

RECORDERS' REPORTS

Archaeology

With last winter's lengthy archaeological season having been more or less covered up to the end of April in the last issue of *Tribulus*, there is little to report for the last few months in the way of fieldwork, since no lengthy summer excavations were carried out.

The only fieldwork of any significance was a survey of the island of Futaisi, adjacent to Abu Dhabi, carried out by the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey at the request of Sheikh Hamad bin Hamdan al Nahyan, as part of baseline studies prior to the inauguration of the new Futaisi Golf and Country Club.

The survey produced little in the way of surprises, with extensive evidence of Late Islamic occupation comparable with that found on other islands both close to Abu Dhabi, like Balghelam, and further afield, like Merawah or the two Yasats. One can't help wondering just how much archaeology there was on Abu Dhabi island itself before the construction of recent years got under way!

One aspect of Futaisi's archaeology of interest, however, was further evidence of the collection and management of fresh water resource, with a couple of large cisterns being noted. Contrary to the impression that Abu Dhabi's islands were largely bereft of fresh water, ADIAS teams have found wells, cisterns and water collection systems on almost every island of any size that they've visited, and the subject is to be further addressed in future research.

Another brief survey of one of Abu Dhabi's little-known traditional buildings, the summer house of the late Sheikh Shakhbut bin Sultan al Nahyan, was also carried out at the request of Information and Culture Under Secretary Sheikh Abdulla bin Zayed al Nahyan.

Further to the excavations in summer 1995 at Abu Dhabi Airport, to which many Group members lent a hand as volunteers, (for which, again, many thanks), a final report on the pottery from the site has been submitted. Despite the lack of large structures, the site has proved to be of very considerable importance. Besides its use during the Late Stone Age, the pottery shows that it was also used in the early Third Millennium BC, (c. 3,100 - 2,700 BC), and then flowered during the Umm an Nar period, (c. 2,700 - 2,200 BC). It went out of use shortly after that, but was then again occupied in the first centuries of the First Millennium AD, (c. 0 - 200 AD).

With the help of Group Corporate member the Abu Dhabi Company for Onshore Oil Operations, ADCO, a full report on the excavations is being prepared for Sheikh Hamdan bin Mubarak al Nahyan, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Civil Aviation Department, who funded the dig.

In his capacity as Co-ordinator of ADIAS, your Recorder attended the annual Seminar of Arabian Studies in London in July, and is pleased to report that the United Arab Emirates, as usual, figured prominently in the discussions, with virtually a whole day being given over to papers about the UAE.

Hussein al Naboodah of the Emirates University dealt with the traditional fortified architecture of Al Ain, a useful further contribution to studies of the UAE's more re-

cent military buildings, (see Kennet, D. [1992]. *The Towers of Ras al Khaimah, Tribulus Vol. 2.2*).

Walid Yasin al Tikriti of the Department of Antiquities and Tourism in Abu Dhabi's Eastern Region reviewed recent work in and around the Al Ain area, including three seasons of work at the Hili 17 site, dated primarily to the Iron Age, and results of work on another Iron Age site near Qarn Bint Saud, where a large house of around 200 sq. metres was discovered as well as a *falaj*. He also reported the discovery of another Iron Age site in the desert at Wadi Hammam, 25 km north of Al Ain and east of Sweihan, suggesting the probable existence of a previously unidentified cross-desert route to Dubai. From the University of Sydney, Peter Magee reported on two seasons of excavations at the Iron Age site of Muwailah, near Sharjah International Airport, while Michel Mouton from France delivered a paper on work on the Iron Age sites on the Al Madam Plain, also part of Sharjah.

Carl Phillips, from London's Institute of Archaeology, provided an overview of pre-historic settlement in Ras al Khaimah's Wadi Qawr and Wadi Munay, from the Umm an Nar period to the Iron Age, while Rob Carter, also from the Institute of Archaeology dealt with work on a large mound in Kalba which, although partly obscured by gravel deposits brought down from the mountains by rainfall, appears to have been similar to Umm al Qaiwain's Tell Abraq, and to have been occupied from the Umm an Nar period until at least the Iron Age. Kalba is clearly one of the major sites in the country, and a full publication of results should add significantly to our understanding of settlement patterns from the Third to First Millennium BC.

Again from France, Sophie Mery reported to analysis of pottery from the great North tomb at Hili A, from where a total of 295 skeletons.

Finally, building upon his recent work in Fujairah, Dan Potts from the University of Sydney provided an important overview of the copper industry in the Emirates, including sites in Fujairah and southern Ras al Khaimah, and citing Carbon 14 datings that suggest the industry changed and evolved from the early Third Millennium BC until at least as late as the Fifteenth or Sixteenth Centuries AD, much later than had previously been realised.

The United Arab Emirates remains one of the most active countries anywhere in Arabia in archaeological terms. The forthcoming winter season should, once again, see extensive work being undertaken throughout the country, a summary of which will appear in the spring 1997 issue of *Tribulus*.

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