King Salman's Center
For Historical and Civilization Studies of Arabian Peninsula

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Journal of Studies in The History and Civilization of Arabia (SHCA)

New Insights into the Archaeological Record at Jabal Ikmah in AlUla Oasis

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH

THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

Journal of Studies in the History and Civilization of Arabia (SHCA)

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A semi-annual refereed scholarly journal in the studies of the history and civilization of the Arabian Peninsula published in the months (October - March) by King Salman's Center for Historical and Civilization Studies of Arabian Peninsula at King Saud University. It is concerned with publishing researches, studies, book reviews, and abstracts of university thesis in Arabic & English.

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4. Use uniform font for the title (Traditional Arabic, 18 points, bold).
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3- The principle author bio and associate author if any.

4- A declaration form after filling out and sign it. If there is more than one researcher, each researcher fills out the declaration and approves it individually.

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New Insights into the Archaeological Record at Jabal Ikmah in AlUla Oasis

Dr. Munirah Almushawh, Mr. Saeed AlAhmari, Mr. Sror Alshammery and Mr. Abdulmajeed Alremaily

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Abstract: Jabal Ikmah is a major archaeological site in AlUla, which offers incredible insights into the archaeology of Dadan and the region. It is already well known for featuring hundreds of valuable ancient inscriptions. It was listed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2023 as a testimony of its outstanding universal value. This corpus represents the largest concentration of well-preserved Dadanitic inscriptions in north western arabia, reflecting a variety of subjects such as prayer, religion, agriculture, seasons and memorials. The site flourished during the first millennium BCE especially during the Lihyanite Kingdom. In spite of its remarkable importance, relatively few archaeological investigations have been made in the site, the majority of which were from an epigraphic perspective. The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to validate the location of the inscriptions in Jabal Ikmah, which previous scholars have published; and 2) to conduct a field survey to record other archaeological features in the site. This pedestrian survey was not limited to the gorge; it covered the entire area currently fenced. This was achieved by direct visual observation in a survey of highland and lowland aspects as well as multi-source data analysis. This paper presents the initial archaeological survey results, which yielded key discoveries. Among them is the absence of Albert Jamme's collection of inscriptions linked to the site of Ikmah in his 1974 publication. This highlights the importance of assessing historical publications that were published in a time when accessibility to maps and accurate geographical locations was limited. The survey furthermore resulted in key findings that changed the chronology of the site, such as identifying prehistoric rock art panels and lithic scatters, which illuminate human activity in Ikmah in prehistory.

Keywords: AlUla, Ikmah, Dadan, Lihyan, North Arabian inscriptions, Lihyanite Kingdom.

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الملخص

إضاءات جديدة على السجل الأثري لموقع جبل عكمه في واحة العلا

د. منيرة المشوح، أ. سعيد الأحمري، أ. سرور الشمري، أ. عبد المجيد الرمالي

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يُعتبر جبل عكمه أحد أهم المواقع الأثرية في واحة العلا، لاحتوائه على مئات من النقوش القيّمة، التي تستعرض جوانب عديدة لحضارة دادان خاصة والمنطقة بوجه عام. صمدت تلك النقوش بشكل استثنائي أمام عوامل التعرية لموقعها المميز داخل داخل مضيق جبلي، مما جعلها أكبر مكتبة للنقوش الدادانية المحفوظة على مستوى المنطقة. وقد أدرجَت منظمة اليونسكو جبل عكمة رسميًا في سِجل «ذاكرة العالم» في ٢٠٢٣ تأكيدًا على أهمية الموقع على المستوى العالمي. ازدهر الموقع خلال الألفية الأولى قبل الميلاد وخاصة خلال فترة المملكة اللحيانية. وقد عكست لنا النقوش موضوعات الحياة الجوهرية مثل: الصلاة، والدين، والزراعة، والمواسم، والسجلات التذكارية. وعلى الرغم من أهمية الموقع الاستثنائية، إلا أنه تم إجراء عدد قليل نسبيًا من التحقيقات الأثرية في الموقع، معظمها تقتصر على دراسة النقوش.

سعت هذه الدراسة لتحقيق هدفين: ١) التحقق من مواقع النقوش التي نشرها علماء سابقون وربطوها مكانيًا بجبل عكمه. ٢) إجراء مسح ميداني لتسجيل المعالم الأثرية الأخرى في الموقع. لم يقتصر المسح الأثري على منطقة المضيق الجبلي؛ بل شمل المسح كامل المنطقة "ضمن ما يعرف حاليًا بالمنطقة المسيجة". تضمنت المنهجية تسجيل اللقى والبقايا السطحية في الموقع، وتحليل البيانات، إضافة الى مسح الواجهات التي لم تُمسح سابقًا.

تُقدم هذه الورقة النتائج الأولية لهذا المسح، والتي أسفرت عن اكتشافات رئيسية من بينها إعادة النظر في مجموعة النقوش التي نشرها ألبرت جام في عام ١٩٧٤ وربطها بموقع عكمه، والتي أثبت المسح الأثري إنها غير موجودة في المضيق الجبلي، ولا ضمن الموقع المسيج، ولا حتى ضمن منطقة المسح التي امتدت لستة كيلو مترات حول الموقع. مما يؤكد أهمية إعادة تقييم دقة الأبحاث التي تم نشرها في وقت كان الوصول إلى الخرائط والمواقع الجغرافية الدقيقة محدودًا. علاوة على ذلك، أسفر الاستطلاع عن نتائج رئيسية من شأنها تغيير التسلسل الزمني للموقع، مثل لوحات الفن الصخري التي تعود لعصور ما قبل التاريخ والأدوات الحجرية، التي بدورها أزاحت الستار عن النشاط الاستيطاني داخل عكمه في عصور ما قبل التاريخ.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العلا، جبل عكمة، دادان، لحيان، النقوش العربية الشمالية، المملكة اللحيانية، الفنون الصخرية في العلا.

Introduction

For millennia, AlUla Valley has served as a natural crossroads for human activity. Positioned on the ancient incense route from southern Arabia into Egypt and beyond, it became a hub of commercial and cultural exchange. This oasis was a key stop for merchants of myrrh, frankincense, and other precious merchandise. Because of this privileged position in the Arabian Peninsula, AlUla is home to a series of ancient settlements, including Dadan (Biblical Dedan, located near the modern city of AlUla), one of the most developed 1st millennium BCE cities of the Arabian Peninsula. Dadan was also the apparent capital of the successive kingdoms of Dadan (Arabic:دادان, Dādān) and Lihyan (Arabic: لحيان, Liḥyān; Greek: Lechienoi).

Communication allows cultural exchange, trade, and development. Dadan flourished enormously and developed its own alphabet form of the South Semitic writing system, the Dadanitic language. This practice of communication in the form of written language spread throughout the Dadanite and Lihyanite civilizations allowing not only development, but also enabling the societies to record their own life and everyday events.

Jabal Ikmah, also known as al-ʿUdhayb, contains the largest concentration of well-preserved Late Dadanitic inscriptions carved on rock faces in the world. Hundreds of inscriptions have survived intact due to numerous variables, one of which is their location, inside a natural gorge, which overlooks the oasis and palm groves just 3.5 km northwest of Dadan.

This ancient archive of documentary heritage most likely dates back to the second half of the first millennium BCE, during the Kingdom of Lihyan, since five dated inscriptions in the site refer to kings of Lihyan. The

inscriptions reflect a variety of subjects such as prayer, religion, rituals, agriculture, and memorials. The general theme of the formal inscriptions records a performance of a religious ceremony for Dgybt [Dhu Ghaybah], Dadan's principal deity.

Numerous inscriptions feature elements related to the agricultural life within this ancient oasis, where prayers for seasonal rain for the sake of the palm trees and other crops dominate the inscriptions of men and women whom both owned agricultural land in their own right. Each inscription is a window to the past, viewing a vibrant picture of their way of life, beliefs, and social structures.

This particularly fine and exemplary epigraphic collection consists of inscriptions incised or carved in relief on the rocks and cliff faces of the Jabal Ikmah gorge. The majority is in the form of elaborate script and well-defined letters. The mountain landscape served as a canvas to document the legacies of this long-vanished civilization.

The outstanding qualities of beauty and craftsmanship in the inscriptions carved in relief imply that they were the work of skilled masons demonstrating high levels of artistry. The sandstone was carved in order for the letters to stand proud from the rock surface (Fig. 1). This technique requires a great precision and a high level of expertise. The majority of the inscriptions in relief were precisely made, with no margin of error. The incised inscriptions could have been engraved by their authors, indicating that the knowledge of writing was widespread within the Lihyanite kingdom, fulfilling the human desire to remember and be remembered.

