



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Heritage & Culture



International Symposium “Archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula Through The Ages”

7th - 9th May 2006

Intercontinental Hotel - Muscat



INTRODUCTION

The Arabian Peninsula is located between latitude $12^{\circ} 32'$ north and $30^{\circ} 12'$ south, which totals 20° , and longitude $40^{\circ} 34'$ west and 58° east, which totals 24° .

The total area of the Arabian Peninsula is one million square miles, which means that it is the largest peninsula in the world. To the north is the Levant, to the east the Arabian Gulf, to the south the Indian Ocean and to the west the Red Sea.

The Arabian Peninsula is located in the southern corner of Asia surrounded by water and land, enjoying -in the ancient world- good climatic and agriculture features. All these factors enabled the Arabian Peninsula to have strong trading relationships in Prehistoric times with adjacent regions located on its east side and the Mediterranean Sea on its west and north-west sides.

Because of its strategic location the Arabian Peninsula played an important trading role and became as a natural bridge between the East and the West, beside it was adjacent to the most famous regions which had a deep effect on the life and history of the populations of the area, such as civilizations of the, Mesopotamia, Indus Valley, Iran, the Nile and Greece.

On the basis of its natural and civilized diversity the Arabian Peninsula played a central role between these civilizations and its population was the active part in trading. Because of that the ancient texts mention direct relationships with Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Pharoanic civilizations. The Arabian Peninsula cities was also influenced by religion, languages, art, agriculture, and industry of these civilizations and, as a result, its economy flourished and developed.

This seminar is a jewel in the crown of activities celebrating "Muscat the Cultural Capital of the Arab World 2006", looking forward to show the world the historical and cultural depth of the Arabian Peninsula. The aim of this seminar is to shed light on the results of archaeological surveys and excavations carried out in the countries of the Arabian Peninsula over many decades. Also, to acknowledge the efforts conducted in the administration plans to protect the national cultural heritage sites and present them on adequate and internationally recognized standards basis. The scientific content of the papers presented during this seminar will enhance the history of the Arabian Peninsula from the Stone Ages through the early and late Islamic periods.

OPENING CEREMONY PROGRAM

- Arrival of the Chief Guest H.E. President of the Majlis Al Shura, **Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al QATABI**

- Readings from the Holy Qur'an

- Welcome address by **H.E Sultan bin Hamdoon AL HARTHI**
Undersecretary of Heritage, Ministry of Heritage and Culture

- Participants welcome address by **Dr. Isam bin Ali AL RAWAS**
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sultan Qaboos University. Chairman,
GCC Society of History and Archaeology

- **Introductory lecture**
'The History and Archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula'
Professor. Dr. Abdbul Rahman Al Tayyib AL ANSARI
Editor-in-Chief, ADOMATO, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Coffee Break

First Day Sessions
Sunday 7th May 2006

Morning Session

10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Moderator:

Mr. Hassan bin Mohammad bin Ali AL LAWATI
Director General of Archaeology and Museums,
Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Sultanate of Oman

First Session

PREHISTORIC PERIODS ON THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

The origin of man in the Upper Pleistocene period (125,000-10,000 BP) sheds light on the finds that help interpret details of daily life during that period. The presentation will cover Paleolithic periods when early humans were present in south-eastern Arabia. They might correlate with the early 'Out of Africa' movement of early humans. Evidence will be discussed accordingly.

10.00 – 10.45 **Mr. Jeffery ROSE**
Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, USA

10.45 – 11.00 Discussion

Archaeological survey results in the Sultanate of Oman: Following the immigration of man from Africa to the south and the Central Region of Oman.

Archaeological surveys conducted in the Al Qara Mountains in the Dhofar region and the Wilayat M'hoot in the Al Huquf desert in particular, wanted to locate sites related to Early Human Immigration from Africa to Asia through the Arabian Peninsula. Studies indicate that the beginning of human immigration took place prior to 1.9 – 1.8 million years ago.

- The immigrants took two routes:
- From Ethiopia through the Sinai desert towards the Levant.

From Djibouti through the Bab Al Madab in the Red Sea towards south-west Yemen.

The presentation will cover the Pleistocene archaeological sites discovered in Oman including the discovery of early human artifacts and tools.

11.00 – 11.45 **Professor Dr. Hans-Peter UERPMANN**
Archaeologist, University of Tübingen, Germany

11.45 – 12.00 Discussion

Archaeological evidence and discoveries which indicate the existence of early man in the Sultanate of Oman, and scientific comparison with similar archaeological sites discovered in the United Arab Emirates.

