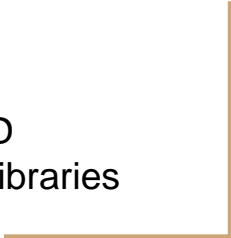


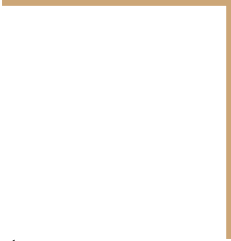


Recovering Yemen's Cultural Heritage

The Stookey Microfilms

Dale J. Correa, PhD
The University of Texas Libraries





“...removing archival records can be disruptive to immediate programming and operational needs, let alone larger societal processes concerning transition, recuperation of historic memory, and reconciliation.”

Theresa E. Polk, [“Archiving Human Rights Documentation: The Promise of the Post-Custodial Approach in Latin America.”](#)



Robert W. Stookey, PhD (1917-1998)

- Foreign Service Officer in Yemen
 - Served as chargé d'affaires, directing the U.S. Legation in Yemen, during the final months of the old regime, through the 1962 revolution and the inception of the republic, and into the early phase of the civil war
- PhD from UT Austin in 1972
 - Dissertation: “Political Change in Yemen: A Study of Values and Legitimacy”
 - Covers political change in Yemen from the pre-Islamic polities to the national reconciliation in 1970
- Fulbright-Hays grant in 1973
 - Filmed manuscripts of Mansur, Shami, and Jahhaf collections—among others—on 16 mm film
 - Turned over to UT Libraries and accessioned in 1980

Post-Custodial Archiving

“The idea that archivists will no longer physically acquire and maintain records, but that they will provide management oversight for records that will remain in the custody of the record creators.”

Society of American Archivists, [*Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*](#)

A Post-Custodial Agreement Before Its Time



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712

June 2, 1980

SSB 214
512 471-3881

TO: Dr. James A. Bill, Acting Director

From: Robert W. Stookey, Research Associate *RWS*

SUBJECT: Yemeni Microfilms

You will no doubt recall that in 1973, while in Yemen under a Fulbright-Hays research grant, I made microfilm copies of a number of Arabic manuscripts on a variety of subjects. The collection consists of over 50,000 manuscript pages on 16 rolls of 16 mm. film. Both negative and positive copies of each roll are on hand. A duplicate set was presented to the Yemeni Studies Center in Sanaa (an official YAR agency). Much of the material was provided me by His Excellency Sayyid Muhammad al-Manşūr from his own library and other private collections. Sayyid Muhammad is a senior member of the Yemeni ulama and has served in the past as YAR Minister of Justice and also of Awqāf. His assistance to me was made conditional on several stipulations which were embodied in a formal, written agreement deposited in the office of the Public Affairs Officer of the American Embassy in Sanaa. Among the obligations I assumed was to provide print-out copies of the manuscripts Sayyid Muhammad made available. I had these made at my own expense. The Center, however, paid the costs of their shipment to Yemen, on the understanding that the films will be placed on permanent deposit in the U/T Library's Middle East vernacular collection. I have delayed delivery of the films to the library thus far, in large part because our Embassy in Sanaa, in care of which the print-out copies were shipped, delivered them to someone other than Sayyid Muhammad, and it may thus prove necessary to have another set made and shipped to him.

Dale J. Correa, PhD
UT Libraries

A Post-Custodial Agreement Before Its Time

“Much of the material was provided me by His Excellency Sayyid Muhammad al-Manṣūr from his own library and other private collections...His assistance to me was made conditional on several stipulations which were embodied in a formal, written agreement...**Among the obligations I assumed was to provide print-out copies of the manuscripts Sayyid Muhammad made available.**

...in the case of the manuscripts furnished me by Sayyid Muhammad al-Manṣūr, I was obliged to agree that **if the Arabic text of any of the documents is published a certain proportion of the press run will be made available to him for distribution to libraries and other centers of learning in the Middle East.** (No such strings attach, of course, to manuscripts I obtained from other sources, but these compose less than half the collection.)”