Figure 1. Image of inscriptions carved in relief in the george of Jabal Ikmal

Maria Hidalgo-Chacón Díez argues that some of the authors of these inscriptions came from outside AlUla, from different places such as Bdr, BNʿL, TR, DʿDN , DʿMN, DTʿʿL, Khl, Blḥ and Tqmm. She presumes caravans and traders stopped to rest or exchange goods at Ikmah, and gave *zakāt* (alms) to the deity Ḏġbt as they crossed the area. She states, "The etymology of these place names reveals that in most cases, they are related to either agricultural or the geographical context." She also notes that the authors of the inscriptions "owned possessions which are connected with agricultural products, land and property. These Inscriptions record the performance of a particular ceremony called ẓll. The formula used is: 'ẓll h-ẓll - Ḏġbt. The place where this performance was made is Khl in the great majority of the Inscriptions; the other places being the sites where the Inscriptions' authors have their possessions" (Hidalgo-Chacón Díez, 2014, pp.25).

Name, Location and Current Limits

The earliest mention of the geographical name was in Charles Doughty's 1891 map (Fig. 2). It is one of the oldest maps of the area, and on it the 'el-Akhma' mountain extends from 'Wadi Shellal' (وادي شلال) in the north to el-'Moatidal' (المعتدل) Wadi AlMu'tadil in the south. This is much larger than the limits of the currently fenced area, which encloses an area larger than the gorge where the inscriptions are concentrated. Doughty neither marked the gorge nor mentioned the inscriptions so seems not to have known about the site.

Figure 2. Map of Ikmah by Charles Doughty (1891, p, 30).

The site is referred to in literature as:

عكمة - العكمة

Ikmah

al-Akmah

Al--ʿUdhayb (Ǧabalʿ Ikmah)

el-Akhma

The Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, (SCTH) now known as Heritage Commission, fenced the site two decades ago to protect the inscriptions inside the gorge and its surroundings. Since then the term Ikmah has been used to refer to the current limits of the fenced area, which covers ~40 Hectares (Fig. 3). The fence extends for 0.46km along the north, ~3km along the east, 0.14km along the south and the west is bounded by the natural contour of the mountain of Ikmah
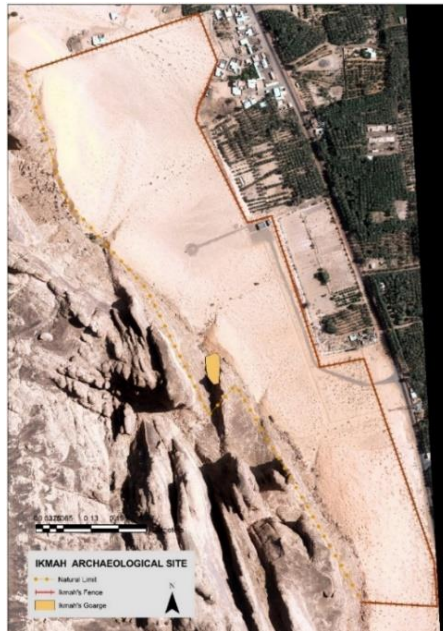
Figure 3. Current limits of the Jabal Ikmah heritage site

Ikmah's location offered several advantages:

1- Important location within the Dadanite and Lihyanite kingdoms. Close to Dadan (Al-Khuraybah), to the southeast, and Umm Daraj, due south, two major Dadanite and Lihyanite sites (Fig. 4).

2- Overlooking the AlUla valley, today where there are palm groves (today).

3- Significant natural landscape where waterfalls cascade after rain and near wadi streams.

4- Natural protection offered by the hills and mountains, which possibly made it the northern limit of the city of Dadan, if we take into consideration the remains of the ancient massive wall north the site.
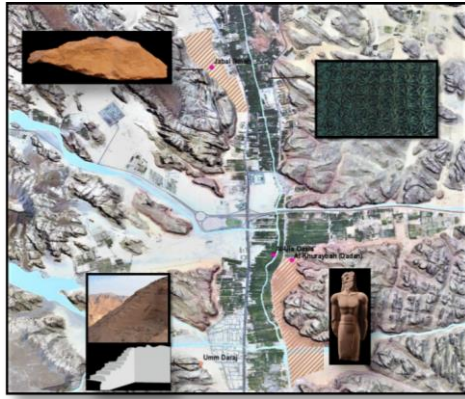
Figure 4. The location of Ikmah within the Dadanite and Lihyanite kingdoms

Early Studies

1-Ruth Stiehl 1968:

This was the earliest archaeological visit to the site. It took place during the summer of 1968, when Ruth Stiehl, an epigrapher and the first foreign woman to go on an archaeological mission to Arabia, roamed AlUla, tasked to find a gorge reported to have hundreds of inscriptions. She was directed by the Department of Antiquities in the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia to do so.

The location of the site was not precisely recorded yet. Therefore, she searched for it for days, until she met a young eight-year-old boy called Reja

Alabdullah wandering around his family's farm near Jabal Ikmah. She asked if he had seen this site and his answer was yes. Reja held Ruth's hand and they walked until they reached the opening of the gorge with hundreds of inscriptions on both sides, engraved and carved. Stiehl was overjoyed to find this exceptional site. She celebrated her joy with a big hug that Reja still remembers. She continued to send him letters by mail from Germany to AlUla for years after, and his photo as a child was presented in her scientific conferences for years after. Stiehl was the first scholar to publish about Ikmah, and Reja was the torch that illuminated the way.

During our recent study, the research team had the opportunity to record the details of this historical visit, from Reja at Ikmah, 53 years after he met Stiehl and guided her there (Fig.5). This story is one of many that reflects the crucial role of local communities in the evolution and development of archaeological scientific research.

Figure 5. Reja Alabdullah (second from the left) with the research team during our survey in Ikmah

After this successful mission Stiehl published nine of the Late Dadanitic inscriptions in "Neue lihynische Inschriften", in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, Die Araber in der Alten Welt, (Altheim & Stiehl, 1968). Then in 1971 she published 40 inscriptions in "Neue lihynische Inschriften aus al-ʿUdayb. Mit einem Nachtrag by M. Höfner", in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl,

Christentum am Roten Meer, (Stiehl & Altheim 1971) two of which demonstrate a new interpretation of the previous publication. She mainly focused on the inscriptions inside the gorge, which she named Bi'r Udhayb.

2-Albert Jamme 1968.

Albert Jamme joined Stiehl in AlUla between August 21 and September 10, 1968. His survey was less systematic. He stated that his research was hindered by several factors, some of which are 1- Being unaware of the names of many mountains and hills in the area 2- Difficulty of conducting such study with the absence of a large detailed map. 3- Great shortage of camera films. "As a consequence, it was not possible for the expedition to hold to any well-prepared research plan" (Jamme, 1974: 2-3). Jamme divided his collection into eight groups from different locations in AlUla, and gave a copy of the inscriptions only, without any photographs (Fares, 2005: 42). One of the eight was reported to be in 'Al-'Akmah' (Jabal Ikmah), and another in 'Bir al-'Udayb'. In 2021, our team visited the site to validate the data and were unable to find his published inscriptions that were listed under the provenance "Al-ʿUḏ ayb (Ǧabal ʿIkmah)" in the OCIANA 2017 edition, leading to the assumption that the location of his inscriptions are not precisely defined, and are not in the current limits of Ikmah. Therefore, we recommend the need to revise his original collection published in 1974 under the title Miscellanées d'ancient arabe II. As well as updating the OCIANA database and its upcoming editions with the accurate information.

3- Hussain Abu- Al-Hassan 1997:

In the early 1990s a Saudi Arabian scholar Hussain Abu- Al-Hassan conducted a study on the inscriptions of Jabal Ikmah. He studied 196 inscriptions: 156 new inscriptions and 40 from the Ruth Stiehl 1971 collection, to suggest a "rereading" of the text. His work was published in 1997.

4- Alexander Sima 1999:

The Alexander Sima volume is based on 250 photos of 128 inscriptions from Ruth Stiehl's expedition to 'Al-Udayb' (Jabal Ikmah) in Saudi Arabia (1968). There are 96 long inscriptions and 32 graffiti, to which 63 of 128 have been previously published. All of them are from the gorge, some inscriptions from the isolated boulders at the entrance and the others are from the two faces of the mountain inside the gorge of what he calls Al-Udayb. Only two are on steles of unknown origin. His interpretation of the inscriptions differs from Abu-Al-Hassan's.

