

YEMEN

Many of the outstanding cultural landscapes in Yemen, including villages and towns, are threatened by decay, although efforts by the General Organisation for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen (GOPHCY) to stop this process of decay and restore individual monuments seem to be successful in the towns of Sana'a and Shibam, both inscribed in the World Heritage List (see also the *Heritage at Risk Report 2000*). However, Zabid, capital of the first independent Islamic State of Yemen from the 9th century onwards and once the seat of a famous Islamic university, is highly endangered and has therefore already been placed on UNESCO's list of cultural heritage in danger. At the beginning of the 1990s, this city in the Tihama, a plain between the coast of the Red Sea and the mountains, with its wide range of monuments showing partly Egyptian, partly Ottoman influences, was still in a relatively good condition. The rapid dilapidation of the historic houses, some of which were empty, others were drowning in rubbish, only began in the last decade. Many houses have been pulled down and replaced by banal concrete constructions. The dilemma is how to stop the continuing destruction of this unique city.

Views of the rapidly decaying city of Zabid