Assumptions about the spread of early man from Africa into Asia and Europe usually include south-east Arabia as a major stepping stone on the way from East Africa to South Asia. However, there was no archaeological evidence for this until recently. New discoveries in the United Arab Emirates, together with our increased knowledge about the geological and palaeoclimatological history of the last two million years and about the development of early humans, now give us an opportunity to re-interpret the earlier discoveries of Palaeolithic stone tools found in several areas of the Sultanate of Oman. There were at least two periods during the Palaeolithic when early humans were present in south-east Arabia, and they might correlate with early 'Out of Africa' movements. The respective evidence will be discussed in the lecture.

12.00 – 12.45 **Prof. Dr. Abbas Sid Ahmad MOHAMMED**
Department of Archaeology and Museums, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia

12.45 – 1.00 Discussion

The Neolithic periods in Saudi Arabia.

This paper discusses methods of human adaptation and the evolution of civilization in Saudi Arabia during the early Stone Age. It starts with geographical landscapes during that period and details surface features and climatic history, including ecological changes in Saudi Arabia in the Pleistocene and Holocene periods. The paper will then document the history of excavation work in Saudi Arabia detailing how man migrated from East Africa - where evidence of the oldest human civilizations was discovered - to Arabia and the routes he used. The paper will explore all the possibilities of the circumstances related to such migration and will detail the archaeological evidence of the three Stone Age periods in chronological order. It will finish with contemporary issues related to the study of excavation fieldwork of the early Stone Age in Saudi Arabia and suggested recommendations for those issues.

1.00 – 3.00 **Lunch Break**

Afternoon: 3.00 pm – 6.15 pm

Moderator:

Mr. Shihab Abdul Hameed SHIHAB

Director of Archaeology and Museums, National Council of Culture, Art and Literature, Kuwait

Second Session:

ARABIA IN THE FIFTH AND FOURTH MILLENNIUM BC

Archaeological excavations have revealed that the oldest settlement of man was during this period in this area. Presentations will cover evidence of these settlements resulting from the study of daily life.

3.00 – 3.45 Dr. Margarethe UERPMANN
Archaeologist, University of Tübingen, Germany

3.45 – 4.00 Discussion

Early Bronze Age subsistence in Oman and the Emirates – evidence from the evaluation of animal bone finds from Al Moyassar, Hili, Umm An Nar and Tell Abraq.

Archaeological surveys and excavations in the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, fieldwork research results carried out by using technical methods and new methods in archaeological work led to the establishment of a large information database, but it did not provide suitable information about the economics of Bronze Age society. This paper will present unpublished study results of animal bone finds from (Al Moyassar in the Sultanate of Oman, Umm An Nar, Ghanada, Hili 8 and Tell Abraq in the United Arab Emirates). The paper will also discuss, in general, the administration plan for animal groups, site comparisons and published information about other contemporary sites.

4.00 – 4.45 Dr. Munir Yussif TAHA
Archaeologist, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, National Council of Culture, Art and Heritage, Doha, Qatar

4.45 – 5.00 Discussion

Stone Age tools and the artifacts of early man in Qatar

This paper will cover the archaeological excavations on the Qatar Peninsula during different periods of the Stone Age. Hundreds of stone tools and cultural artifact remains require further study and accurate classification in order to obtain more information, especially the relationship between the Ubaid period and the Neolithic period. The archaeological finds discovered so far reflect the daily sociological, economic and spiritual life of the inhabitants of the Qatar peninsula dated to more than ten thousand years ago.

5.00 – 5.15 Coffee Break

5.15 – 6.00

Dr. Mark BEECH

Senior Resident Archaeologist, Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey (ADIAS)

6.00 – 6.15

Discussion

Rethinking the Neolithic of south-eastern Arabia: new results from excavations on Marawah Island and Umm Az Zamil, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

This paper will discuss two of the ongoing projects of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey (ADIAS) that shed new light on the Neolithic period in south-eastern Arabia. Firstly, recent excavations on Marawah Island have revealed traces of a very important early Neolithic settlement dating back to the mid Sixth Millennium BC. The site consists of a series of large impressive stone buildings. Interesting finds included imported Ubaid pottery from Mesopotamia, locally made plaster vessels and oyster pearl buttons. Secondly, recent survey work and excavations in the Umm Az Zamil region, new evidence was discovered of a Neolithic settlement in the Rub Al Khali. The results of recent survey and excavation work will be presented and these and other findings will be discussed in comparison to material found at early prehistoric sites located in the Sultanate of Oman.