Methodology of this study

In 2020, a research study was conducted by one member of the authors of this article, Munirah Almushawah, to identify the inscriptions of Jabal Ikmah, which previous scholars had published. The "Online Corpus of the Inscriptions from Ancient North Arabia (OCIANA)" was the starting point of this journey, as it represents the most comprehensive Dadanitic inscriptions reference with 858 pages, covering data published in different books and private collections.

The data collection criteria was based on extracting the inscriptions listed under "Ǧabal ˁ Ikmah" in the provenance section of each inscription. It yielded 541 in-situ Dadanitic inscriptions (Fig. 6). This number does not reflect the actual number of inscriptions in the site, but rather the number of inscriptions that have been published and linked to it.

Figure 6. Compiled data statistics on inscriptions attributed to Ikmah during the first phase of our study.

In Abū ˀ lḤasan's original book, there are only 196 inscriptions. The 28 additional inscriptions which summed up to 224 in Figure 6 are subdivisions added by OCIANA to cover additional inscriptions "near the original ones" that were not documented before, e.g. AH 001.1.

While conducting the research an identification card was created for each inscription (541 cards in total), to enhance the process of retrieving the information and analysing the inscriptions as required during the study. Each card includes the Siglum, subject of inscription, translation, figures and URL for OCIANA database (Fig.7).

Figure 7. Example of an identification card created for the inscriptions attributed to Ikmah.

In 2021, Almushawah, Saeed Alahmari and Soror Alshameri started the second phase of this research project by conducting an initial archaeological survey of the site. The aim was to:

1- Locate the groups of inscriptions within the site and validate the information compiled in the first phase of this research.

2- Conduct an archaeological field survey to record other archaeological features in the site. This survey was not limited to the gorge; it covered the entire fenced area of the heritage site.

The group of inscriptions published in Stiehl's collection, Abu- Al-Hassan's collection and Sima's collection were successfully located in the gorge of Ikmah (Fig. 8).

Figure 8. Distribution of previously published inscriptions confirmed in the Ikmah gorge.

However, Jamme's collection published in 1974 was not found inside the gorge, or in the fenced limits or even in the wider covered area of the general survey, which extended for 6km, from Wadi al-Mutadil in the south to north of the Ikmah gorge, on the west side of the AlUla valley, as indicated (Fig. 9).
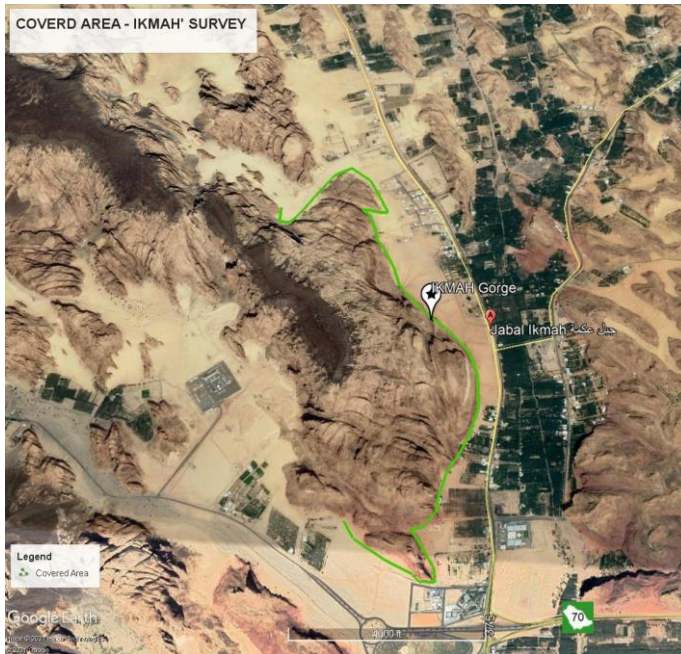
Figure 9. Survey area covered during the search for Albert Jamme's collection of inscriptions.

Analysis of the Inscriptions

After the exclusion of Jamme's collection (252 graffiti inscriptions), we analysed the validated inscriptions (~280) in an attempt to further understanding the Lihyanite kingdom. Within the inscriptions of Ikmah published in Abu- Al-Hassan's collection, there are five dated inscriptions, which mention specific kings of Lihyan (Table 1), reflecting the early origins of monarchic system in ancient Arabia. Two are sons (of Hn's), possibly brothers.

Location of the Inscriptions	Eastern side of the mountain (AH1-AH20)	The rock between the two sides of the gorge (AH21-AH57)	Western side of the mountain (AH58-AH196)
Number of Inscriptions	1	1	3
Siglum	(AH 13)	(AH 56)	(AH 63) (AH 64) (AH 81)
Date	Year 5 Era of king {S²hr} {son of} Ḥn´s	Year 17 Era of king Salhan	(AH 63) Year 20 Era of king Tlmy (AH 64) Year 20 Era of king Tlmy (AH 81) Year 16 Era of king Tlmy Bin Hn`s

Table 1. Kings mentioned in the inscriptions of Ikmah

Additionally, there are inscriptions refering to women owning properties and performing ceremonies, reflecting their wealth and prosperity, and highlighting the changing patterns of social transformation and women empowerment in ancient cultures of Arabia. Moreover, inscriptions mentioning kings, slaves, priests, and priestesses indicate that distinct social and economic classes were in existence in this part of the world in the 1st millennium BCE.

The active role of women as priestesses is clear: the analysis of the inscriptions shows that of 28 referring to this religious role 71% are for priests and 29% are for priestesses (Fig. 10).
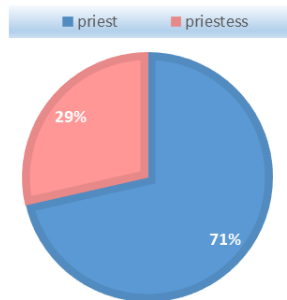
Figure 10. Priests and priestesses in Ikmah inscriptions

The priests:

1. AH 003 (Sima1999:36;D136)

2. AH 010(Sima1999:37;Ryckmans3.33;D143)

3. U 059; Stiehl D 01; Al-Qudrah 1993: 24, no. 34;
    AH 018; D 125

4. AH 022 (U042(lines1–2);D150)

5. U 012; Stiehl A 30; Al-Qudrah 1993: 23, no. 30; AH 028; D 123

6. U 035; Stiehl A 26; Al-Qudrah 1993: 22, no. 26; AH 034; D 119

7. U 004; Altheim & Stiehl 1968: 30, C; van den Branden 1969: 76–77,
    no. 37; Stiehl A 16; Al-Qudrah 1993: 19, no. 16; AH 053; D 109

8. AH 063(Sima1999:38;TMLTno.3)

9. AH 065.1

10. AH 084; (Sima 1999: 42)

11. AH 091; Sima 1999: 42

12. AH 097; Sima 1999: 43

13. AH 108; Sima 1999: 44

14. AH 120; Sima 1999: 45

15. U 063; AH 129; Hidalgo-Chacón Díez 2016a: 76–77

16. AH 138; Sima 1999: 45–46

17. AH 147.1

18. U 016

19. U 044

20. U 100

The priestesses:

1. AH 006 (Sima1999:36;D139)

2. AH 012 (Sima1999:37;D145)

3. AH013(Ryckmans3.28;Scagliarini1996:93–97;Scagliarini-U001;D146;Farès2009:183,no.1)

4. AH 015(Sima1999:37;D147)

5. U 038; AH 029; D 152

6. U 022; Altheim & Stiehl 1968: 31–32, P/6-7; van den Branden 1969: 77–78, no. 39/6–7; Stiehl A 06; Al-Qudrah 1993: 16–17, no. 6; AH 043; D 099

7. U 019; Altheim & Stiehl 1968: 26–27, M/7–13; van den Branden 1969: 70–73, no. 32/7–13; Stiehl A 08; Drewes 1983: 428, no. 15; Al-Qudrah 1993: 17, no. 8; AH 046; D 101; Farès 2009: 184, no. 3

8. AH 090; Sima 1999: 42

Another important element emphasised in the inscriptions is rain, both 'early' and 'late' rain seasons. Analysis of inscriptions published in the OCIANA collection concluded that there are eight inscriptions referring to rain/agriculture in an unspecified region, in adddition to 24 inscriptions of rain/agriculture specifying different specific places, e.g. Ḏ ʿ mn , Bnʾ l, Ḏt ʿ ʿ l, Bdr, h-M–ḏ hb, Tqmm and Tr. Moreover, this type is also evident in other sites with Dadanitic inscriptions. For example inscription JSLih 077 (Eut 838; Doughty 1884, pl. XV, f. 28; Halévy 1884: 19, no. 6; Müller, D.H. 1889: 76–77, no. 27; Grimme 1937: 315–316; CLL 082; Jamme 1971: 37–38; JaL 102i; Drewes 1983: 428–429, no. 19; Déroche 1987: 134–136; Al-Qudrah 1993: 37–38, no. 94; D 058) is located on a large vertical cliff face, several hundred metres east of the ruins of the ancient city of Dadan (Al-Khuraybah).

