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Transformations in the Role of the Nizwa Fort over the Course of the 20th Century

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On December 15th, 1955, the British consulate in Muscat, Oman, sent a telegram to the Foreign Office stating, "the Sultan of Muscat's forces occupied Nizwa fort without resistance this morning. Imam Ghalib is reported to have resigned and retired to his village in Rustaq" (FOA 1015/157). This announcement generated immense interest, resulting in major British newspapers offering various explanations about the occupation of the fort. For example, the article under the headline, "Rebel Fortress Occupied" informed the readers that:

> Many messages of congratulations are arriving for His Highness, Said bin Taimur, Sultan of Muscat and Oman whose forces have successfully established his authority in the interior of the sultanate after more than forty years of divided rule.[1]

The author of this article goes on to claim that the fort was the headquarters of the "so-called" Imam Ghalib bin Ali and that his separatist aspirations, financed by Saudi Arabia, challenged the Sultan's authority in this potentially important region. According to this account, a swift military drive by the Sultan's Muscat and Oman Field Force and its British officers was successful, while Nizwa put up no resistance. As the article further explained, the red flag of the Sultan was now flying over the battlements of the Imam's circular fort, allowing British oil prospecting efforts on the highly promising territory near the unmarked frontiers between Oman and Saudi Arabia to be conducted undisturbed.

The underlying set of assumptions in this media narrative led the reader to believe that Oman had been a unitary nation under a sultan. Its way of life had been usurped by religious leaders who had threatened the legitimate government, and aimed to become potentates in the mountainous interior. In response, the Sultan, encouraged and supported by the British

government, ordered his forces to destroy the power of the Imam by occupying Nizwa fort, the administrative and judicial centre of the Ibadi Imamate. In this scenario, the fort is portrayed as the embodiment of political authority and military control over the region in the conflict between the true sultan and the pretender imam, casting the fort as the ultimate stake in a naked power struggle between the Sultan and Imam's competing forces. Such a singular portrayal of the past elides critical questions as to the fundamental shifts in the role and function of this important site over the course of the 20th and 21st century that were the result of a historically contingent outcome, shaped by particular intersections between institutions, power and knowledge that defined the nature of sovereignty itself

Since its construction in the 17th century, the fort has generated communal belonging through entrenching social and political stakes that have been tethered to two different temporal rationales over the course of a century: (1) a theologically anchored exemplary history and (2) and a more secular oriented and nationally grounded progressive history tied to the idea of working the land and harnessing its resources. At the same time in these varying and shifting contexts, the enduring material presence of the fort has germinated new possibilities in the domains of politics, temporality and religion, forging unfolding capacities for ethical and political action.

In this paper I argue that the way in which the fort is experienced today has been mediated by a relationship to pasts that are not singular in nature but instead dynamically variable, crossing the boundaries between religious and political belonging and subject to larger historically contingent socio-political and economic contexts. I analyze the historicity implicit in the ways in which the fort's material form, its spatial contours and the uses they have been put to, traverse distinctions between legitimacy and illegitimacy and act as fundamental to the work of rearranging political and religious reality itself, delineating the foundations of two separate entities 1) Ibadi Imamate (1913-1958) and 2) the Sultanate of Oman (1970 to the present). At the same time, in order to understand the full epistemological power that heritage as a textual and visual discursive practice enacts, I trace the ways in which the contemporary heritage project produces factual differences and substantiates a historical-national territorial community through its tangible transformations of the fort, once a bastion of Ibadi religious jurisdiction and political rule, into a site of national history.

There is no doubt that the past has been used in modern Middle East state building to authenticate and authorize political and social projects that are in fact quite recent in origin.[2] Historical facts are commonly and strategically invoked in order to forge a collective social identity. But rather than examining the past that has been set in place through heritage institutional networks merely as a matter of selective suppression, one could pay close attention to the visual and discursive forms through which history is propagated in public institutions such as museums, the modes through which it has been rendered amenable to modern nation state building, and the kind of productive power it generates as a result. In short, this essay argues that heritage, as a set of practices, does not simply legitimize national identity as a state building tool, but transforms the very bases by which citizenship may be cultivated. Thus, another set of analytical questions about the past may be posed at this point that privilege an alternative set of issues: How have ideas of the past, its proper form and practice produced the categories of "history" and "religion" in the Omani public domain today? What are the limits of this history, when it is regimented by the institutional trappings of the modern state?

