

Exhibition focuses on threats to oases

By Manuela Gutberlet

OMAN TRIBUNE

MUSCAT Threats faced by oases in the mountains, on the seaside and in urban areas were the focus of the two-day exhibition and symposium which concluded at the conference and exhibition centre of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) on Sunday. Oases of Oman is a joint research and documentation project of SQU, three German universities and the German Archaeological Institute.

"Al Hamra is fascinating. You can see many old houses that are in ruins. However, in Al Hamra the palm plantation is still intact unlike in Nizwa where many palm trees have already perished," Professor Dr Eckhard Ribbeck, University of Stuttgart, told a group of students who went around the exhibition.

Oman Tribune talked to some of the students who visited the exhibition. The

event was sponsored by *Al Watan* and *Oman Tribune*.

Hamoud Al Mahry, who came from Dhofar, said: "I am from Hassek, about 200km east of Salalah. When I was a child my family lived in such a house, like in Bilad Seet. Then my parents rebuilt the house at the same place."

"The exhibition raises awareness about the need to protect our Omani heritage, especially the old houses, forts and castles," said Salim Al Maqbali from Sohar. In his view, old houses should be reconstructed in the old way, to keep the past alive. "Like in Ibra,

some parts were designed in an old way with Sarooj," said Salim Al Maqbali standing in front of the pictures of the old town of Ibra.

Once Ibra had many palm trees.

Today it has a population of about 25,000 and is a commercial and service centre in Sharqiyah region. Radical structural changes and population growth



have led to the formation of new city districts, which surpass the traditional city districts in size many times over. About 20-km road was developed along the new road connecting Muscat with Sur. However, the old part of Ibra, called Al Manzifah, is likely to be in ruins.

Nasser Al Hadrami from Izki thinks that the old parts of the cities should be protected and reconstructed in the old manner. He studies engineering and has chosen Heritage

Management as a subject at SQU.

"Oasis like Bahla and Izki are missing. Izki is one of the oldest oases in Oman and Bahla is also one. They date back to pre-Islamic era," said Al Hadrami.

"I thought oasis is a water pool but through the exhibition I got to know that it is a village where people are living," Leila Al Kaabi, who studies medicine, said. However, Al Kaabi believes the timing for the exhibition is wrong. "All students are busy with

their exams," said Al Kaabi.

Some students think that the exhibition should be available to a broader audience. "I think it would be a good idea to conduct the exhibition in other cities also, so that more people can learn about oases," said Dawoud Al Hatmy from Ibri.

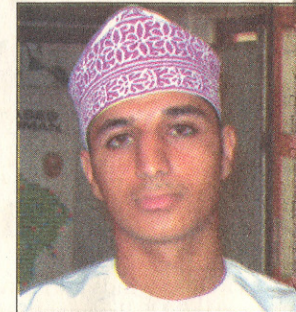
"Our research project on oases continues and it is progressing well. We would like to conduct such exhibitions in Germany too," said Ribbeck.



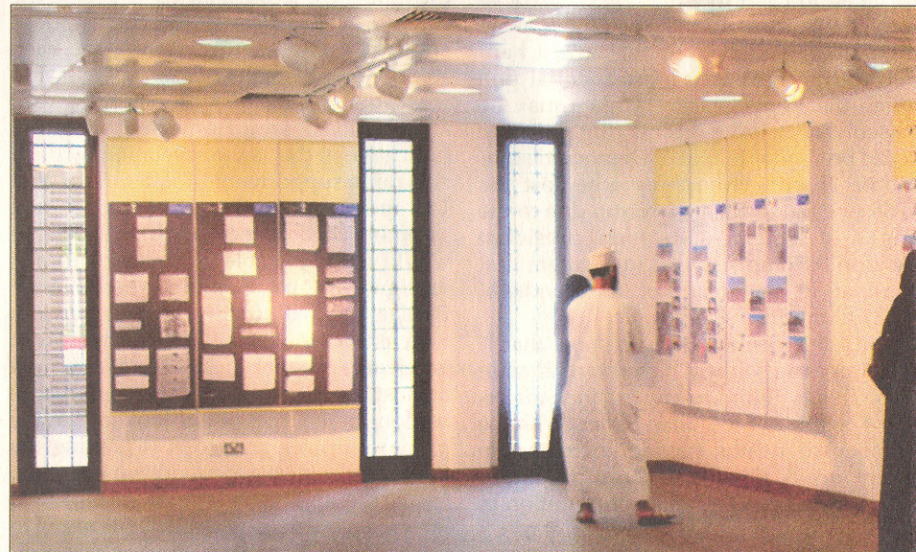
Hamoud Al Mahry



Salim Al Maqbali



Nasser Al Hadrami



The exhibition on oases at Sultan Qaboos University.

Manuela Gutberlet/Oman Tribune

OMAN

Seminar and exhibition of oases begin

MUSCAT — Abdul Aziz bin Mohammed Al Rowas, His Majesty the Sultan's adviser for cultural affairs, opened at Sultan Qaboos University yesterday a two-day seminar and exhibition of Omani oases which deals with the research project on authenticating and studying oasis. The project was implemented by the Archaeology Department at SQU in cooperation with the Agricultural and Marine Sciences College and a number of German universities.

Dr Saud bin Nassir Al Riyami, SQU vice-chancellor, said the Omani oases represent one of the most important means of living. These oases reflect the development and shape of the relation between the human being and nature in Oman.

The German ambassador to the Sultanate said this project comes to safeguard the Sultanate's cultural and geographic heritage. The chief guest expressed delight at the implementation of the project and praised the SQU's efforts in such projects which highlight the Sultanate's civilisational and cultural position before the renaissance era.

A comprehensive field survey will be conducted all over the Sultanate to enumerate and authenticate the oases sites. — *ONA*

Omani students honoured

ABU DHABI — The cultural attaché at the Sultanate's embassy in the UAE has honoured Omani students who will be graduated in Sharjah University this year. Sulaiman bin Ali Al Badi, cultural attaché, here congratulated the graduates' parents and praised the assistance accorded by university officials to the students. He then presented the students with certificates. — *ONA*



BRIEFING: Abdul Aziz bin Mohammed Al Rowas being briefed on the Omani oases at SQU yesterday.

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