Despite the fact of having multiple readings for the same inscription by different epigraphers, these inscriptions are of high value. For example, they represent some of the earliest evidence for agriculture in the AlUla

oasis, in the first millenium BCE, spefically in the inscriptions which include details on the cultivated plants, such as date palms and other 'crops', e.g. inscription (U 023; Drewes 1983: 428, no. 18; AH 041) with the reading provided by (Hidalgo-Chacón Díez, and Macdonald, 2017 :747) (Fig. 11):

1: ʿbd----nt son of ʾft pr–

2: iest of Ḏġbt and his son Yhn–

3: ʾ and his wife ʾmtbʿs¹m–

4: n {planted} in Bdr and in Bnʾl one

5: hundred and forty-five palm trees {and}

6: {performed} the ẓll-ceremony for {Ḏġbt} ---- {their} palm trees

7: and their {crops of the season of the later rains} and so favour them and {their} posterity
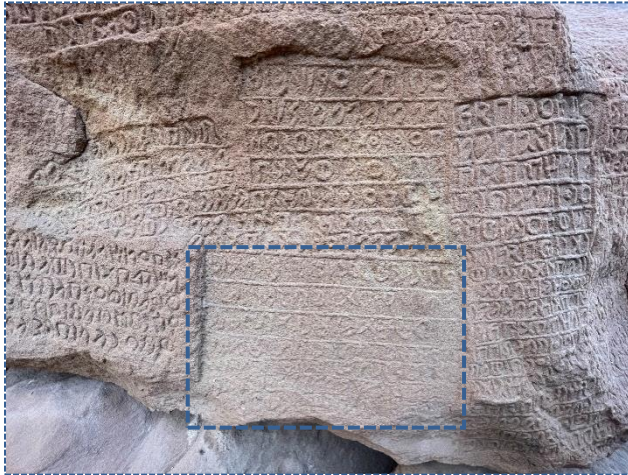
Figure 11. Inscription U 023 at Ikmah, which is carved in relief.

For a desert oasis, rain is vital for life and prosperity, especially for cultivating palm trees, which consume a lot of water. One individual could possess as many as one hundred and forty-five (145) palm trees as stated in the above reading of inscription U 023.

A panoramic view of numerous palm tree gardens can be observed today from both the summit of the mountain east of the gorge and the high sand dunes nearby Ikmah, suggesting that there could have been palm groves in the surroundings also in the 1st millennium BCE. This could be additional significance for choosing this specific location within the AlUla valley.

During the survey we also observed that the geological formation of Ikmah offers a significant display of water when it rains heavily: it is a natural location for cascading waterfalls after heavy rain. This spectacular scene still displays when is rains heavily in Ikmah (Fig. 12), and as a result vegetation is greater in the site due to the rich surface run-off water resources. The specific geology of the site could therefore also have contributed to choosing the Ikmah gorge for the concentration of inscriptions.

Figure 12. Ikmah after rain, note the cascade of waterfalls. Photo ©Rakan AlAnizi

Archaeological remains in the site:

The second aim of this study was to conduct an initial archaeological field survey to record other archaeological features in the site. This phase resulted in key discoveries that changed our understanding of the chronology and richness of the site.

Ancient wall

Other than the inscriptions, previous scholars did not record any archaeological remains in Ikmah, except for the remnants of an ancient wall 300 meters north of the gorge, near the modern fence. This wall extends from the mountain to the east. It was first mentioned by Abdullah Nassif (1988:106), then by Ali AlMughanam et al. (1999: 56).

During the survey, the team measured this very important architectural element. It extends for 450 meters, and then a neighbouring farm fence cuts it. Given its dimensions and location, and utilizing the 5 cm orthophoto provided by the Royal Commission for AlUla, we propose that its original length was 660 meters, and that it extended to the edge of the mountain opposite, to the east (Fig. 13). Nothing conveys power, resistance, and ownership like a wall and for the Lihyanites all these characteristics were important. Additionally, this wall could have provided security; such walls are evident within the boundaries of this ancient kingdom e.g. the wall across Wadi AlMu'tadil.

Figure 13.a. Image of the ancient wall.
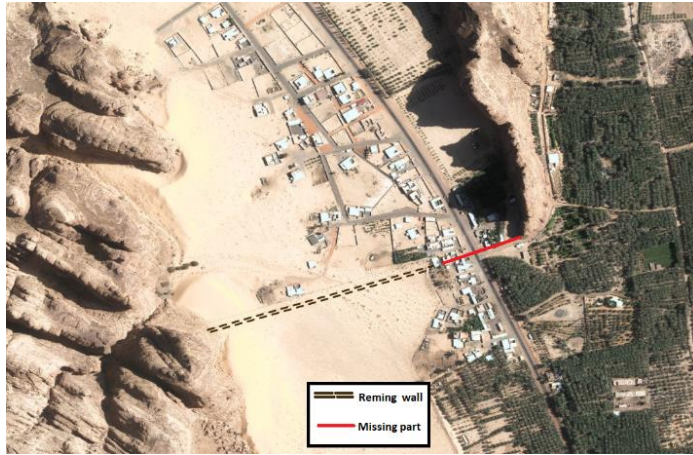
Figure 13.b. Remains of the ancient wall outside and to the north of the Ikmah gorge, near the modern northern fence line (Orthophoto, Geotech Overseas © RCU).

Since ancient times, people have built walls to contain, defend and/or protect their land from others, and a massive wall such as this one would not have served its purpose without this missing part. Unfortunately, the missing c. 200 meters of this wall were demolished by the new infrastructure of paved roads and nearby farmlands several decades ago.

Pottery

Scatters of pottery sherds were found during the field survey in the wider area of the site. However, the densest scatter is interestingly on the surface of the ancient collapsed wall (Fig. 14). The sherds are similar to "Khuraybah Pottery" or "Al-Ula style pottery" and the Red Burnished Ware (Hausleiter et al, 2021, Tebes 2015), which is also found in the site of Dadan, indicating that this wall apparently belongs to the Dadanite and/or Lihyanite civilizations.
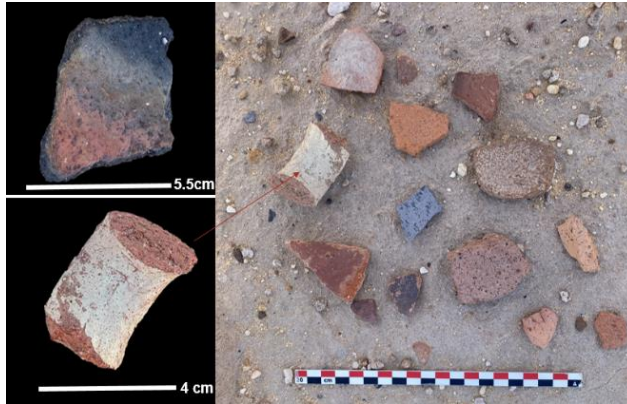
Figure 14. Variety of pottery sherds found on the surface of the wall located north of the Ikmah gorge.

Altar

Another important element found during the survey of the site is this ancient altar (Fig. 15), located inside the gorge near the inscriptions. It is carved from a horizontal rock formation, similar to a platform, on the eastern hillside of the gorge. It was possibly used for the presentation of religious offerings, sacrifices, or for other ritualistic purposes. Such altars have been recorded in several other sites in AlUla, such as Wadi Abu Ud (Wādī ābū ʿ ūd), an archaeological site with many Dadanitic inscriptions, just south of the Ikmah gorge.

Figure 15. Ancient altar in the Ikmah gorge

Isolated rock boulders with Dadanitic inscriptions

During the survey of the mountain summits surrounding the gorge, the team recorded a number of isolated rock boulders with rock art and Dadanitic inscriptions. These boulders have not been previously identified and are well preserved due to their remote location (Fig. 16). These unpublished inscriptions require an epigraphic study to decipher their indications and highlight any significance.