Second Day Session
Monday 8th May 2006

Morning: 9.00 – 1.00

Moderator:

Dr. Mohammad bin Ali AL BALUSHI

Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman

Third Session:

ARABIA IN THE THIRD AND SECOND MILLENNIUM BC

A unique period of flourishing lifestyle throughout most of the regions of the Arabian Peninsula, where land and maritime trading routes led to the establishment of strong centres of civilization. Natural resources, such as metal, stone, and other materials, were used to enhance daily life during this period. Papers will cover centres of civilization on the Arabian Peninsula, trade relations with the adjacent civilizations such as Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, Dilmun and Persia. Copper trade in Arabia, administration plans of the archaeological sites and their preparation as tourist attractions will also be covered.

9.00 – 9.45 **Jeffery and Jocelyn ORCHARD**
Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham, U.K.

9.45 – 10.00 Discussion

The Third Millennium BC Oasis Settlements of Oman and the first evidence of their irrigation by *aflaj* from Bahla.

The first part of this paper will shed light on the environmental elements of the very first of the settlements in the Al Hajar oasis in Wadi Bahla and Bisya in the Al Sharqiya region in the Sultanate of Oman. In the second half of this paper, turning from the particular to the general, we will look at some of the more obvious questions to which the distinctive layout of the Hajar oasis settlement gives rise, for example, most topically at the present moment, the question of whether such settlements were *falaj*-irrigated, given our recent discovery of what would appear to be an early 3rd millennium BC *falaj* in Hajar oasis settlement site in the area of Al Ghubrat Bahla to the north of Bahla.

10.00 – 10.45 **Nasser Said AL JAHWARI**
Lecturer, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
Sultan Qaboos University. Sultanate of Oman

10.45 – 11.00 Discussion

Settlement Patterns, Development and Cultural Change in Northern Oman: Survey and Investigations at Wadi Andam

The aim of this research is to attempt to examine the settlement history of the Oman Peninsula through the passage of time, from the Prehistoric to modern times. The research is intended to show the continuation and discontinuation in settlement patterns in general, and examines the landscape of the ancient agricultural settlements from watersheds and upper wadi zones in the north through the lower wadis, gravel hills and broad wadis to the gravel flat interfluvial zones in the south. Through this research we hope to understand the changes and movements in settlement patterns in northern Oman from Prehistoric to recent times. I will pay attention to these small settlements in order to show whether or not they have a similar history to the larger settlements. Therefore, the research is intended, based on its survey results, to answer some questions and problems related to 'wadi settlement' changes and distribution in Oman.

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 – 12.15 Professor Dr. Ali El Tijani EL MAHI
Head, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman

12.15 – 1.00 Discussion

The formation of settlements, the occupation of man and his role in using natural resources.

The aim of this research is to understand the settlements establishment and human occupation in different Omani Environments, together with studying the settlement identification as a cultural, economical and social case. The research, based on its results, provide a fact that the environmental concept led to a certain population distribution, technical and economical evolution, which reflected respectively on the settlements nature and their locations. Also, that the permanent and nomadic life is a strategy itself, and that the efforts to find the permanent place to live is a creative way to fulfil the strategy of living within the dry environment.

1.00 – 3.00 Lunch Break

Evening 3.00 – 6.15

Moderator:
Dr. S. P. Gupta

Secretary General, Indian Archaeological Society, India
Fourth Session:

MINING ACTIVITIES ON THE ARABIAN PENINSULA IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM BC

Evidence of mining activities during this period reflects positively on metal work and on settlements of the Arabian Peninsula. Papers will cover the most important features of settlements dated to the First Millennium BC, administration plans and possible tourist attractions.

3.00 – 3.45 Dr. Mohammed Ali AL BALUSHI
Assistant Lecturer, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman

3.45 – 4.00 Discussion

Administrating the Ancient Manufacturing Heritage of Oman: Copper Mining Site in Wadi Al Safafir (Sama'il as an example)

This presentation will cover the copper mining site of Wadi Al Safafir in the interior region of Oman as a practical pattern for administering these types of sites with reference to their role in exporting, smelting and mining processes in old Omani civilizations. It is hoped that this paper will be the first study on administrating the ancient manufacturing heritage in Oman by addressing different questions, such as why this manufacturing heritage needs to be protected, what types of manufacturing heritage exist in Oman, what the threats are to this heritage, what the standard of laws protecting cultural heritage are and what the situation is for administering this heritage. At the end this paper some methods and recommendations will be presented outlining better methods of conservation, protection, administration and use of the cultural heritage of early manufacturing in Oman.