The Fort as a Site of Geo-Political and Regional Conflict

Between 1913 and 1957, for the first time in almost fifty years and in response to the informal British governance of the waters and coastal regions of Oman, the Ibadi Imamate re-established itself in the interior of the country. Over the course of the previous 1,200 years, the relatively unknown Ibadi school of *shari'a* interpretation had periodically instituted the Imamate, uniting the peoples of south-east Arabia into a body-politic led by an elected imam. Founded on a Quranic worldview of 'commanding right and forbidding wrong' (*amr b'il-ma'ruf wa nahy 'an al-munkar*), the authority of the Nizwa fort embodied that of the Imamate and was the seat of the Imam. Its authority was grounded in a concept of the past reaching back to (1) the Quran, (2) the *sunna* (the ways) of the Prophet and his companions and (3) the formative experiences, words and deeds of an unbroken line of succession of Imams since the early Madinan caliphate. The authority of the fort in its embodiment of the Imamate was premised on weaving together these three primary tiers of interpretation to scaffold the idealised 'just' Ibadi community in which *shari'a* structured the everyday practices and morally shaped the norms governing the way members related to themselves and others. Established in the early twentieth century, this polity was established in opposition to that prevailing in the coastal areas of Oman, where a monarchical dynasty, the Al Said, had gradually ceded power to British imperial sovereignty. At the time, Britain effectively controlled the sea-lanes and coastlines, thus reconfiguring the nature of political interactions and trading relations among tribes, rulers and the *ulama* (religious scholars).

In the early twentieth century, Oman was part of the frontier zone of the British Raj, a crucial entity in the British political system whose policies had consequences throughout the Gulf region.[3] The region was integral to the battleground for control of empire-wide communications between Britain and India. It was thus instrumental to the balance of power between the European great powers and as a platform on which Western "civilisation" could be extended even before the discovery of oil in the mid-twentieth century. The prospect of oil discovery on the lands of the Imamate resulted in a series of brief but violent conflicts and air assaults that took place from the mid to late 1950s. As a result, the Imamate period ended, giving way to a sultanate, backed by the British, uniting the region under a single polity. The British-supported coup-d'état that brought Sultan Qaboos to power in July 1970 is considered the inaugural epoch of socio-economic development, modern nation state building and the uni-directional movement toward progress. Large-scale civic infrastructure projects, such as road, hospital and school construction, as well as the bureaucratization of modern state governance, integrated the interior of Oman with the coastal capital city Muscat. Today, Nizwa is the regional capital of the *dakhiliyah* (interior) province. However, given the acts of war that forcibly ousted the Imamate from the region, it is important to understand how such violence entered into public memory. In the course of my fieldwork in Nizwa, despite the fact that its current role was brought about through armed conflict, I found few sentiments of regret towards the entrenchment of the Sultanate.

At the heart of the broad socio-political and economic transformations that undergird Oman's rise as a prosperous oil producer lies a project aiming to establish how transformative modes of history have reconfigured the Ibadi tradition, rendering them consonant with modern political and moral order in the Sultanate of Oman. The Nizwa fort, now a museum and historic monument, becomes a site that facilitates an understanding of how the Omani state has guided its citizens to become modern subjects armed with the appropriate sensibilities towards religion and

history. Yet, in order to comprehend how transformative pedagogical practices cultivate a rightly-minded citizenry, it is essential to recognize the function of the fort under the Imamate.