Figure 16. Isolated boulders with Dadanitic inscriptions on the summits surrounding the Ikmah gorge

Ikmah in Prehistory

Unexpectedly, the survey team discovered a variety of prehistoric lithics in Ikmah; this discovery is regarded as one of the key findings of the study because it provides an entirely new window on an unknown period of human presence within the fenced heritage site. The lithics consist of a possible Levallois core from the Middle Paleolithic (Fig. 17 A), in addition

to a possible Neolithic flake core made of quartz pebble, with fine knapping (Fig. 17 B).
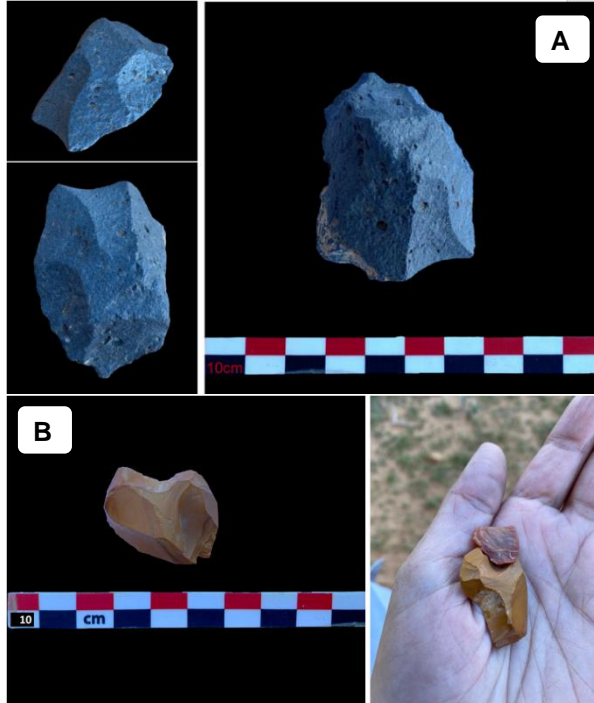
Figure 17. Prehistoric lithics discovered in Ikmah, A. Possible Levallois core. B. Neolithic flakes

Rock art panels

The team recorded massive rock art panels on the cliff faces near the southern limit of the modern fence enclosing the site as illustrated in the map (Fig. 20). These modified rock surfaces are spectacular and of high cultural value due to their excellent artistic style, large size, density and content. They reflect different elements of AlUla's past – including indications for different environmental conditions and diverse wildlife. Whoever depicted these figures was certainly living in a different climate, perhaps in a savanna-like environment, before the desertification of the area.

The rock art includes different types of animals – cattle, ibex, lions, ostriches, camels, horses and human figures. The inclusion of lions and cattle, which require more water to drink than desert fauna, points to a wetter environment when they were engraved. The panels were recorded with a Differential Global Positioning Systems (DGPS) for accurate recording of coordinates

.

Figure 18. Distribution of rock art panels outside the Ikmah gorge, concentrated in the southern part of the fenced area of the heritage site,

One of the most impressive panels is approximately 17m in length and 7m in width. It represents different species of animals presented in a mix of other artistic elements. The panel is dominated by cattle depicted in different styles, some, for example, with complex geometric patterns (Fig. 19). Cattle are depicted elsewhere in the AlUla region; however, the panels at Ikmah are exeptional
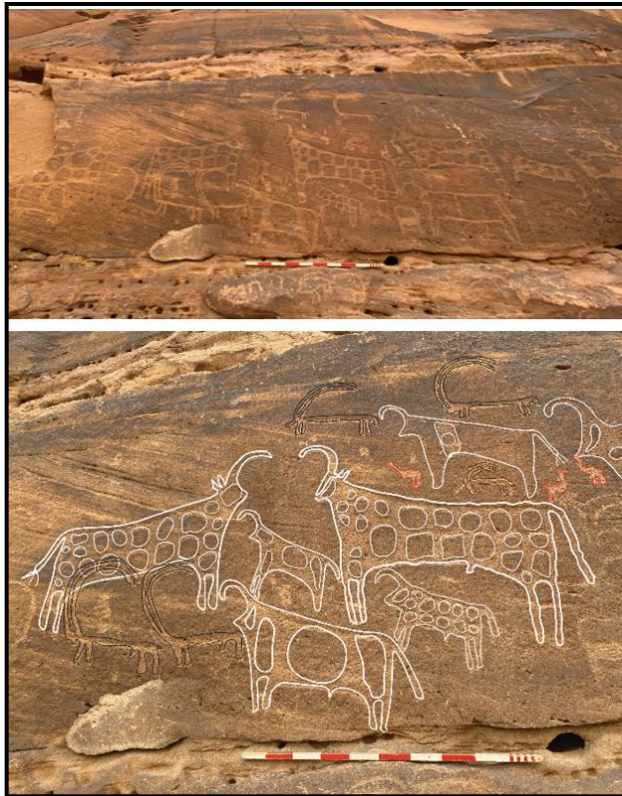
Figure 19. Example of cattle depicted in a rock art panel within the fenced area of the Ikmah heritage site.

They are distinguished by their large size, precision of drawing, and most importantly because they illustrate the steps of executing the artwork. The authors see that this panel demonstrates the stages the artist carried out: **First** defining the external contours of the cattle by incising/engraving and drawing lines cut into the rock with a sharp tool. Then, dividing the figure with a straight line in the middle in order to balance the distribution of elements within the drawing frame. **Second**, the artist divides the figure into several vertical and horizontal lines all over the cow's body, and then uses the pecking technique, an indirect carving method, to highlight the details of the face and chip the rock surface of the horns. **Third**, the artist reduces the edges of the squares by carefully engraving rounded contours. **Fourth**, the final step of the work is completed with making more precise geometric patterns (Fig. 20).
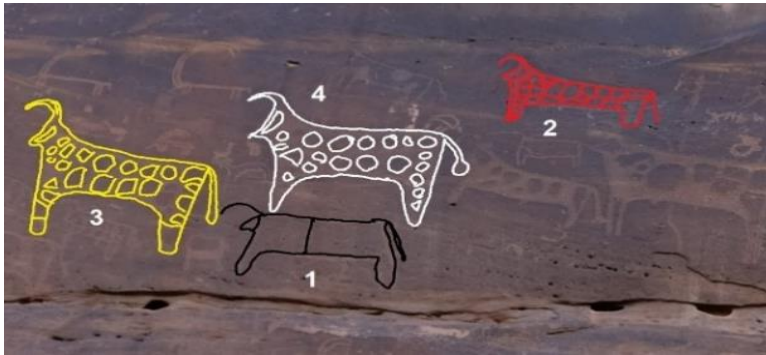
Figure 20. Hypothesis of the stages of execution in drawing the cattle.

Rock art expert Majeed Khan classifies a similar type of cattle as "cattle with forward curved horns" and dates it to the period from 3500 BCE to 3000 BCE (Khān 1993:131).

Another interesting rock art scene represents a group of humans, two males in the upper part of the drawing, and two females in the lower part. This was obvious from the body representations of the figures. They are attacking a lion to defend their cattle (Fig. 21). This scene offers cultural indications such as the domestication of cattle and the apparent social equality between men and women in hunting activities in that era. In addition, it suggests that the environment in AlUla -when this was engraved- was green savanna land and humid conditions, which are the habitat for lions to thrive.

Figure 21. Lion hunting scene depicted in a rock art panel within the fenced area of the Ikmah heritage site.

As for the hunting weapons, Naif AlQanoor (2007:51) states that the bow and arrow were used in Arabia during the Neolithic period. Furthermore, Khan (2007:114) mentions that cattle and lions started to be associated together in a rock art in the Neolithic period from 7000 BCE-6000 BCE.

Chariot with wheels

Located ~500m outside and south of the gorge, and in a very high place (elevation ~ 2920ft), approximately 120m from ground level, a chariot

was engraved, pulled by two horses and with its pair of wheels lying flat (Fig. 22). This depiction resembles actual chariots, an innovation that spread in AlUla in Antiquity. Although chariots are considered very rare in north Arabian rock art, AlUla is home to several examples, such as the chariot in Wadi Abu Ud (Wādī ābū ʿūd) (as mentioned above, a wadi just south of the Ikmah gorge) and the chariot of Al Sinya (north of modern AlUla) (Kha□n 2017). Several other chariots depicted in a rock art have been discovered in different regions such as in Tabuk (Nayeem 2000), Jubba (Nayeem 2000) and Al Musharafa in Hail, which dates back to the Bronze Age-early Iron Age (Macdonald 2009).

Figure 22. Chariot depicted at Ikhmah outside the gorge.

Islamic and modern remains

1-Early Arabic inscriptions

Several Arabic inscriptions of the early Islamic period were recorded during the survey inside the fenced area, some of which are dated, e.g. the inscription in (Fig. 23), that dates to 223 AH (a year in the Hijri calendar, which corresponds to the Gregorian calendar between the years 837 and 838 CE). The inscription reads as following:

<div dir="rtl">

الله ثقة احمد بن محمد بن خلف وكتبه سنه ثلاث وعشرين ومئتين

</div>

Translation: Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Khalaf trusts in God, written in the year two hundred twenty three.

