

Archaeology Review

The period under review, from late April, has covered the summer months, in which, as usual there has been relatively little archaeological field work to report. The bulk of it has been in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, where the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey, ADIAS, has managed to continue its work under conditions that, climatically at least, haven't always been ideal.

In the latter part of the ADIAS spring season, further study was taken of the Mantiqa al-Sirra site in the desert east of Medinat (Bida) Zayed, which was first published in an earlier issue of **Tribulus**. (1).

Field Director Salvatore Garfi, accompanied by field archaeologist Jakub Czastka, with support from the Diwan of the Ruler's Representative in the Western Region and from Abu Dhabi National Hotels, made a preliminary investigation of the site, showing it to comprise the remains of a fortified mud-brick structure. Further work is provisionally planned at the site during the 1997-1998 winter season, but a tentative dating, based upon potsherds, suggests that the structure is of Late Islamic date. Further sites of the same period were also identified in the vicinity, suggesting a pattern of more extensive use of the desert in the Late Islamic period than had heretofore been realised. A summary report will be published in a subsequent issue.

In July, another site from the early First Millennium AD was identified on the offshore island of Qarnein, helping to amplify the still scanty knowledge of this period in Abu Dhabi. The site was first noted during an ENHG field trip back in 1989, when surface scatters of pottery were seen, but sherds from the island were not examined by archaeologists until this summer. A preliminary note on the discovery appears elsewhere in this issue (see P. 25-26).

A number of raised circular mounds, of probable Late Islamic date, were identified by ADIAS in August near Ras Hanjurah, on the coast north east of Abu Dhabi, all of probable Late Islamic date, and similar to other mounds identified on nearby islands like Balghelam (2).

Finally, a potentially important Late Islamic site in the desert around 60 km south west of Abu Dhabi was drawn to the attention of ADIAS by the Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Municipality and Ruler's Representative in the Western Region Sheikh Mohammed bin Butti Al Hamed and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research (and ENHG Patron) Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan at the beginning of September. The site has yielded a number of Late Islamic ceramic vessels, and extensive potsherds. Further study of the site, with assistance from the Municipality, is planned for the winter.

Elsewhere in the country, little archaeological activity has been reported, although a number of papers relat-

ing to UAE work were presented, as usual, at the annual Seminar for Arabian Studies in Oxford.

Plans for the winter 1997-1998 season include more work on the important early Islamic *tell* at Kush, in Ras Al Khaimah, to be directed by Derek Kennet, and a resumption of excavations at the Third to First Millennium BC site at Tell Abraç on the borders of Sharjah and Umm Al Qaiwain, which will be conducted by a University of Sydney team under the direction of Professor Dan Potts.

Elsewhere in Sharjah, more work is planned at the Jebel Buhays Late Stone Age cemetery and at the Muwailah Iron Age village.

ADIAS plans, besides Mantiqa al-Sirra, provisionally include further work on Merawah and Dalma, and the beginnings of trial excavations on some of the remoter islands in Abu Dhabi's Western Region.

Two of the finds reported over the summer months, those of the First Millennium AD site on Qarnein and the Late Islamic settlement in the desert south west of Abu Dhabi were first identified by non-archaeologists, underlining the important role that can still be played by the non-specialist. They join a long list of such sites, including the Al Sufouh Third Millennium BC tomb in Dubai and the First Millennium AD Christian settlement on Sir Bani Yas, both first discovered by ENHG member Carolyn Lehmann, (the second of them during another ENHG island expedition).

Further proof, if any is still needed, of the importance of drawing the attention of archaeologists to anything encountered while out and about in the Emirates. Despite the extensive development of recent years, there are likely to be many sites not yet discovered, and it is important for our knowledge of the country's heritage that they are recorded and examined before they are overtaken by the demands of development.

References:

1. Czastka, J. & Hellyer, P. [1994]. An archaeological survey of the Mantakha As'sirra area in Abu Dhabi's Western Region. **Tribulus** 4:1 (April 1994). p. 9-12.
2. Garfi, S. [1996]. Excavations on Balghelam Island - a preliminary report. **Tribulus** 6:2 (October 1996). p. 5-10.

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