The Fort under the Imamate

The Nizwa fortress is an imposing citadel, in the midst of the flourishing city of Nizwa[4] and was once heavily fortified. It has become an iconic symbol of the military, administrative, judicial and scholastic roles that once defined the Ibadi Imamate as *al-wizara* (political and financial) administration), *al-minbar* (the mosque and its functions) and *al-ta'dil* ([administration of] justice).[5] The structure as a whole, consists of both a castle and a fortress that adjoin each other and are linked by means of intricate corridors. The construction of the fort as it exists today goes back to the 17th century when the Yaarubi Imamate established itself. It was built out of rough stone and mud brick over a period of twelve years (1649-1661) by Imam Sultan b. Sayf (1649-1680) after defeating the Portuguese. In fact, the fortress section of the citadel, which includes an artillery tower, is generally considered to have been deeply influenced in its design by the Portuguese system of forts that were built on rocks and islands located near the port of Muscat.[6] Today, its most prominent feature is a massive bastion tower that was considered to be strong enough to withstand cannon fire while providing a circular platform on which cannons could be placed. The platform is surrounded by a high wall that acted as a shield for the 25 canons that were placed behind openings and could be fired in a 360-degree radius. Linking walkways, curtain walls and connecting corridors were constructed to provide quick access to all parts of the building for the defenders in case of a siege. However, the fort is also well known for the ingenious traps that were an integral part of its design. This included false doors, "murder holes" or small openings above strategic doorways where boiling water, honey or oil could be poured down onto the enemy, stairs interrupted by gaping pits where planks were laid and quickly removed if an alarm was raised.[7] However the residential and administrative component of the complex, the castle itself, is considered to predate the tower by several centuries. A quadrangular courtyard encloses both the fort and castle. Thus the Nizwa fortress was not only used for defense but was also the residence of the Imam and his family as well as a place to receive guests. The castle therefore also included reception halls, administrative and judicial sections for adjudicating disputes, a prison, a *madrasa* for students who were studying the higher levels of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and were training to become scholars and judges, as well as date stores, water wells and an armoury.

However, the past that generated all three features that make up the Imamate: administration, religion and justice may not be easily assimilated to the linear history to which nation-building practices lay claim. This theologically oriented history was premised on the idea of the exemplar and emerged from the collection of *hadith* (words and deeds of the Prophet) that, along with the Quran, forms the fundamental sources of *shari'a* and is oriented towards evaluating the virtuous life as part of a theological worldview centred on God. These sources, however, were also entrenched within a certain conception of the past that was instrumental in subsequent political and theological debates pertaining to the faith. In its authoritative and institutionalized form, this history generated the microcosm of a broader set of debates that structured the Islamic world in terms of authority and the body-politic. The main issue these debates focused on was the question of criteria for legitimate rule after the Prophet's death.

In the introduction to *Tuhfat al-'Ayan,* the late 19th and early 20th century *'alim* (scholar), Sheikh Nur al Din al-Salmi, remarked on the paucity of noteworthy historical works among the Ibadis:

> History is a form of knowledge for emulating the lives of the virtuous (*iqtida al-salihin*) and guiding one towards the path of greater righteousness (*tariqat mutqin*). Since history consists of the recollection of all that has passed among good and evil peoples, hearing about the judicious and wise (*'aqil*) as part of knowledge of the righteous which manifests itself into a longing to follow their trace/impressed presence (*iqtida athar*). Hearing information concerning the deeds of evil doers, however, resolves into an apprehension and an eager anxiety to follow those who have been virtuous and to shun (*tajanab*) the circumstances that have led to evil. One is therefore always on a path of striving or struggle (*jihad*).

The concept of *iqtida athar* or following the impressions left behind by virtuous forbears was fundamental to infusing the past authoritatively into the present as a mode of reasoning and implementing *shari'a*. When I inquired about the relationship between history and the practices of Ibadi jurisprudence, an old *qadi* who now acts as a legal consultant in the office of the *wali* (governor) of the Dhakhiliyah province, replied that history itself is part of the development of *fiqh* (jurisprudence), since it is an inextricable part of a process of documenting the lives of previous Imams through the ages.[8] The exemplary words and actions of former imams established a tangible record of their lives (*athar*) that, in turn, is one of the main bases for developing *fiqh* (jurisprudence) instrumental to the exegetical elaboration of the foundational sources. Thus, the past became a storehouse of orientations and values that were embodied in the deeds of the celebrated *salihin* (righteous) and made accessible to future generations through their transformation into oral and written records. These figures and their deeds became ethical models and standards guiding later generations of jurists, judges, scholars, and even ordinary Ibadi Muslims, in determining the right course of action to take or evaluating the attitudes and behaviours of others.