4.00 – 4.45 **Professor Dr. Gerd WEISGERBER**
Archaeologist, Germany

4.45 – 5.00 Discussion

Examples of multi-period copper production sites in Oman

Today analytical studies are standard for archaeological research on prehistoric metal objects, as well as typological and chronological classifications in evaluating their social and economic relevance. Research can yield information on the provenience of the metal, the composition of ores, and sometimes on the methods of production. It is now known that Oman was most probably the old Sumerian copper land of Magan, so that the history of the Third and Second Millennium, in the strongest sense, is not "prehistory" but "history" as there exist written historical sources. However, because this historical information is small use of the term "prehistory" is preferred for the Bronze Age antiquity of the country. Survey of ancient mining and smelting sites in the Oman mountains have shown that Magan copper production took place at many sites, that the evidence is unique concerning the number of sites and structures, and that other periods, such as the Middle Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the Islamic periods produced great amounts of copper, most of them on a larger scale than the preceding periods. The purpose of this paper is to present several of the most important copper production sites to demonstrate their different remains and features of mining, smelting, and structures of organization, through subsequent periods in the Al Sharqiyah and Al Batinah regions

5.00 – 5.15 **Coffee Break**

5.15 – 6.00 **Sultan Saif AL BAKRI**
Department of Excavations and Archaeological Studies, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Sultanate of Oman

6.00 – 6.15 Discussion

Archaeological sites dated to the First Millennium BC in the Sultanate of Oman

The paper will cover the cultural features of the beginning of the First Millennium BC in Oman (Iron Age 1300-300 BC) and will shed light on the unique aspects of this period and how it differs from the Bronze Age Period (Third and Second Millennium BC) when changes in lifestyle due to the expansion of use in natural resources, particularly a new irrigation system. This new irrigation system followed the method of cutting channels from mountains to settlements of the so-called *al falaj*, and which resulted in agriculture becoming an important economical resource, together with mining, copper smelting, pottery and metal manufacturing activities, which led to an increase in settlement areas and the population.

Third Day Session
Tuesday 9th May 2006

Morning: 9:00 – 1.00

Moderator:

Dr. Sa'ad bin Abdul-Aziz AL RASHID
Saudi Arabia

Fifth Session:

THE ARABIAN PENINSULA DURING THE ISLAMIC PERIOD

Papers will cover two main subjects. Firstly coinage, including unpublished studies on the coin collections held by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture. Secondly, results of studies carried out by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture and the efforts to protect and restore architectural heritage, such as forts and castles, mosques and old houses.

9.00 – 9.45 **Abdullah Jassim AL M'TAIRI**
Department of Tourism and Commercial Marketing, Dubai, UAE.

9.45 – 10.00 Discussion

The history of coinage on the Arabian Peninsula

This paper will discuss the great Islamic history and will talk about one of the most important aspects in that history: the economic side represented by the coinage of the Arabian Peninsula. This paper will encompass the different countries of the Arabian Peninsula and discuss in depth Abbassian period coinage discovered in Oman, Mecca, A'Seer Al Yamama and Yemen.

10.00 – 10.45 **Ibrahim Ahmad AL FADHLI**
Department of Excavations and Archaeological Studies, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Sultanate of Oman

10.45 – 11.00 Discussion

An Overview of the Coin Collections in Ministry of Heritage and Culture

The study of Islamic coins in particular started at the end of the 18th century, and the more specialized the studies the more scientific numismatics became. Islamic researchers specialize in various areas of numismatics, for example, conservation, classification, archival storage, publishing papers, exhibiting materials etc. Scholars in western countries have also started to study Islamic coins providing exhibition space, museum opportunities and providing special research centres for such study. This paper will deal with the most important coin discoveries in the Sultanate of Oman, and for the first time will go into detail about Yanqul, Bahla and Al Manaijlah coins, and some of the unique dinars that were presented to the Ministry or discovered in different regions of Oman

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 – 12.15 **Ahmad Salim AL HIJRI**
Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Sultanate of Oman

12.15 – 1.00 Discussion

The efforts of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture in protecting architectural monuments, for example Omani fortified buildings.

