades which support them, which means closing in the ends of their constructions.

The roofs have to be repaired, and the entire building maintained by repainting with lime once a year and occasionally repairing deterioration due to ageing.

Further study. Like so many mosques in Ḥaḍramawt, the building deserves thorough further study:

1. A consideration of the painted inscriptions on the ceilings, and a search through textual sources for further evidence of the dating of the stages of building.
2. A study of the construction of the building, particularly of the lower mosque, with the aim of establishing the original plan and its subsequent change.
3. A study of the decoration of the ceilings to establish parallels and sources for the patterns used.
4. Archaeological study of the surrounding area, especially the adjoining ruins of the Ḥiṣn. Pending this study, the ruined area nearest the mosque will have to be protected from spoliation by builders in search of cheap building material.

Sai'ūn: the Friday mosque

This large historic mosque is generally in good condition and well maintained, although it has recently been marred by the insertion of modern concrete screens in the south-west wall.

The Friday mosque contains some excellent woodwork, including several pairs of splendidly carved wooden doors on the south-west side, and a magnificent *minbar*. The artistic and historical value of these examples of traditional Ḥaḍramī work is such that the mosque authorities must be persuaded to guard against damage by careless painting or alteration in the future.

It is hoped that, following a detailed study of the building and the *awqāf* records, the mosque can be conserved as closely as possible to its traditional appearance.

Al-Ghurfah: mosque of Bā'bath

Built in 1532 (940), and situated 6 km from Sai'ūn to the west, this important mosque has well-preserved ornamentation dating from the sixteenth (tenth) century over the three porch doorways, the *miḥrāb* with its bold shell semi-dome, surrounded by a strong frame, and a fine original *minbar* with beautiful arabesques. On this evidence it seems likely that most of the mosque, including at least the lower storey of the square minaret, dates from that century. As such, it is a major monument and should be protected by every possible means from deterioration or wilful alteration.

At present the mosque is well maintained and painted throughout in limewash. Members of the mosque community would like to replace it with a new building, however, so there is need for action, both to protect the building legally and to spread an understanding of its value among the people who use it.

Qabr Nabī Allāh Hūd

This ancient place of pilgrimage has been the centre of a religious cult dating from pre-Islamic times. It comprises three groups of buildings, all equally important.

First, there is the tomb of Hūd himself, a domed structure high on the hillside, surrounded by a shaded arcaded walk for the pilgrims, for the heat in summer is fierce. Here, according to legend, Allāh opened the rocks of the hillside to allow his prophet Hūd to escape from his enemies. Below the tomb is the prayer hall, surrounding the great rock which is believed to be Hūd's camel turned to stone. Also arcaded, it is a relatively new construction in its present form. Third, spread out on the flatter ground below, lies the well-built town, to house the pilgrims during the period of three days every year when they reside in it. It has its own mosques and tombs, carefully built like the houses

of mud-brick and white plaster, and meticulously maintained. The simplicity and sober, abstract character of the plain walls, arches and domes evoke all that is finest in man's striving for spiritual harmony and peace. Except during the time of pilgrimage, the town is deserted. Conservation here is mainly concerned with protection against possible misguided despoliation of the character and beauty of the buildings and their setting.

Mashhad: tombs of Ḥasan ibn Ḥasan and ʿAlī ibn Ḥasan

Some scholars date the oldest tombs to before 1591 (1000). They consist of a series of relatively large domed chambers, two of which contain large wooden tombs covered with sheet bronze, decorated in relief. One has a single tomb, the oldest, that of Ḥasan ibn Ḥasan; the largest contains five tombs, reputedly of ʿAlī ibn Ḥasan, his wife and children. But the whole complex is said by other scholars to have been built or rebuilt only some 150 years ago.

The quality of design and execution of the tombs, together with their well-preserved setting inside the domed chambers, is exceptional and every effort will be made to conserve them. At the moment they are looked after by the *Manṣab* of the village, although the tombs are empty. But the doors of the buildings are unlocked and it is not certain that vandalism is entirely obviated. The domed structures need considerable structural repair and replastering.

Preliminary estimate of cost

It is estimated that the repair and presentation of the five items mentioned on pages 122–5 above would cost a total of 500,000 Yemeni dinars.

Preserving cultural traditions in the wādī

Many of the crafts, pursuits and other activities need encouragement and financial subsidizing. The promotion and sale of craft goods will be improved and their distribution organized to other tourist centres and overseas.

1. *Crafts:* such as straw-plaiting, pottery making, woodcarving, weaving of wool and decorated cotton cloths (turbans and *fūṭahs*), etc.