Figure 23. Dated early Islamic inscription at Ikmah, south of the gorge.

2-Early coinage of the Saudi State-dated to the era of the unification of Najd and Hijaz in 1343AH (1925CE)

The coin was discovered south of the gorge. It is stamped for The Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd (Arabic: مملكة الحجاز ونجد, Mamlakat al-Ḥijāz

wa-Najd), a dual monarchy ruled by King Abdulaziz following the victory of the Saudi Sultanate of Nejd over the Hashemite Kingdom of the Hejaz in 1925. It was the fourth iteration of the Saudi State (Fig. 24). The coin is dated to 1348 AH and reads as following:

1- Obverse

"Abdulaziz al Saud, King of Hejaz and Nejd and Dependencies"

(عبد العزيز آل سعود ملك الحجاز ونجد وملحقاتها)

2-Reverse

"One Qirsh 1348"

Figure 24. Coin found in Ikmah, south of the gorge

Results and Discussion

The ancient archive engraved and carved on the cliff faces and boulders in the gorge of Jabal Ikmah is a reliable resource to glimpse ancient life in an early civilization of the Middle East in northwest Saudi Arabia. The Late Dadanitic inscriptions reveal aspects of the lives of the inhabitants in the 1st millennium BCE, during the Lihyanite kingdom. They describe an extensive number of associated elements, such as the socio-political system, economic basis, rituals, and more. Most refer to rituals or religious ceremonies.

The practice of describing religious ceremonies and other important events by epigraphic means existed in many parts of the world. Nevertheless, Jabal Ikmah is a paradigmatic example in the Arab region, as its collection fills the Iron Age era gap within the Arabian Peninsula, expanding our global understanding of these important legacies of human culture.

The formal inscriptions, epigraphs composed of up to nine lines in some cases, reflect the political and socio-economic conditions of the early Arab communities here. In relation to economy and society, this collection of inscriptions represents the earliest documentary heritage about ancient agricultural production, as well as about land and property in the Arabian Peninsula.

Most of the inscriptions mention a specific place of significance called khl, which refers to the place in which the main ritual or religious ceremony took place. This place has not yet been located, however the epigraphic records are solid evidence of its existence and deciphering more of these inscriptions will possibly lead to finding it.

Otherwise, numerous references to places with significant historic names have been identified in these Dadanitic inscriptions, forming a mind map that reflects a network of connections with other communities in antiquity.

Additionally, several inscriptions refer to women (i.e., inscriptions AH-012, or also U-013, in Macdonald et al. 2017), owning properties and performing ceremonies, reflecting their wealth and prosperity, and highlighting the social differences and women empowerment in ancient cultures of Arabia. Moreover, inscriptions containing kings, slaves, musicians, priests, and priestesses indicate that distinct social and economic classes were in existence in this part of the world as early as the 1st millennium BCE.

Ikmah's inscriptions are an exemplar in artistic ability, with twenty-four inscriptions carved in relief; the letters stand proud from the rock surface demonstrating an advanced artistic approach of highly skilled professional masons (i.e., inscriptions U011 to U019 and U021 to U026, Macdonald et al. 2017). The Dadanites and Lihyanites are well-known for their excellence in carving stone, sculptures more than two meters in height have been unearthed from ancient Dadan, 3.5km southeast of Jabal Ikmah. This documentary heritage offers incredible insights to complement the archaeology of Dadan and the region, enhancing understanding of the development of ancient communities in this part of Asia.

The absence of Albert Jamme's collection of inscriptions linked to the site of Ikmah published in 1974 highlights the importance of assessing historical publications that were published in a time when accessibility to maps and accurate geographical locations was limited.

Furthermore, the unexpected prehistoric findings just outside the gorge signal the need for additional studies to understand more about Ikmah. A new systematic in-depth approach is needed for survey and analysis of the lithics to determine the range of time in which the site and its environs were actively inhabited in the prehistoric era.

The discovery of the prehistoric rock art panels of Ikmah is highly important on several levels, for example providing the opportunity to observe the methodologies and stages by which an image is created and to recognize the significance the site appears to have held during the Neolithic period. Nevertheless, a future detailed study of the rock art is essential to be able to position the site within the corpus of other rock art sites in the Arabian Peninsula and to extract further cultural implications.

This study expands our understanding of the long human presence in Ikmah. The majority of scholars have been documenting and studying the distinguished inscriptions of the site, not noticing the small details in the presence of such an enormous epigraphic compendium. Now that archaeological studies are targeting hidden details from a multidisciplinary perspective, it became more evident that Ikmah has much more to offer.

The new chronological timeline of Ikmah from prehistory to modern times is indeed an unpredictable result that encourages archaeologists to keep unfolding the mysteries of this land, and always report new findings that cast significant new light on AlUla's past legacies.

Acknowledgements

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New Sabaean Inscription on Miḥrāb and its Role in the Healing of Diseases

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Abstract: Publication of a new Sabaean inscription, related to the 'Miḥrāb' part in ancient South Arabian temples, and its role in the healing of diseases. This may provide an example of 'Therapeutic Incubation' i.e., sleeping in the temple to receive healing from the god, with ʿAthtar providing healing for patients in a particular place called the mḥrbt (Miḥrāba). The new inscription was recognized online after its photos had been shared, resulting from illicit excavation during the war in Yemen, among other inscriptions, said to be sold to an unknown merchant..

Keywords: Sabaean Inscription, Ancient South Arabia, Incubation, Dream, ʿAthtar.

الملخص

نقش سبئي جديد عن المِحراب ودوره في شفاء الأمراض

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يُعنى البحث بنشر نقش سبئي جديد عن الجزء المسمى "مِحراب" في معابد جنوب الجزيرة العربية القديمة، ودوره في شفاء الأمراض. ويبدو ذلك مثالًا على ممارسة "الحالومة الشفائية"، والمقصود بها طقس النوم في المعبد لتلقي الاستشفاء من الإله، ممثلًا بالإله عثـتر الذي يظهر مانحًا الشفاء للمرضى في موضع محدد يسمى "م ح ر ب ت" (مِحرابَة). وقد عُثر على صورة هذا النقش على شبكة الإنترنت، إذ تمت مشاركة عدة صور له بعد نبش عشوائي غير مشروع أثناء الحرب في اليمن، إلى جانب نقوش أخرى قيل إنها بيعت لتاجر مجهول.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نقش سبئي، جنوب الجزيرة العربية القديمة، الأمراض، طقس الحالومة.

Introduction

In the context of the destructive war in Yemen since 2014, Yemeni heritage is largely exposed to destruction and unfortunate loss. Until 2019, General Organization of Antiquities and Museums recorded about 66 museums, monuments, archaeological sites, and about 35 religious monuments that have been destroyed or exploded, in addition to increasing illicit excavation and smuggling of artifacts (al-Siyani, 2009, 259). As a result of these acts, photos of a newly discovered stone inscription, have been shared on an online social-media platform (Facebook) on 1st November 2020. In addition to new two bronze inscriptions, a fragmentally dedicatory plates, shared online by the same person, on 28th November 2020, one of which or each one consists of the formula "Sin ḏū-ʾAlīm" identical to another dedicatory inscriptions from Dhu-Alīm temple in Shabwah. All three Inscriptions said to be from *Jabal ʿIyāl Yazīd* district in *ʿAmrān* governorate, in western central Yemen, which is doubtful, as smugglers tend to be obscure about where they found the artifacts. No further information or photos has yet become available about these inscriptions, as they were sold[1].

However, the three available photographs of the stone inscription (Figs: 1- 3) are relatively clear and sufficient, for a preliminary study, which is provided here. Two of the photographs (Figs: 1 - 2) were shot after water had been poured on the inscription.

In general, this is a dedicatory text consisting of 17 lines engraved on a stone, approximately 75×50 cm in size, compared to the floor tiles shown below it, which are usually 50×50 cm. It belongs to an individual called

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[1] Personal communication with the induvial who shared the photos, via WhatsApp, on 15th May 2021.

Wahbʾīl, who is asking the deity ʿAttar for healing from a disease. It has been possible to restore some of the glyphs to reveal well-attested formulas known from other inscriptions; however, this has not been possible for the majority of glyphs.

