

A traditional South Arabian dhow boat is beached on a sandy shore. The boat is dark brown with a white sail and a yellow cabin. In the background, there are blue mountains under a clear blue sky. The water is a deep blue color. The foreground is a green grassy area.

What's the time? Natural measurement of time in Modern South Arabian

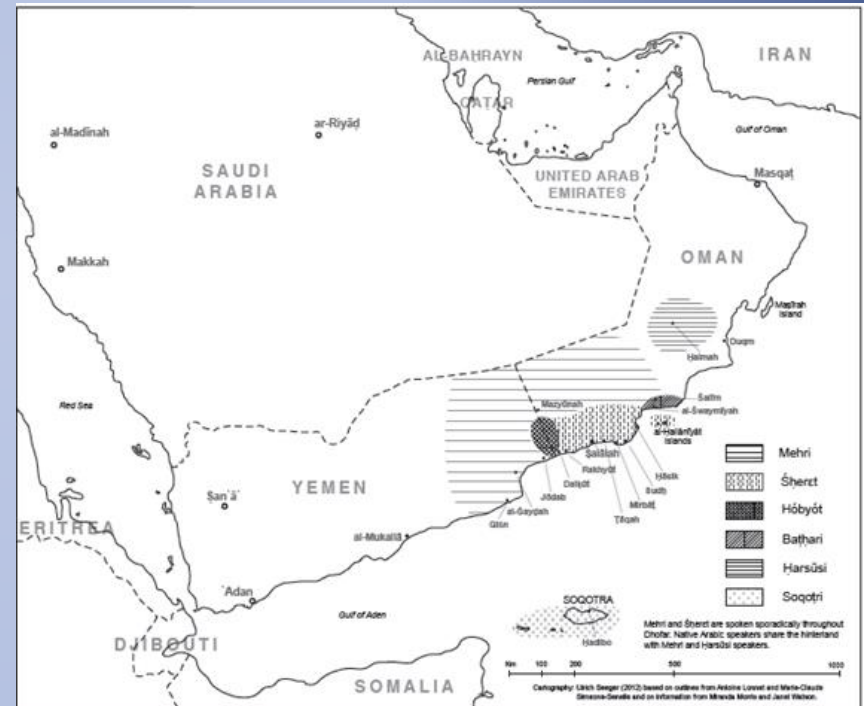
Janet C.E. Watson, University of Leeds
Leonid Kogan, National Research University,
Higher School of Economics, Moscow
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Outline

- Brief introduction to the Modern South Arabian languages
- The research teams
- Traditional lifestyles
- Quantification
- Adverbials of time
- Verbs of movement and staying

DEAMSA: Jan 2013-Dec 2016

- 5 languages, 3 UK investigators, 15 local researchers, 100+ speakers
- Archive at ELAR, SOAS:
 - 200+ hours of audio documentation
 - 10+ hours audio-visual documentation
- Comparative cultural glossary
- Ethnolinguistic & phonetic analysis
- Training of local community members



Semantic fields

- Personal – birth, weddings, divorce, death, kinship terms, illness
- Environmental – water, land, toponyms, flora, fauna, directions, orientation, stars, seasons
- Occupational – livestock husbandry, frankincense, fishing, construction, agriculture, fishing, lime production
- Trade – weights, measures, bartering, products, debt
- Material culture – milk, food, leather work, fibre work, woodwork, clay work, fire
- Stories – poems, folklore, fictional and factual tales

The Russian-Soqotran team

- In 2010, Vitaly Naumkin assembled a Russian-Yemeni fieldwork team: Semitist Leonid Kogan and Arabist Dmitry Cherkashin, and two extraordinarily gifted and enthusiastic native speakers of Soqotri: 'Isa Gum'an al-Da'rhi and Ahmed 'Isa al-Da'rhi. Six fieldwork seasons on the island, three brief sessions in Sana'a, and above all the informants' four lengthy stays in Moscow enabled the team to bring to fruition several projects, such as an integral morphological description of the Soqotri verb, a comprehensive lexical archive of previously unknown Soqotri words, and the revitalization of the Vienna Soqotri corpus. The primary goal and focus of the team, however, has been the creation of the *Corpus of Soqotri Oral Literature* (CSOL). In 2013, Ahmed's wife Maysoon Mohammed al-Da'arhi joined the team from the Soqotri side, and Maria Bulakh, a specialist in synchronic and historical Semitic linguistics and etymology, from the Russian side.

