

EDITORIAL

Twenty Volumes of Adumatu so far mean ten years: the newborn has grown up, passed the initiation stage, and admitted into the recognized community of credited scholarly journals. Over the decade, Adumatu has nurtured scholarly works from the far Arab west to the near Arab east; scholars' knowledge of the archaeology of both sides has contributed generously. Yet, Arab west archaeologists are still reluctant to participate more actively in publications of the Arab east even though we are eager to be more informed of the archaeology of their Arab part. Perhaps an excuse can be attributed to the barrier of language: learned archaeologist in the Arab west are well versed in French, and they probably find it difficult to write in Arabic or English, the two languages Adumatu accepts. Nevertheless, we do look forward to their contributions.

To highlight the achievement of these ten years, one perhaps should appeal to statistics. The journal published some 150 refereed papers covering various issues that extended from prehistory, pre-Islam, ancient inscriptions, to Islamic periods. Other topics that do not fall within the statistics include general principles, book reviews, conference reporting, and scholarly workshops and forums. In short, the journal has been actively pursuing its academic task.

Over these years Adumatu has been able to attract readers from the four corners of the world, and to become an internationally recognized outlet for scholarly studies. Recognized researchers throughout the world have chosen it for their work and have contributed to its issues. This respect is the fruit of the editorial board's commitment to high standards of scholarship; indeed, the board has, too often regrettably, rejected works that fall short of the declared standards of the journal. Only strict adherence to standards can elevate scholarly work to a level close to perfection, a pursuit to which we have committed our ambition.

At Adumatu, we are thrilled, indeed, that the Academic Council of King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, has included the journal in its credited list of publications for distinguished research and quality assurance. This inclusion comes in recognition of the journal's academic quality, and it will be a motivation for academic archaeologists to seek Adumatu as an outlet for their serious work.

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To Arab Library and Arab and non-Arab readers, our first Forum— "The City in the Arab World"— presented some 23 original archaeological papers. Of these, fifteen were written in Arabic and eight in English. These studies addressed the history of the Arab cities— inception and development— over the various periods: prehistoric,

historic, and Islamic.

The Forum discussed the inception of the City in the Arab world along certain and comprehensive themes: beginnings, development, planning, and the urban and civilization advancement. This naturally led to addressing the prehistory communities and the changes that took place in their means of food picking, gathering and hunting common in the Paleolithic age, how they transformed into agriculture and animal domestication in the Neolithic age. Such changes led in modern historical periods to the appearance of towns. Archaeological evidence discovered in many archaeological sites testify to the transformation of agricultural villages to cities during the fourth Millennium B.C. In the Arab world, during the third Millennium B.C. cities appeared with their full city components and utility departments: temples, palaces, living neighborhoods, water supply arrangements, and surrounding walls riddled with defense towers.

Since that time, cities and capitals all over the Arab world proliferated: the Arabian Peninsula, Mesopotamia, Syria, The Nile Valley, and the Arab west.

The Forum also covered certain cities of pre-Islamic periods such as Tayma, Marib, Petra, Kherbet Tharieh, the City of al-Fau, Hatra, Palmyra, and Gaza. During the Islamic period, Arab cities that came into being thereafter drew on this great civilization heritage. Of these covered in the Forum are Jilfar on the coast of the Arabian coast, Faid on the road of pilgrimage from Kufa (Iraq) to Makkah, the two ports of Raya and al-Kilani in a al-Tur (Mount Sinai) which serviced as connection points between Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Arab west, and finally Bejaia and Honeine in the Arab middle west (Algeria).

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The fruitful harvest of the first Forum materialized in a full-fledged book: *The City in the Arab World in Light of Archaeological Discoveries: Inception and Development*. The book was well-received, and the comments and feed-back commended the effort, the high scholarly quality, and the rich and informative material. Those encouraging comments led us to think of launching a second Forum. Our first centered on the “city” in terms of beginnings and development, and it provided us with a large umbrella under which the most important element, man, would be a feasible theme for a second forum. Thus, in light of archaeological excavations man and the environment in which he lived and the circumstances under which he developed his community, become the focus for the coming Forum. Here, by man within his environment we do not mean only the human who lived in the ancient pre-writing periods, along with his thoughts, behavior and living structures, but we also include his other diverse activities such as writing, arts, architectures, water resources, and worship places as these materialized within the natural environment in which one lived. Accordingly, of the topics for the

second Forum is “Man and River and Valley Environment” be it desert, mountainous, coastal, Island, or tropical. The aim, of course, is to highlight the relation between man and his environment along with the factors that influenced human communities throughout the ages. These are to be articulated through actual examples from real archaeological sites, facilitating dialogue among experts in archaeological studies and environment, and suggesting issues for future research. In this way, rich knowledge will be the product, and new horizons will open up for fresh and new directions in archaeological research.

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If archaeologists do lament and suffer over the loss (intentional or unavoidable) of an archaeological relic, it is all the more reason to shed tears for the loss of a scholar of Islamic archaeology of the stature of Professor Nasser bin Ali Al- Al-Harhi. Professor Al- Al-Harhi pioneered the discovery of the archaeological sites of Makkah, Taif, and the neighboring areas. His publications on those places were rich treats for researchers, for he was never satisfied with just presenting his findings but used to do all he could to add the place's history, significance, and what particular light it should add to our knowledge. He roamed Makkah mountains, valleys, Mount Arafat, and adjacent areas and exposed their secrets down to the smallest detail. He wrote on their buildings, architectural styles, and attics. Even their building material and bricks received meticulous attention. In fact, in his work on Makkah and Taif, he spared us the effort and time and enriched our knowledge archaeologically and culturally. In character and conduct, Professor Al- Al-Harhi was more than generous; he never published a book without having copies sent to his friends and to those interested in his work. Even dictionaries, monumental as they naturally are, he would have them included in his mail to friends. And often times he would include a note to the effect that this or that book he sends is printed at the expense of a donor; that unknown donor, I always knew, is no other than he himself. I had the pleasure once of teaming with him in one of his many field trips where we moved from Taif to Bani Malik to the lands of Thagaif, to other and still other places. It was a real enlightening trip from one archaeological relic to yet another, from one tribe to still another, and from home of generosity and hospitality to another. We immensely did gain in knowledge, experience, and unforgettable friendship. His sudden death was tragic for all; yet Nasser will surely remain a star among archaeologists, and his name will definitely be inscribed in the record of eternal fame. May God bless his soul and receive him into the promised heaven.

Editor -in-Chief