“...U/T will provide, on a reimbursable basis, copies of specific titles in the collection for scholarly study, with these stipulations:

- a) **U/T is to receive three copies of the resulting completed research**, whether in thesis, dissertation, article, book, or other format. (For the main library, the Vernacular Collection, and the Center’s reading room.)
- b) If the research results in **an edited Arabic text, an additional copy will be provided for presentation to Sayyid Muhammad al-Manṣūr**, if he was the source of the manuscript used.
- c) If the Arabic text of a document furnished by Sayyid Muhammad is to be published commercially, **the editor undertakes to reach agreement with Sayyid Muhammad respecting the copies he is to receive in fulfillment of the obligation mentioned above.**

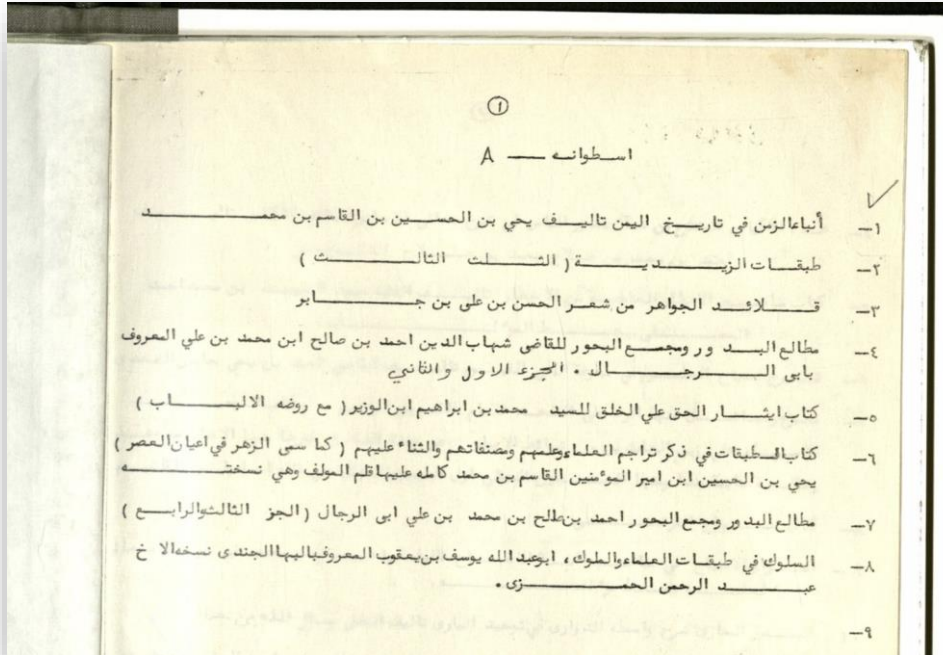
Honoring the Conditions

THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY in Sanaa. Among the obligations I assumed was to provide print-out copies of the manuscripts Sayyid Muhammad made available. I had these made at my own expense. The Center, however, paid the costs of their shipment to Yemen, on the understanding that the films will be placed on permanent deposit in the U/T library's Middle East vernacular collection. I have delayed delivery of the films to the library thus far, in large part because our Embassy in Sanaa, in care of which the print-out copies were shipped, delivered them to someone other than Sayyid Muhammad, and it may thus prove necessary to have another set made and shipped to him.

“Among the obligations I assumed was to provide print-out copies of the manuscripts Sayyid Muhammad made available. I had these made at my own expense. The Center, however, paid the costs of their shipment to Yemen, on the understanding that the films will be placed on permanent deposit in the U/T library’s Middle East vernacular collection. **I have delayed delivery of the films to the library thus far, in large part because our Embassy in Sanaa, in care of which the print-out copies were shipped, delivered them to someone other than Sayyid Muhammad, and it may thus prove necessary to have another set made and shipped to him.**”