The *sirat al-nabawi* (biography of the Prophet), accounts of his companions (*sahaba*) and important aspects of the lives, words and actions (*athar/*tracks) of the Ibadi imams were an integral and necessary part of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) compendiums. Laden with ethical import, these actions were constituted as normative deeds capable of transmitting values and instigating imitation. Pivotal multi-volume legal references, such as the *Bayan al-Sharh* (eleventh century), the *Musannaf* (twelfth century) and the *Qamus al-Shari'a* (eighteenth century) were often mentioned by people from all walks of life in Nizwa as relevant references to life during the Imamate.[9] Such accounts explain the rationale that generated certain concepts and rulings that came to define Ibadi legal scholarship and sanctioned its ethical-political rubric.
These texts were introduced in a simplified form and story-like narrative in *katatib* (Qur'anic schools), making them accessible for children, but they also became the object of more advanced study as a part of exegetical literature (*tafsir*) in the higher realms of learning. In short, they followed the student throughout all stages of education and beyond. The daily techniques of recitation and memorization of past exemplary accounts was a key means of internalizing narratives and events. These techniques became part of the process of domestication and incorporation in working on one's body and soul.[10] Meditating on past acts of piety as well as on sins through oral and aural techniques became instrumental in embodying a habitual familiarity of knowledge formation and an ethical form of being. In the training Ibadi *ulama* through

intensive study and discussion, such disciplinary practice honed ethical-political and legal forms of judgement that, in turn, structured the very perceptual basis *what does that mean ???* within which specific legal and academic issues could be debated and resolved.
Core values, such as respect, cooperation, neighbourliness and generosity were moral virtues that presupposed an authoritative model emulating the attitudes, actions and beliefs of the Prophet and his successors, the imams. These virtues were integral to the processes of cultivating relationships and establishing coherence determined by the legal and ethical norms of Ibadi fiqh. The authoritative past, embodied by the physical presence of the fort, was part of an infrastructure of institutional power and disciplinary practices in which merit in the form of piety in commanding right and forbidding wrong became institutionalized. In securing the authority of the Ibadi Imamate, the fort as an institution was the site of a historical consciousness that organized law, administration and ethics in ways that defined or defied Ibadi religiosity. Normative ethical principles guided the interpretation and deployment of jurisprudence and everyday administration. Underlying the "exemplary" view was the assumption that history was continuous, where past seamlessly blended into present and future. The interpretation of what was ethical was conditioned by Ibadi doctrine and practice, embodied in past acts and deeds, and assumed immutable and valid across time. This sense of continuity and constancy aimed at engaging, ingesting and approximating the virtues and pious accounts of the exemplarity of the Prophet, his companions, and subsequent imams. In doing so, it suspended temporal difference. The past was simultaneously dead and living, evocative and didactic for the present and future.

The Nizwa Fort as Heritage

Modern nation state building, its knowledge and sensibilities have erased the past even as they have engendered new ways of relating to it through institutions that have constitutively produced new relationships between the past, present and future. Today, the Nizwa fort embodies a configuration of the past that cleaves through the temporal assumptions of Ibadi *shari'a* time. At the heart of the broad socio-political and economic transformations that undergird Oman's rise as a prosperous oil producer from 1970 onwards, lies an alternative phenomenon. It is one that involves the ways in which transformative modes of history and time become integral to the larger modernisation project that has profoundly conditioned daily life in Oman. *Turāth* (heritage) is a concept born of the Omani *nahda* or renaissance that began when Sultan Qaboos bin Said (r. 1970 – present) ascended the throne of what is now the Sultanate of Oman and heralded a time of material development and progress. In repackaging the past, institutional *turāth is* at once historical and contemporary in structuring living consciousness and rendering it amenable to the forward thrust and linearity of modern time. The concept of *athar,* impressions or traces left behind by virtuous forbears, captures the markedly different ways in which Oman was in the grip of the past during the Ibadi imamate compared to the "heritage crusade" of the contemporary era.[11] Historically, the long standing idea of *athar* has always been primarily moral in nature and grounded in the foundations of Islamic religious authority, rather than simply tied to a material substantiation of the past. The interpretation of what was ethical was previously founded upon Ibadi doctrine and practice, embodied in past acts and deeds, and impervious to time.

