

## *In memoriam*

### Jocelyn Cecilia Orchard, 1936–2019

Jocelyn Orchard, who died in August last year following a short illness, was a specialist in the archaeology of the Ancient Near East, with a passion for the grand sweep of history and the early periods of Mesopotamia and Arabia. She was a unique figure in the field of archaeology — in her origins, her enthusiasm and unwavering determination, and in her achievements despite invariably having only very modest resources at her disposal. Latterly an Honorary Research Fellow of the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity in The College of Arts and Law at the University of Birmingham, she was co-founder and co-Director, with her husband Jeffery Orchard, of The University of Birmingham Archaeological Expedition to the Sultanate of Oman — later renamed The Hajar Project — and worked for thirty-three years investigating sites in the Wadi Bahla, near Bahla town and in the vicinity of Bisya, under the patronage of the Oman Ministry of Heritage and Culture.

Born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, on 27 October 1936, Jocelyn was one of four daughters of Charles Farrell, a civil engineer, and Hilda May (née Herbert). She was educated at Bishop Anstey's High School and received her overseas Baccalauréat from the Sorbonne, Faculté des Lettres. Jocelyn studied for her MA at the University of Edinburgh between 1958 and 1962, before moving to the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, where she received a Post-Graduate Diploma in the Archaeology of the Near East in June 1966. Subsequently, she worked on excavations in Jerusalem, Petra, and Warka, as an assistant in the Department of Antiquities in Aden, southern Yemen, and from 1967 to 1969 as Librarian and Assistant Administrator of the Palestine Exploration Fund in London. However, it was when working with the British School of Archaeology in Iraq that she met Jeffery Orchard, then the Assistant Director, and together they formed a close and enduring personal and professional partnership which lasted until his death in 2015.

In 1971 Wilfred Lambert, then Professor of Assyriology at the University of Birmingham, encouraged Jeffery to apply for the post of lecturer in the Ancient History and Archaeology of Western Asia. Jeffery was successful, but typically, in terms of their equal relationship, this was clearly viewed as a joint opportunity. 'Frankly, I think that this is something that both of us must apply for in the hope that one of us might just get it', he wrote to Jocelyn. 'The great advantage of this opening, as I see it, is that it would give us freedom to plan our own archaeological field projects... I am completely blocked by prior interests... whilst you are hampered by permit requiring purposes by the fact you don't represent a university or a museum...' Jocelyn embarked upon her own career in Birmingham as a museum administrator, first from 1976 to 1981 as Assistant Director of the Area Museum and Art Gallery Service for the Midlands and then, until 1990, Deputy Director of the West Midlands Area Museums Council.

In 1980 Jeffery and Jocelyn began their annual survey, research, and excavation seasons in Oman, investigating the earliest appearance, character, and evolution of oasis settlements. These settlements, which they named The Hajar Oasis Towns, are distinguished by their enigmatic monumental circular structures, their cemeteries of beehive-shaped tombs, and their contacts with Mesopotamia, Iran, and the Indus Valley. From the first, Jocelyn was particularly intrigued — following on from her keen interest in the archaeology of Yemen — by the possibility of structures buried in wadi sediments and later, focused on a greater understanding of the use of *aflaj* (groundwater-fed sub-surface to surface irrigation systems).

In 1990 Jocelyn's post in Birmingham fell victim to one of the seemingly haphazard organizational reviews of which the museum sector seems prone, though happily giving her the freedom she wanted, both in time and money, for their annual fieldwork in Oman. With Jeffery's retirement in 1993, this could now be their primary aim and activity.

Jeffery's declining health after 2010 ended their personal work in the field, although both remained active in their research projects. The interim results of their work have been presented in a number of journals and papers

and preparation for the publication of the final reports was underway at the time of her death. It is a measure of Jocelyn's indomitable character that, following the unexpected diagnosis of her final illness, all her efforts in her last days — and they were only days — were focused on the successful creation and endowment of The Jocelyn Cecilia Orchard Research Trust for the full publication of their fieldwork.

Nigel Tallis FSA