2. *Pursuits:* such as traditional building crafts, traditional medicine, etc.
3. *Clothing and jewellery:* such as traditional embroidery, gold and silver working, etc.
4. *Food:* traditional cooking and recipes, etc.
5. *Poetry and folklore:* the collection of proverbs, epigrams, poems and writing in prose, both traditional and modern.
6. *Music and dance:* traditional aspects up to the present day.
7. *A museum of prehistoric, pre-Islamic and Islamic antiquities in Wādī Ḥaḍramawt:* the new museum would accommodate new discoveries as well as the collections now dispersed in other centres which relate directly to the wādī. In this new museum the collections reflecting the traditional life of the people which are already situated in the Museum of Sai'ūn would be displayed under more favourable conditions.
8. A Wādī Ḥaḍramawt cultural centre here could be focused on many of the activities and training programmes related to sections 1 to 6 above.

Preliminary estimate of cost

It is estimated that construction and arrangement of a new museum at Sai'ūn and the provision of new manuscript facilities at Tarīm would cost 3 million Yemeni dinars.

Chronology

c. ninth century B.C.	First datable inscription from city site of Raybūn.
c. fifth century B.C.	Bā-Quṭfah temple estimated to be dated to this century by its inscriptions.
c. 300 B.C.	Ḥaḍramawt known to Egyptians and Greeks as one of the areas from which frankincense was obtained.
c. A.D. 60–100	Shabwah mentioned by Pliny and in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.*
A.D. 220–30	Shabwah conquered and pillaged by King of Sabaeans.
c. A.D. 631	Contact between the Prophet and local Kindī leaders of Ḥaḍramawt, who visited Medina. One was Wail ibn Hejr, another al-Ash'ath ibn Qays who remained there until the Prophet's death.
c. A.D. 633–*c.* 850	Ḥaḍramawt ruled by a governor responsible to the Caliphs of Islam, usually through Ṣan'ā' in Yemen.
A.D. 747 (A.H. 130)	Introduction of Ibāḍī doctrines. For a period, from the ninth (third) century, Ibāḍīs appear to have ruled Ḥaḍramawt, in league with Ibāḍīs in Oman.
mid-eleventh century A.D. (mid-fifth century A.H.)	Intervention of Sulaiḥid dynasty from Yemen, introducing Shī'ī rule with close ties with Fātimid Egypt.
c. A.D. 1180 (A.H. 576)	Bulk of Ḥaḍramawt administered by a governor for the Ayyūbid rulers of Yemen. Tarīm, however, taken over by Banū Qaḥṭān, and Shibām ruled by Banū al-Dā'ar.
A.D. 1219 (A.H. 616)	Ibn Mahdī conquered Shibām for Ayyūbids.
A.D. 1224 (A.H. 621)	Al-Yamānī dynasty assumed control of Tarīm. Rasūlid Sulṭāns, with capital at Ta'izz in Yemen, probably controlled most of the rest of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt and the coast.
A.D. 1274 (A.H. 673)	Ḥabūḍīs of Ẓafār conquered Ḥaḍramawt.

	In subsequent years Rasūlids recaptured Ḥaḍramawt and destroyed the house of Ḥabūḍī.
mid-fifteenth century A.D. (mid-ninth century A.H.)	Taḥīrīds of Yemen, successors of Rasūlids, apparently ruled Ḥaḍramawt.
c. A.D. 1489 (A.H. 894)	Kathīrī tribe from Ẓafār controlled Wādī Ḥaḍramawt and much of the coast.
sixteenth century A.D. (beginning tenth century A.H.)	Yāfiʿī tribe from north-east of Aden brought in to aid dissident group of Kathīrīs. The former, afterwards themselves split into two factions, thereafter assumed control of much of the coast and part of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt, eventually including Shibām.
	Portuguese and Turks began to exert political influence, especially on the coast.
A.D. 1809 (A.H. 1224)	Wahhābi invasion of Wādī Ḥaḍramawt. After destroying many tombs and much historical and written heritage, Wahhābis retreated.
A.D. 1830 (A.H. 1246)	Prolonged dispute lasting until 1858 (1274) between the Kathīrī Sulṭān of Saiʿūn and the Quʿaiṭī Sulṭān of Qaṭn for possession of Shibām, with intermittent and eventual sharing of the administration of the city between them.
A.D. 1937–1940s (A.H. 1356–1360s)	Ḥaḍramawt under strengthened alliance with Aden by implementation of a series of treaties with Britain.
A.D. 1967 (A.H. 1387)	Proclamation of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, in which Shabwah became part of the Fourth Governorate, and the remainder of Ḥaḍramawt comprised the Fifth Governorate.

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