However, since its inception as a nation state from 1970 onwards, Oman's expanding heritage industry and market for crafts and sites, fashions a distinctly national and territorially grounded imaginary, exemplified by the boom in museums, exhibitions, cultural festivals and the restoration of more than a hundred forts, castles and citadels. Of these hundreds, twenty-three have been transformed into tourism and heritage sites by the Ministry of Tourism, including

large complexes similar to Nizwa that were built for defensive, residential and judicial purposes. They were the administrative, judicial and military centres of the region and often housed the Imam's representatives such as the *qadi* (judge) or the *wali* (governor) and their military entourage. For example, al-Rustaq fort is 160 km northwest of Muscat. and located at the centre of the oasis, on a rocky hill. It was built by Nasir b. Murshid (1624-94), the founder of the Yaariba Imamate. Its crenelated walls tower up to 13 m above the rocks. It makes up an irregular complex of buildings around a courtyard that was once the residence of Yaarubi imams and is defended by two massive round towers on the south-east and north-west corners. Other historical sites include al Hazm, a short distance from al Rustaq which was built by Sultan bin Sayf II between 1708-1711 and Jabrin castle, 45 km from Nizwa and was built by Bilarab b. Sultan, the third Imam of the Yaariba dynasty. These historic sites are among many that have been transformed into visitor centres and museums.

Moreover, many public spaces around Oman are covered with images of tangible icons, claimed by the modern state, traditional items marshalled to provide the context within which the very foundations of the nation take shape. This iconic imagery, which include stylized references to fort architecture or hazy paintings of daggers, coffee pots and silver jewellery, recalls a past that relies on visual association with the original sites and objects. In modern Oman, the notion of *athar* has achieved a particular salience as heritage with the emergence of nation state building, civic morality and its attendant politics.[12] In other words, time has acquired a new quality in assuming a secular logic. Owing to this paradigm shift, *athar* has come to be construed as a memorialized past, grounded in the physical, or material traces of buildings or objects. These tangible remains now serve as testimonies to the glories of Oman, paving the way for restoration programmes that recognize specific features as worthy of preservation. Old forts and watchtowers were also maintained and restored during the Imamate, albeit for reasons other than their relationship with the past. These building forms were embedded in a religio-political life-world, where their roles enabled social and ethical practices and responses that were an integral part of daily life. This shift in the meaning of *athar* also reflects a transformation in temporality as part of a modern experience that understands change as inevitable with the passage of time. It presupposes the past as qualitatively different from the present and deserving of preservation before it vanishes in the face of inevitable change. With this shift in concept and its social, religious and political implications, Oman becomes a wholly different entity from that which existed prior to the institutionalization of heritage from the 1970s onwards. The operations of this history-making process involve the annihilation and the reconstruction of a particular historical tradition that once prevailed over the Omani region. What remains of the Imamate including its forts and watch towers has become integral towards generating a new form of authority, history and Ibadi religiosity. +++

Monumentalizing the Nizwa Fort

These days, the guns and cannons are silent and no guards patrol the crenelated contours of the great fort. Yet, the Nizwa castle and gunnery tower still stand as an imposing 17th century edifice with an Omani flag flying from a high flagpost. Restored in the late 1980s, its stone and earth works adjacent to the congregational mosque and opposite the old souks, now tower over a straggly line of tourist craft shops, bookstores, cafes and a large parking lot, serving visitors who come to meander through Nizwa's newly renovated and expanded souk areas. Two old cannons flank the large entryway leading to a vaulted passage at the end of which a raised platform bearing a large desk can be found. Of the three custodians and guides often found sitting there, two had family members that once served as guardsmen (*askariyeen*) at the fort during the

Imamate period (1913-1957). Yet, these men are now merely greeting visitors and handling ticket sales.