Adverbials of time, Mehri

- *fahag* ~ *ka-ffahag ḥāwalay* ‘first light’
- *ka-ffēgar* ‘dawn’
- *śūrēḳawtan* ‘first part of sunrise’
- *ka-śśarḳ* ‘sunrise’
- *ṣūbīḥan* ‘early morning after sunrise’
- *k-aṣōbaḥ* ‘in the morning’
- *ḍwēlēban* ‘early mid-morning’
- *ḍḥawban* ‘late morning’
- *nhūran* ‘hot part of day’
- *k-aṭaḥar* ‘midday’
- *k-azwūl* ‘just past midday’
- *ka-lḥasr* ~ *alḥasr* ‘mid-afternoon’
- *ḡasrawwan* ‘late mid-afternoon’
- *ḡasērēyan* ‘late afternoon’
- *kalḥaynī* ‘before sunset’
- *kalāḥāni* ‘early evening’
- *k-amgawzaḥ* ~ *agzēḥ* ‘once the sun begins to redden’
- *ū-maḡrāb* ‘sunset’
- *k-aḥīśē* ‘when sky first fully dark’
- *bi-ḥallīyēn* ~ *ḥāwēl ḍ-aḥāṣar* ‘first part of the night’
- *bi-ḥallay* ‘at night’
- *nahdēt ḍ-aḥāṣar* ‘just before midnight’
- *fakḥ ḍ-aḥāṣar* ‘midnight’
- *tōlī ḍ-aḥāṣar* ‘end of the night’

Time without sun

- In Dhofar and eastern Yemen during the monsoon period when the sun cannot be seen, noon was traditionally measured by looking into small pool of water, and sunset by the sound of a beetle

Verbs of movement, Mehri

- *agōmaś, yigamaśan, yigōmaś* ‘to go before dawn’
- *ǧsūm, yigawsam, yigśēm* ‘to go at first light’
- *ghēm, yighōm, yighōm* ‘to go in the morning’
- *hhawgar, yihhūgūr, yihhawgar* ‘to go in the heat of the day’
- [*haḵrawr, yhaḵrawr, yhaḵḵar*]
- *šūgūs, yišgōś, yiśawgaś* ‘to go late afternoon’
- *aśśōfaḵ, yiśśafḵan, yiśśōfaḵ* ‘to go just before the sun sets’
- *abōṣar, yābaṣran, yābōṣar* ‘to go around twilight’
- *bār, yibawar, yibār* ‘to go at night’
- [*gihma* ‘tomorrow’]
- *šaghūm, yišaghūm, yišagham* ‘to come in the morning’
- *ḵhēb, yiḵhōb, yiḵhōb* ‘to come in the heat of the day’
- *watxaf, yitxōf, ytaxf* ‘to come in the evening’
- *kluh, yikayl, yiklah* ‘to come in early evening [livestock]’
- *ṭwuh, yiṭayw, yiṭwah* ‘to come at night’
- *nakak nhūran* ‘I came around mid-day’
- *nakam tīn dʔawban* ‘they m. came to use mid-morning’

Verbs of movement, Soqotri

- *šh^a!ef* ‘to leave in the morning (4.30 – 10.00)’
- *gεhεm* ‘to come around noon (11.00 – 13.00)’
- *nofoś* ‘to leave in the afternoon (13.00 – 17.00)’
- *öqar* ‘to come in the evening (17.00 – 20.00)’
- *bóɟor* ‘to leave at night (from 20.00)’
- *šəmeri* ‘to come during the night (from 20.00)’

Verbs of spending particular period

- Mehri
- *haqşawm, yhaqşawm, yhaqşam* ‘to spend the hot part of the day’
- *watxaf, yitxōf, ytaxf* ‘to spend the evening’
- *hātūm, yhātūm, yhētām* ‘to spend the night’
- *haşbāḥ, yihşawbaḥ, yhaşbaḥ* ‘to wake in the morning’
- *haştū, yihşayt, yhaşt* ‘to spend the winter’
- Soqotri
- *šš^aqer* ‘to spend c. from 05.00 – 10.00’
- *qóhob* ‘to spend c. from 12.00 – 15.00’
- *šəřáşir* ‘to spend c. from 16.00 – 20.00’
- *ferr* ‘to spend c. from 20.00 on’

Discussion

- Shade and shadow in narratives
- Age judged by environmental event – the year of drowning, the year of drought, the year of the al-Haymar rains
- Periods of time measured by the amount of time it takes one to do a certain task – move between two bends in the wadi, milk 10 camels, etc.
- Watches lead to lexical loss ...

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