Transcription

1. *[Whbʾl](ḏ)[… …]*
2. *[bn ḫl]ẓ ḫl*ẓ*-hw w-m(ʾ)ṣ(rt)[… …]*
3. *[… …](b)t-hw w-(s ʾl)-hw ʿṯt[r]*
4. *[mr]ʾ-hw ṣ(lm)[m] w-ṯwrm w-k[… …]*
5. *[..] q ṭrm w-(n ḏ)ḥm my(š)[.]šr b*
6. *w-ʿṯtr-šrqn f-rʾk-ṣry ʿ(b)d—*
7. *[-hw W]hbʾl bn kl mrḍ mrḍ (s)*
8. *[..]ftm w-tryd b-mḥrbt(n) [… …]*
9. *[… …](f)n w-ʾrbʿt mr(ḍ) qwmm w-*
10. *[… …]w l-ʿṯtr-šrqn ḫmdm (b)[-ḏt hʿn-h]—*
11. *w w-nṣb-hw bn hw(t) [mrḍn … …]*
12. *[ʿṯ]tr-šrqn f-l-zʾn sʿd[-h]—*
13. *(mw) ṣdqm ʿdy (ʾrd-)hmw*
14. *[w-ḫmr-h]mw ʾwldm hnʾm w-h[… …]*
15. *[… …]ʿ(-h)mw w-rṯdw ʿṯt[ršrqn]*
16. *[… …](-h)mw bn š ṣy-šn[ʾm]*
17. *[… …]šrn*

Translation

1. [Wahbʾīl] dhū- …
2. [sickness of which] he suffered and danger…
3. his (temple), and ʿAttar his [lord]

4. asked him a statue and a bull and…

5. … burnt offering and libation ((or: applied incense and took a bath))

    … *my*(*š*)[.]*šr*?

6. and ʿAṯtar-Sharqān gave a favourable decision to protect his servant

7. Wahbʾīl from every suffering of disease …

8. … and went (for healing) in the Miḥrāba …

9. … 'thousand?' and four patients in total, and

10. … for ʿAṯtar-Sharqān, [in praise because he (delivered him)]

11. and raised him up (healthy) from these (diseases).

12. May ʿAṯtar-Sharqān continue to grant to them

13. true prosperity in their land,

14. [and grant them] healthy children, and …

15. their… and they committed to ʿAṯtar[-Sharqān]

16. their … from malice of any enemy

17. … (and) the evil …

Commentary

Line 1:

- First line is completely destroyed, except for the glyph 'ḏ'. Usually, dedicatory texts begin with the genealogy of the authors. Here we are may restore the proper name of the author (*Whbʾl*) from line 7 (see below).

Line 2:

- *[bn ḫl]ẓ ḫl*ẓ*-hw*: This is a hypothetical restoration and correction, based on other inscription mention 'bn ḫlẓ ḫlẓ' (CIH 407/9; Ja 613/9; Ja 633/5; cf. Saʿīd 2002, 18-21), meaning

'disease of which he suffered'. *ẓ* in *ḫl*ẓ*-hw* is clearly *r*, probably a scriptive mistake.

- *mʿṣrt*: from the root ʿṢR has the meaning 'peril, danger' in the Sabaic Dictionary (SD: 21), cf. Arabic *ʿaṣarahū al-ʾalam* (squeezed in pain), and Yemeni *ʿaṣar* 'to suffer from lumbago' (Piamenta: 329)

Line 3:

- *[… …](b)t-hw*: his temple. *bt* from the root BYT 'house; village, estate; temple, etc.' (SD: 34), although the stone is broken right before the *lemma*, which makes it uncertain.

- *w-(sʾl)-hw*: *sʾl* 'ask, request, demand' (SD: 121), and '*-hw*' referring to ʿAthtar.

- *ʿṯt[r]*: ʿAthtar, the supreme god in ancient south Arabia.

Line 4:

- *[mr]ʾ-hw*: *mrʾ* meaning (lord) is partly restored here according to the context.

- *ṣ(lm)[m] w-ṯwrm w-k[l]*: a statue and a bull and every…

Line 5:

- *qṭrm w-(nḍ)ḥm*: the term *qṭrm* (from QṬR) should have a meaning associated to *mqṭrt* (incense-altar) (SD: 109). However, *qṭrm* being followed with *nḍḥm* (from NDḤ), cf. *mnḍḥ* (water distributor), make it highly possible to read as a religious practice been performed: either burnt-incense and libation, or that the patient applied incense and purifying baths.

- *my(š)[.]šr*: ? (Not clear in the available photos). According to DASI, '*myš...*' is hitherto unattested in the corpus of South Arabian inscriptions, thus it is preferable to avoid any uncertain suggestion for now.

Line 6:

- *w-ʿṯtr-šrqn:* and ʿAthtar Sharqān.
- *f-rʾk-ṣry:* The phrase *f-rʾk-* is well attested in the inscriptions in the meaning of 'gave a favorable decision to'; *ṣry* meaning 'protect' (SD: 145). Note the attestation of this exact expression in a similar context (dealing with ḤRB) in Nāmī NAG 12/ 20-21.
- *ʿ(b)d-hw:* his servant.

Line 7:

- *Whbʾl:* A personal theophoric name: 'Wahbʾīl'(Tairan, 1992, 233).
- *bn kl:* from every.
- *mrḍ mrḍ:* suffering of disease. This repeating of '*mrḍ*' occurred in several inscription about the diseases[1].

Line 8:

- *w-tryd*: It is remarkable that '*tryd*' occurred in a context of epidemic in CIH 541/92 meaning 'diminish, fall off, subside' of the diseases. However, the meaning should be slightly different here, as the context is about the '*tryd*' of the person himself, not the diseases. A possible interpretation can be established according to the following term '*b-mḥrbtn*'.

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(1) see for instance: CIH 530/5; CIH 336/9; Ja 585/11.

- *b-mḫrbt(n)*: in-the-Miḥrāba (feminine form) derived from the root ḤRB, cf. '*mḫrbn*' in Ir 12/5, '*mḫrb-hmw*' in Ir 71/4, '*[m]ḫrb-hw*' in RES 4108/3, '*mḫrbn*' in RES 3122/3 (Robin, 1991, 153), and even '*ḏ-mḫrb*' (Robin, 1991, 155), among its meanings: 'incubation', a practice of sleeping in the temple to receive oracular decision, though not 'therapeutic incubation'. However, both concepts come close, therefore, '*w-tryd b-mḫrbtn*' could mean 'and went (for healing) in the *Miḥrāba*' that is a temple part where a patient receives a divine healing. This can be supported by a recently interpreted minuscule inscription (L 044/6), where the association of the '*mḫrb*' with the verb '*ystṯbn*' (receive healing or medicine) becomes evident. It goes: *ḏt tʾrḫn ḏt tʾtwn mḫrb hgrn l-ḏt ystṯbn b-śn-k b-tsnn h-sy-k* "that you prepare what you send to the city's *miḥrāb*, so that he can heal his teeth with the dental medicine that you bring" (Faqʿas, 2022, 351, 399, 441); Cf. *mrḍn śnnhw* "the disease of his teeth" (Maraqten 2014, 314-315).

Line 9:

- *[... ...](f)n w-ʾrbʿt mr(ḍ) qwmm*: 'thousand? ' and four patients in total. '*ʾl-*' in *ʾlfn* is hypothetical, and '*f*' is not certain. although it would be quite doubtful to count in this precise manner.
- *mr(ḍ):* patients. The '*ḍ*' is not certain, '*b*' is also possible.
- *qwmm*: total amount. See the beginning of YM 12 025 '*qwm-hw sbʿt ʿšr*' (Total amount of seventeen), *qwm-hw* as in Arabic '*quāmuhu*' (Maraqten, 2014, 361-362).

Line 10:

- *w l-ʿṯtr-šrqn*: and for ʿAṯtar-Sharqān.
- *ḥmdm*: praise, thank (SD: 68).
- *b-ḏt …-hw*: can be restored '*b-ḏt hʿn-hw*' meaning 'because he delivered him' (SD: 23), as in '*ḥmdm b-ḏt hʿn*' in Ja 613/6-7, and '*ḥmdm b-ḏt hʿn*' in CIH 407/7.

Line 11:

- *w-nṣb-hw*: *naṣab* in classical Arabic is 'fatigue, tiredness' (Lane, 2799); still, the context here shows the person grateful (*ḥmdm*) for being *hʿn* and *nṣb*; which excludes the 'fatigue'. The root NṢB in the Sabaic Dictionary has a meaning of 'set up' (SD: 99), this allows a comparison of the root NṢB with QWM, which is used in the sense of 'raising up healthy' as in classical Arabic '*intaṣab salīm min al-kusāḥ*' (al-Nabhānī, 1911, 327) (raised up healthy after rickets), and '*wa-qām salīm lā maraḍ bih*' (Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, 2013, II,322) (and raised up healthy with no sickness).
- *bn hw(t)* [*mrḍn*]: from those, referring to the diseases. cf. '*bn hwt mrḍn*' in BynM 1/9 and '*hwt mrḍn*' in CIH 405/9 and '*b-hwt mrḍn*' in Ja 670/14.