A variety of handicraft items, such as palm fans, textile weavings, old swords and *khanajar* (daggers) decorate the walls. The fort, once a centre of military, political and administrative Imamate power has been transformed into a museum. The former prison, a maze of corridors and small cells, has been transformed into an exhibit hall, each of which takes up a particular theme in Nizwa's history. Illuminated and colourful textual panels are set beside dioramas that reconstruct the fort's history. As will be elucidated below, the effect of the whole embodies a certain perceptual and sensory experience of the past. These contemporary practices of public history perpetuate forms of history, culture, religiosity and time even while (re)organizing them simultaneously.

A side room on the raised dais in the fort's entrance invites visitors to watch a film (in Arabic/English) on the importance of the fort. Through a series of images juxtaposing men's dances with crowded souk areas, handicrafts, cattle auctions and historical mosque architecture, the film places Nizwa and its fort into a context in which they stand in a contiguous relationship to a more comprehensive but absent whole: Oman itself. Objects and sites assume the role of historical witnesses to a past that, despite a brief note dating the fort to the first half of the seventeenth century, is rather ambiguous inasmuch as the images displayed and the buildings mentioned as part of Nizwa's traditional fabric are never assigned to a specified time. Instead, the seventeenth century fort is transposed and linked to seventh-century mosques and late twentieth-century souk areas and cattle auction blocks, generating a sense of a past that is neither entirely distant nor separate from the continually moving present. This amorphous sense of temporality is significantly strengthened by the vacillation between the past and present tense that is a marked feature of the film's narration.

Simultaneously, in the film, Nizwa's physical past is represented as inextricably linked to a sense of nationhood, tied to a metaphysical understanding of working the land and its resources. This sense of rootedness to the land is grounded in national belonging as it becomes tethered to a longer teleological history of "progress" and "civilization" that triumphs over the "Other." For example, the film extols the time when the Ibadi Ya'riba Imamate (1624-1744) of Oman, who built the Nizwa fort, became a significant naval power, freeing Oman from the Portuguese in 1650 and establishing a powerful empire based in East Africa. The depiction of the Ya'riba Imamate as Omanis who defeated the European imperialists, created a competing navy through harnessing local land and maritime resources, and eventually triumphed against the Western powers to establish their own empire is a reversal of the classic theological view. In Ibadi doctrine, the Ya'riba imams are part of the *umma,* a theologically defined space centred on God, where they stand as models of virtuous conduct that each Muslim seeks to emulate in order to achieve salvation. According to the film narration, however, the Ya'riba imams are portrayed as spiritual heroes embodying the national principles of fortitude, bravery, creativity and entrepreneurship that have endured as lasting traits of the Omani to the present day. As a monument, the physical presence of the Nizwa fort is now construed as a signifier that is capable of summoning a history and its values to conscious and collective recollection. The building of the Nizwa fort bears witness to this value-laden history, with its engineering and defensive system, the fortification of the city, its walled souk, the cattle auction area and the decorative programme of its historic mosques.

Together, in their immediate association with each other, images of these architectural landmarks and material objects become tokens of "authenticity" and "tradition" as an integral part of Oman's modernity. As the film affirms at the end, "these (i.e. the cityscapes) are live

testimonials (*shawahid hayya*) to Nizwa as a centre of culture, spiritual enlightenment and learning that has produced and attracted many jurists (*fuqaha*), religious scholars (*ulama*), poets and men of literature since the very beginning of the Islamic era." Without delving into the historical and cultural specificity of the fort's past, its structure is cast as a point of convergence for political, social and religious interaction and a centre of learning and administration, generating a way of life as the focal point of community activity. The Nizwa fort, once the cornerstone of the Ibadi *shari'a* polity, now transcends the historical and cultural specificity of concrete circumstances and has been recast as a mighty reservoir of abstract values that extends from the medieval past to the present day, moving back and forth between past, present and future to embody the nation state and its normative standards. The past itself becomes a force that is immanent to the present rather than disassociated from it.

