

Questionnaire (put reference #:page # after each entry)

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

Society: Mahra (1)

Language: Mehri or Mahri (1)

Language family: Afro-Asiatic (1)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): gdq (1)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): 23°36'N 58°33'E (6)

1.4 Brief history: The Mahra are a semi-nomadic people, and overall, are spread out along much of the Middle East. Populations of the Mahra make up some of the populations in Yemen, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. The Mahra move from region-to-region throughout the year in search of scarce resources and are almost entirely one hundred percent Islamic. "The Mahra still uphold much of their semi-nomadic traditions, although settled life is gaining ground, especially in Oman." (4).

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The Mahra seem to be almost completely uninfluenced by missionaries, as they are nearly all Muslim. However, it does seem that government and/or powerful neighbors seem to be causing the Mahra to quickly shift from their primary language, Mehri, to Arabic- which is prominent in the region. "They have their own language, [Mehri](#), which belongs to the [South Arabian](#) language family. Today, 60-70% of all Mahras speak Mehri as their first language, but it is losing ground to [Arabic](#)." (4)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): The Mahra live in the regions of the Middle East that are mainly desert and mountains, so it makes sense that they are semi-nomadic and travel when the seasons change. "The semi-nomads spend the winter months travelling into inner desert regions with livestock, and summers in villages." (4)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

Population size: 71,000 in Yemen, 51,000 in Oman, and 14,000 in Kuwait (4).

Mean village size: No data found

Home range size: No data found

Density: No data found

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Bread and porridge (4)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Eggs, milk, and chicken (4, 5)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: No data found

2.4 Food storage: No data found

2.5 Sexual division of production: No data found

2.6 Land tenure: No data found

2.7 Ceramics: No data found

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: No data found

2.9 Food taboos: No data found

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? No data found

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No data found

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No data found

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): No data found

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): No data found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): No data found

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): No data found

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): No data found

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: No data found

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: No data found

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Traditionally, marriages are arranged by use of a dowry, but it is becoming more and more common for individuals to be able to choose his or her marriage partner. "In the past, marriages were arranged, but, increasingly, individual choice is becoming acceptable." (2)

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Any inheritance is passed down patrilineally since males are favored in society over females, as is the case in most Islamic societies. "They receive inheritances patrilineally (inherited by the next male family member). In this system, boys inherit more than girls." (2)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: No data found

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: No data found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Most Mahra marriages are endogamous, and usually marriages are only between males and females from the same societal group. "The Mahra are an endogamous tribe, which means that they only marry within a small social circle." (2)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? No data found

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") No data found

- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No data found
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: No data found
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) No data found
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? No data found
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: No data found
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? No data found
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females- No data found
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: No data found
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): No data found
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? No data found
- 4.24 Joking relationships? No data found
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Descent seems to be passed down patrilineally, including names and inheritance. "They receive inheritances patrilineally (inherited by the next male family member). In this system, boys inherit more than girls." (2)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: No data found
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? No data found
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? No data found
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Marriage is usually preferred within small social circles. "The Mahra are an endogamous tribe, which means that they only marry within a small social circle." (2)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Marriages used to be arranged by parents, but as the Mahra have become acclimated to modern times, it has become more reasonable for individuals to marry whom they want. "In the past, marriages were arranged, but, increasingly, individual choice is becoming acceptable." (2)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: No data found

Warfare/homicide

- 4.31 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: No data found
- 4.32 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: No data found
- 4.33 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: No data found
- 4.34 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): No data found
- 4.35 Cannibalism? No data found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: No data found
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): The Mahra are a semi-nomadic people who do move from the desert during cooler months and to their villages and to the mountains during warmer months. "The semi-nomads spend the winter months travelling into inner desert regions with livestock, and summers in villages." (4)
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Mahra tribes are ruled by sheiks, who are essentially experts in the Muslim religion and relations with neighboring societies and outside culture. "Each tribe is ruled by a sheik, who is considered an expert in Islam and in relating to the outside world. His responsibilities include administering justice, protecting the tribe, sustaining tribal status, and providing grazing territory for the herds." (2)
- 5.4 Post marital residence: No data found
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Even though the Mahra's military is fairly simple and rather unorganized, they defend they defend their territory in a very defensive and protective manner- usually through continuous control of the trade and people that go through their territory. "Their territory is staunchly defended, partly by controlling all of the goods and persons that pass through it." (2)
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): No data found
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: No data found
- 5.8 Village and house organization: No data found
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): No data found
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? No data found
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Even though the Mahra's religion is Islam, social classes and ranks still exist and villages are built around that structure. "Despite the teachings of Islam, traditions that uphold different social classes still persist." (2)
- 5.12 Trade: No data found
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? The sheik is the headman in each village, and social hierarchies are known to rule how the Mahra's society is organized. "Mahra social structure is based on the tribe. Each tribe is ruled by a sheik, who is considered an expert in Islam and in relating to the outside world... Despite the teachings of Islam, traditions that uphold different social classes still persist." (2)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR: No data found
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): No data found
- 6.2 Stimulants: No data found

- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): When male youths enter manhood, the Mahra men will begin to carry daggers and change their headwear. “When boys become men, they change their headgear and begin wearing daggers.” (2)
- 6.4 Other rituals: No data found
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): No data found
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): No data found
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: No data found
- 6.8 Missionary effect: No data found
- 6.9 RCR revival: No data found
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: No data found
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? No data found
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? No data found
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) Nearly all Mahra are Muslim, more specifically Sunni Muslims. “Practically all Mahra are [Sunni Muslims](#).” (4)

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: No data found
- 7.2 Piercings: No data found
- 7.3 Haircut: No data found
- 7.4 Scarification: No data found
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): No data found
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: No data found
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Women are forced to conceal their faces, usually with niqabs. As is traditional for most Islam societies, women are required to cover almost all skin. “Women are by all means secondary to men among the Mahra, and wear veils (see [niqab](#)) in all social circumstances.” (4)
- 7.8 Missionary effect: No data found
- 7.9 Types of clothing: No data found

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: No data found
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: No data found
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No data found

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

1. <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/gdq>
2. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-profile.php?peo3=13220&rog3=MU>
3. <http://www.peoplegroups.org/Explore/groupdetails.aspx?peid=11883>
4. <http://i-cias.com/e.o/mahra.htm>
5. <http://books.google.com/books?id=j894miuOqc4C&pg=PA30&lpg=PA30&dq=mahra+people+oman&source=bl&ots=WMhuzrHfku&sig=t4HRrbPJWzzfgOzJKR9nKBsDbhg&hl=en&sa=X&ei=puWGUBP3EqiHywHJ3ICYBg&sqi=2&ved=0CIEBEOgBMA0#v=onepage&q=mahra%20people%20oman&f=false>
6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehri_language