Dale J. Correa, PhD
UT Libraries

Creating a Handlist



Stokey
handlist

'Liste détaillée des microfilms قائمة الأسطوانات وتضمنها

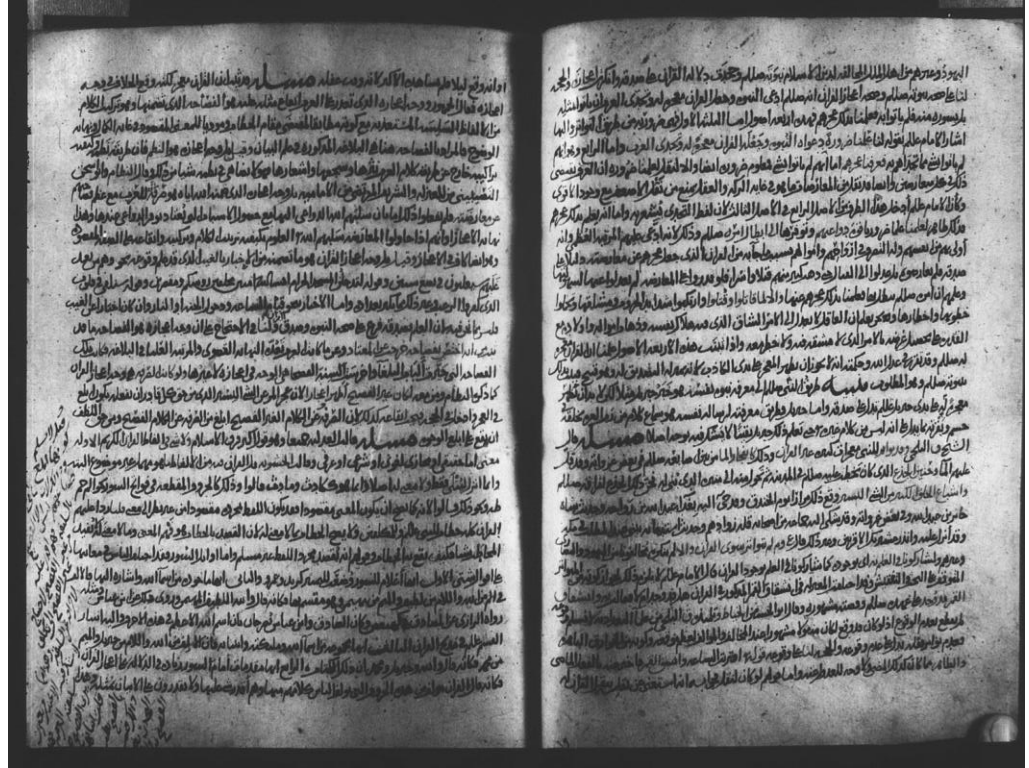
- A / الأسطوانة / Rouleau A
1. يحيى بن الحسين بن القاسم بن محمد
أنباء الزمن في تاريخ اليمن
 2. طبقات الزيدية (الثلاث الثالث)
 3. الحسن بن علي بن جابر
قلائد الجواهر (شعر)
 4. القاضي شهاب الدين احمد بن صالح ابن محمد بن علي المعروف بابي الرجال
مطالع البدور ومجمع البحور
الجزء الأول والثاني

Regourd
handlist

Digitization: An Institutional Minefield

- Initial idea: job talk → first project at UT Austin
- Challenges:
 - Institutional reticence
 - Quality of microfilms, microfilm scanner
 - No one else on campus qualified to do quality control or metadata
 - Hosting/discoverability/access

The Good...



وإنه قد وجد في كتابه هذا...
فإنه قد وجد في كتابه هذا...
فإنه قد وجد في كتابه هذا...

أخبار العرب...
أخبار العرب...
أخبار العرب...

أخبار العرب...
أخبار العرب...
أخبار العرب...

وإنه قد وجد في كتابه هذا...

Serendipity to the Rescue

- [The Yemeni Manuscript Digitization Initiative](#) (U Oregon, Princeton U Library, and Freie Universität Berlin) and Zaydi theology
- Small worlds collide: Sabine Schmidtke, Anne Regourd, and David Hirsch
- End result: Stookey microfilm material will be hosted by the [Hill Museum and Manuscript Library](#) (St. John's University) through the [Zaydi Manuscript Tradition portal](#) at [vHMML](#)

Heritage Recovery through Open Access

- Open access, read only images
- Possibility to crowdsource enhanced metadata in the future
- Yemeni scholars benefit



[Photograph: Benoit Tessier/Reuters](#)

"The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history. Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long that nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was...The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting"

- Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

Questions?