As Nizwa's cityscape has entered new institutional contexts of nation building and touristic enterprises, new purposes have been found for the old architectural buildings and sites. New forms of action are centred on the presumption that the fort, among other architectural landmarks, is a canvas on which an account of the history of the nation has been inscribed. In other words, there is an assumption that history exists in material forms as an inherent part of their substance. In this valuation, they have acquired significances that were unintended by previous users.[13] Stripped of their immediate social contexts and concrete circumstances, architectural landmarks are re-appropriated and translated into a distilled set of standardized spiritualized values and principles. As such, each fort, citadel or watchtower and unusual stylistic features such as "murder holes", regardless of their historical circumstances, become interchangeable and synonymous with each other inasmuch as they all represent innovation, creativity, and stalwartness in the face of danger. It is this very process of distilling the historical and cultural specificity of watchtowers, citadels, forts and castles into a generic form that creates a portable type systematically brought into view through national pedagogy, televisual mass media, and the general architectural aesthetics of cityscapes. For example, the stadium in Muscat that held the theatre for the 40th Anniversary National Day celebrations presided by the sultan was lavishly decorated with a reconstruction of the fort as an iconic type. Through this process of resignification, object assemblages are shoehorned into the framework of a progressive logic, the mainstay of modern historicity. The Nizwa fort, among other historical objects and sites, anchors emotional attachment and civic virtues conceived as the foundation for co-opting a distinctive past into a national march towards "progress."

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[1] *The Times* (20 December 1955)

[2] See Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori (eds), *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); David Held and Kristian Ulrichsen (eds), *The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics, Economics and the Global Order* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012)

[3] Robert Landan, *Oman since 1856: Disruptive Modernization in a Traditional Arab Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967); J.E. Peterson, *Oman in the Twentieth Century: Political Foundations of an Emerging State* (New York: Croom Helm, 1978);

[4] The fortress was erected at such a crowded site in order to act as a refuge in times of conflict or uprisings when the inhabitants of the city could take refuge in the citadel: Monika Fatima Mühlböck, 'Forts and Castles of Oman: Their Importance for the Defense of the Imamate,' *Weiner Zeitschift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 85 (1995): 233-38.

[5] The characterization of the Ibadi Imamate on the basis of these three features has been taken from Ibn Baraka al-Bahlawi, a tenth- to early eleventh-century Ibadi scholar cited by John Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 177.

[6] See Enrico D'Errico, 'Old Muscat and its Fortifications,' in Salma Samar Damluji, ed., *The Architecture of Oman* (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 1998), 140-47; Heinz Gaube, Abd al Rahman al-Salmi et al., eds., *Islamic Art in Oman* (Muscat, Oman: Al Roya Publishing House, 2008).

[7] See Nasir b. Mansur al-Farisi, *Nizwa abr al-ayām* (Nizwa, Oman: The Administration Association of Nizwa, 1994), 23; Literary Symposium in Nizwa, *Nizwa abr al-tarikh* (Muscat, Oman: Ministry of Heritage and Culture, 2001); Ibrahim Ahmad Sa'id, *Nizwa, Madinat al-tarikh* (Nizwa, Oman: University of Nizwa, College of Education, 2008).

[8] Personal communication with legal consultants in the governor's office in Nizwa

[9] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman*, 355.

[10] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 210.

[11] David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

[12] Amal Sachedina, 'Of Living Traces and Revived Legacies: Unfolding Futures in the Sultanate of Oman' (Ph.D. Diss. University of California, Berkeley, 2013); Ann Rasmussen, 'The Musical Design of National Space and Time in Oman', *The World of Music* 1/2 (2012): 63-96; John Willis, 'History, Culture and the Forts of Oman', *Arab Studies Journal* 4/1 (1996): 141-143.

[13] Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998); Webb Keane, *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008).

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