



A Semi - Annual Archaeological Refereed Journal on the Arab World

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## CONTENTS

**EDITORIAL** 4

### PAPERS

- Rock Art Scenes from Wadi Fida, Oman. **Prof. Ali Tigani ElMahi** 7
- Predators and Geometric Mosaic at the Bath of the Umayyad Palace at Qastal - Jordan A Comparative Study **Dr. Mohammad Nassar, Prof. Nizar Turshan & Dr. Khaled al- Jbour** 19

### INDEX

- **A list of Previously Published Papers** 29

## ARABIC SECTION

**EDITORIAL** 4

### PAPERS

- Rock Arts from ash-Shamayatin Directorate, South of Ta'ez Governorate, Yemen, An Archaeological Study. **Aziz Alghauri** 7
- Rain Gods in Safaitic Inscriptions: A Comparative Study with Narratives from the Arab Poetry till the Rise of Islam. **Dr. Mohammad Aljarrah** 29
- A set of Taylos Gems Reserved in the Bahrain National Museum. **Asma Hamood Alanzy** 41
- Policies of Managing Museum Collections The National Museum in Riyadh as a Model. **Prof. Abdulatif Effendi** 57

### BOOK REVIEW

- Rawa'e min fonoon ma qabl at-tarikh [Masterpieces from Pre-History Arts]. Zeidan Kafafi, Khaled Abu ghanimeh, & Maysoon al Nahar **Dr. Omar Al-Ghul** 71

## EDITORIAL

The selection of Al-Ula Governorate, NW Saudi Arabia, to host the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit in January 2021 was an affirmation that the Saudi leadership gives great value for the archaeological and heritage sites that abound in the Kingdom. After all, these sites represent a historical depth and a civilizational and cultural wealth, worthy of investing in their civilizational and cultural components to enhance tourism in the local, regional and international arenas. The Kingdom is rich with cultural heritage that represents different historical eras which should be invested and employed to serve the national vision, promote the national heritage and develop its their components.

Ever since the 1st Gulf Summit, held in 1981, it has been the custom of the hosting country to hold the summit in its capital city. However, holding the current summit in the city of “Al-Ula” in the northwest of the Kingdom came as a thoughtful choice by the Saudi leadership, restoring this archaeological city to its past glory. After all, Al-Ula was one of the most important cities of the ancient Arab kingdoms, and today it has returned re-emerged to represent as a modern cultural and civilizational platform by choosing it to host the GCC Summit this year.

Al-Ula represents “the meeting place of civilizations, people and cultures”, characterized by a location with an aesthetics nature in Wadi Ashar. The city with its civilizational historic depth represents the cultural, religious and social ties throughout history time. The decision to hold the summit in the city of Al-Ula reflects the Saudi determination to strengthen rapprochement and integration factors among the GCC states. It also highlights the importance of investing the historical and civilizational heritage of the GCC states, with their contemporary development achievements; thus, developing the connection of connecting their citizens with the heritage of their countries and highlighting the importance of this priceless cultural heritage.

Al-Ula Governorate includes the site of "Mada'in Saleh", known also as "Hegra", which is the first archaeological site in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The city of Al-Ula has been a crossroads of different civilizations and cultures throughout the ages, and has been an icon for different periods of time. Today, it has become a “soft cultural platform, bearing deep historical dennotations.” The city hosts monuments belonging to the various civilizations it has hosted over thousands of years, starting from prehistoric times, all the way to the becoming a trading centers of the Nabateans, to the Islamic era. The Nabataean Hegra city in Al-Ula Governorate, dates back to the 1st Century BC, and it includes rock formations that reflect the civilizational cultural progress witnessed by Al-Ula through the ages.

The decision to hold the 41st GCC Summit in an important archaeological site in the Kingdom confirms the Saudi interest in archaeological sites, and establishes the conviction of the important and hoped anticipated role that antiquities and national heritage are expected to

have in shaping the country's economic, cultural and tourism 'map'. It also draws the attention of the cultural, media and educational bodies to give antiquities and national heritage the necessary attention needed to highlight them for the younger generations, and present them in the manner they deserve in the national and international arenas. These archaeological sites are expected to provide a prominent contribution to the national economy.