Forts, castles and towers are the most important monuments which took a lot of effort by Omanis to build their civilization, along with the other nations through ages. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said's directions to preserve the heritage left by our ancestors in Wilayats throughout the country and formation of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture, lead to all efforts made to conserve the Heritage of Oman.

1.00 – 3.00 Lunch Break

Evening: 3.00 – 6.30

Moderator:

Professor Dr. Abbas Sid Ahmad Mohammed

King Saud University, Saudi Arabia

Sixth Session:

WORLD HERITAGE SITES ON THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

The Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of Yemen are three of the countries with cultural and natural sites that are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

This session will cover:-

- Bahla Oasis and its administration plan
- The Frankincense Trail
- World Heritage Sites in Yemen (the old towns of Sana'a, Zubaid and Shebam).
- World Heritage Sites in the Kingdom of Bahrain (Bahrain Castle)

3.00 – 3.30 **Mr. Salman Ahmad AL MAHARRI**
Deputy Head, Section of Restoration and Archaeological Conservation, Ministry of Information, Cultural and National Heritage, Kingdom of Bahrain,

3.30 – 3.45 Discussion

Bahrain Castle: Restoration and future administration plans

Bahrain Fort is a very important site both locally and internationally, and it was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site last year. It shows continuous human presence throughout the history of Bahrain and the region to the 16th century AD (Dilmun, Tailus, Islam). The paper will discuss the site prior to its discovery, as well as conservation and restoration work being undertaken, the threats which it faces and the administration plan for protecting the site.

3.45 – 4.15 **Dr. Enrico d'Errico**
Restoration Expert of Historical Buildings, Ministry of Heritage and Culture,
Sultanate of Oman

4.15 – 4.30 Discussion

Bahla Fort: Restoration Methods and the administration of the oasis

In the occasion of the Omani Symposium held in Muscat in October 1980, Professor J.K. Wilkinson (see Journal of Oman Studies volume (6), Part I, Page 193 and note no. (9)) stated: 'Dr. Enrico d'Errico is of the opinion that a part of Bahla Fort is Sassanian.' During the recent restoration of Bahla Fort, its Friday Mosque and Qasaba, these opinions were confirmed with the discovery of the remains of a brick minaret, a mud building and evidence of pre-existent structures influenced by Sassanian architecture, which have survived long after conversion to Islam by the people of the Gulf. This evidence will be a part of the lecture with plans, diagrams and slides.

4.30 – 4.45 **Coffee Break**

4.45 – 5.15 **Dr. Abdullah Zaid H'mood ISSA**
Chairman, General Organization of Preserving the Historical Cities in Yemen,
Ministry of Culture, Republic of Yemen

5.15 – 5.30 Discussion

World Heritage Sites in Yemen and their administration plans

In 1990 the Republic of Yemen, represented by the Ministry of Culture, established a General Directorate for:-

- Protecting and preserving the historical cities in the Republic of Yemen.
- Continuing Government policy in protecting, enhancing and conserving historical buildings.

This paper will shed light on Yemen's World Heritage Sites and the administration plans to protect them:

- City of Shibam (the Historical city of Hadramout).
- The Historical City of Sana'a.
- The Historical City of Zabid.

5.30 – 6.00

Hassan bin Abdullah AL JABRI

Field Director – Frankincense Trail, Office of HM Advisor for Cultural Affairs,
Sultanate of Oman

6.00 – 6.15

Discussion

The Frankincense Trail and future plans.

The Frankincense Land (now Dhofar) is characterized by its frankincense trees and hold the same importance as other important historical sites in the Sultanate of Oman. It is in this region that the purest frankincense (*luban*) is produced. During historical times the importance of frankincense encouraged trading relationships between Oman and countries in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean, and established exceptional trading standards. Evidence shows that the southern Arabian Peninsula flourished during the Neolithic period through to the Islamic period in its economic, social and cultural relationships, which relied on the frankincense trading network of the ancient world. Because of these factors, UNESCO considered Khor Rori (Samahram), Shisr (Ubar), Al Balid and Wadi Dawka (frankincense trees) as a World Heritage Site, inscribed in 2000 on the World Heritage List (under the name The Sites of Frankincense Lands). This paper will give an overview of the Omani frankincense land sites and the administration and conservation plan for them.

6.15 – 6.30

Closing Session

عناوين المحاضرين

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