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Perhaps this calls on us to reflect on the importance of archaeological sites in linking the past with the present and the future. Needless to say, that archaeological sites contribute to the formation of the people's identity, and to familiarize them with the history and civilization of their country. This reflects positively on enhancing loyalty to the country and its civilization, instilling national values, and consolidating national pride, leading to strong cohesion among the people. Therefore, countries around the world are keen to preserve archeological sites, antiquities and the national heritage they own. They also develop national plans and strategies to take care of them and preserve them from erosion due to weather changes. These national plans and strategies also aim to protect them from irresponsible encroachments by some individuals searching for alleged treasures or trading in archaeological finds that they may extract excavate and hide away from legal authorities; thus, wreaking causing havoc and damage to their national archeological heritage.

Therefore, several legislations and laws have been passed and put in place with the aim of criminalizing tradeing in national antiquities. These archeological sites and cultural heritage sites are public property and a national treasure that must be preserved and protected from any encroachment, sabotage, theft, illegal trading or individual acquisition, wherever they are found and extracted.

Preserving antiquities and cultural heritage is a national interest in particular and a global interest in general, since they are a main source of knowledge about the history of the nations that lived in previous eras. They also represent the tangible source to explore the features of the original civilizations of those nations that lived in previous periods ages.

The authorities responsible for antiquities have also developed strategic plans to work on developing the antiquities' sector and implementing send archaeological expeditions to discover buried antiquities that are still waiting for archaeologists specialized in excavation to uncover to excavate them, study them, and prepare conduct scientific research about them. Also, to document these sites them in order to contribute to writing the history of the civilizations that they represent. This way, the stock amount of scientific references publications, based on material elements culture and witnesses to that history and those civilizations will multiply.

It is also worth mentioning that it is very important to register significant archaeological sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List in order to preserve these archaeological and heritage treasures, and to highlight them and enhance their position at on the global level.

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## A Venerable Arab Archaeologist Passed Away

### Prof. Abdelkader Mahmoud Abdullah

In the first week of January 2021, the archaeological community in the Arab World lost one of its prominent figures, who had contributed considerably to the field of research and teaching in many Arab universities; it was Prof. Abdelkader Mahmoud Abdullah. He accompanied us in Adumatu, as a member of the Advisory Board, and a reviewer of various scientific research articles.

He, may he rest in peace, was a revered figure in the field of ancient Sudanese and Egyptian archaeological studies. He conducted various research works, and made significant contributions and a great intellectual achievements. He will be remembered by the researchers academic community who will return to his books and research for their importance and distinction. He, surely, was an important figure in his field.

Prof. Abdelkader Mahmoud Abdullah, may he rest in peace, devoted most of his life to research and academic work; he was a well-known figure in the fields of science and culture. Throughout his career, he maintained interest for in research and knowledge, lived in silence and departed in silence, leaving behind a rich legacy and exemplary demeanor. He was a very knowledgeable figures, and enjoyed close relations with archaeologists and researchers of different nationalities. He was loyal to his work, humble with his colleagues and students, a considerate researcher, distinguished by careful observation, vision and noble goals.

He worked at the University of Khartoum and later at King Saud University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 1975-2001. He was also the Secretary of the Arabian Peninsula Symposium at King Saud University for about 25 years (1976-2000 AD). After that, he joined the Open University of Sudan (2004-2011 AD) as an advisor to the university Rector; a director and founder of the Department of Research, Planning, Development and Graduate Studies. Later in 2011, he worked as a professor of Sudanese and ancient Egyptian languages at Al-Neelain University in Sudan.

He left behind numerous books in both Arabic and English, especially on Sudanese and ancient Egyptian studies. Two of his important books are: *The Meroitic Language* (Riyadh: 1407 AH / 1986 AD), and *the Alphabetical Writing in Ancient Egypt* (Riyadh 1416 AH / 1995 AD).

He participated in the establishment of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists during the 1990s of the last century. He was also the Deputy Secretary-General of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists in its current session. In addition, he was a member of the Advisory Committee of Adumatu Journal. Among the most prominent awards he received are were the Queen Elizabeth II Prize for Best Researcher at Durham University in 1966, and the General Union of Arab Archaeologists Award for his book “*Alphabetical Writing in Ancient Egypt*” in 2000...

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