Line 12:

- *[ʿṯ]tr-šrqn f-l-zʾn*: May ʿAṯtar-Sharqān continue to.
- *sʿḏ[-h]—(mw)*: grant to them (SD: 121, 122).

Line 13:

- *ṣdqm ʿdy (ʾrd-)hmw*: This phrase is attested in several inscriptions, meaning 'true prosperity/fine crops in their land', cf. '*ṣdqm ʿdy ʾrd-hmw*' in the inscription Ir 36/B2.

Line 14:

- *[w-ḫmr-h]mw ʾwldm hnʾm*: This phrase is also a very well-known formula, that we can restore almost the whole word *w-ḫmr-hmw* meaning 'and grant them'.
- *ʾwldm hnʾm*: meaning 'healthy children'.

Line 15:

- *w-rṯdw ʿṯt[ršrqn]*: and they committed to ʿAṯtar-Sharqān. cf. '*rṯd ʿṯtr*' in MAFRAY-ad-Durayb 7, and '*rṯd ʾlmqh*' in RES 4087.

Line 16-17:

- *bn šṣy-šn[ʾm] [... ...]šrn*: a well-known expression at the end of dedicatory inscriptions, meaning: from malice of any enemy (and) the evil. Except for '*…šrn*' which occurred in the minuscule inscriptions (L 019/6; L 008/6) as "*šrr*" (Faqʿas 2022, 367), probably a cognate with the Arabic *Sharr*: evil.

Discussion

Some dedications that were offered for protection against sickness (*mrḍ*) were fulfilled after the direct order (*wqh*) of the deity. This is the case in inscriptions such as: Haram 32; Gr 137; Ja 633; Ja 583 + Ja 807. Orders were received 'in a dream by the worshipper or through priestly

intervention' (Maraqten, 2015, 112); in fact, there are some texts that explicitly state this, e.g., Ja 567.

The dedicator, in this new inscription under study, 'Wahb'īl' provided a bull (probably as a sacrificed animal), and a statue (as a gift) that his lord asked him (*s ʾl-hw*) to give. Line 4 also reads *w-k[l]…* (and…), but it is badly damaged here.

Line 5 reads '*qṭrm w-nḏḥm*', two words that are associated with incense and water. It is possible to interpret them as 'burnt incense and libation', but 'applied incense and took a bath' is also compatible with the Islamic tradition about pre-islamic south Arabia.

We have two poetic verses read: "*wa-tandā misk-an maḥāribuhā*" (and its *miḥrāb*-s are dewy with Musk), and "*ṣanʿāʾ-u wa-al-misk-u fī maḥāribihā*" (Sana'a and the Musk in its *miḥrāb*-s) (Landberg, 1920, 395); Furthermore, al-Aṣmaʿi (d. 828 AD) said: "I entered one of the *miḥrāb*-s of Ḥimyar and the scent of musk blew in my face" (Khoury, 1998, 6); It seems that aromatics in Yemen were associated with *miḥrāb* on a regular basis.

The following word in the inscription *my(š)[.]šr* seems well preserved, but unfortunately, it is not clear in the available photos, which might determine the meaning.

After that, in lines 6–7, his lord (ʿAṯtar Sharqān) gave a favourable decision to protect him from every suffering of disease. The inscription then reads: 'and *tryd* in the *mḥrbt*'. (Maraqten, 2015, 112) assumed that "the place where the ḤRB-ritual was performed should be called *mḥrb*", which has been confirmed.

The root ḤRB has been discussed by several scholars. Ryckmans (1968) was the first who discussed the relation between ḤRB-ritual and obtaining divination by Oneiromancy. Later, Müller (1986, 150) indicated a case of 'Traum erwähnt wird, die während einer Inkubation geschaut wurde' referring to Ja 567, and Biella (1982, 187) interpreted *tẖrbn* and *tẖrbt* in RES 4632 as 'vision obtained by incubation in the miḥrāb'[1].

The hypothesis of therapeutic incubation in South Arabia may finds confirmation in a number of inscriptions, such as Ja 567, where an individual saw *ẖlm* (dream) during his *snt* (sleep) when he was *ẖlẓ* (sick) and subsequently dedicated three statues in bronze; Ja 702, where an individual was punished by a malady after committing an offense, and so he asked for *ẖwlm* (dream); and Ja 721, where a woman asked the god for *wldm* (a child) in the *ṣdġ* (incubation) (Stein, 2006, 298-299).

In his article on "*Miḥrāb*", Serjeant (1959, 443) included an extensive commentary of al-Ghūl on inscriptions RES 4632 and RES 3512B, where "*tẖrbt* and *tẖrb* are attested. al-Ghūl wrote:

the *tẖrbt* refers to the kiosk itself. The word would then bear the sense of 'chamber' or 'kiosk', possibly for observation (…) it seems to have been offered as an act of thanksgiving for the building of a *tẖrb*.

Later, al-Ghūl synonymised between *mḏqnt* and *mḥrb*, supporting his opinion with Serjeant's material. Al-Ghūl (1962, 333-334) went even

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(1) For more discussions about the root see: (Serjeant, 1959, 442-443; Robin, 1991, 152-155; Stein, 2006; Maraqten, 2015, 109, 112; ʿAṭbūš, 2021), with a modern Yemeni parallel of incubation practice called *al-Tasfīl* (literally 'taking down'), where the healer (usual a woman) claims to possess demons who reveal to her the patient's condition, as well as the appropriate treatment for that condition. That revelation comes to her healer through a coma into which she falls, in the underground store of a house (*safal*), to communicate with demons.

further, comparing *md̲qnt*/*mḫrb* with the Arabic *ṣuffah*, which is a part of the early Prophetic Mosque. However, on 2015, Maraqten (2015, 109) suggested to consider *md̲qnt* as "front building, buttress of a structure, entrance-chamber".

Moreover, the scene in CIH 419 (where a human figure 'touches' a reclining woman on a couch) that is inscribed with a curse invoking 'Athtar resembles Asklepios scenes in which patients were healed in the *abaton*, i.e., a sleeping chamber where patients seek a holistic healing in Epidauros, a temple that was attended as a healing sanctuary from approximately the sixth century BC to the third century AD. This perception may provide us with another example of the anthropomorphic manifestations of the South Arabian divinities and their roles.

Etymology of *mḫrb*/*mḫrbt*

Rhodokanakis (1911, 71-80) suggested that the Arabic *miḥrāb* is related to *ḥarbah* (spear)[1] in the sense of a place of pillars (as an analogy to the Prophet's actions using a *ḥarbah* (a spear) as a *miḥrāb* for the prayer,) and as a comparison with the Sabaic root NṢB. Likewise, it can be assumed that a specific place in the ancient South Arabian temples was called *mḫrb* because it has many '*ḥarbah*' (spear) as pillars. Serjeant supported this with the fact that the word *sahm* (arrow) is still used to mean 'a column' in Ḥaḍramawt (Serjeant 1959, 451; cf. Piamenta, 236; Lane, 1455)[2].

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(1) Cf. Sabaic *ʾḫrbm* (spears) in: MAFRAY-al-Miʿsāl 2: 12.

(2) We can also support that idea with the verse "*maḥārīb-u baynahā al-ʿamad-u*" (maḥārīb among which are the pillars) (al-Zabidi, 1965, XIX: 167).

One may wonder whether the same etymological approach can be applied to the Arabic '*sahm*' (shot arrows, drew lots)[1] as a divination practice (Lane, 1454), since Ibn Manzur mentioned the pre-Islamic practice of *al-istihām* (drew lots), derived from the root SHM.

This could also be the case with the Arabic '*qidḥ*' (an arrow before it has been furnished with feathers and a head, used in the game called '*al-maysir*' - sortilege) (Lane, 2493); and the Arabic '*zalam*' (an arrow without a head and feathers: which was applied to those divining arrows … Some say that the '*azlām* are the arrows of the game called *al-maysir*) (Lane, 1247).

Both roots ḤRB and SHM have the meanings of: 'weapon', 'beam' and a divination practice (cf. Qur'an, 37:141); and both QDḤ and ZLM have the meanings of: 'arrow' and 'divination practice' (*al-maysir*), which is mentioned in the Qur'an alongside *al-ʾanṣāb* and *al-ʾazlām*:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالأَنصَابُ وَالأَزْلاَمُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ

فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [Qur'an 5:90.].

However, Robin (1991, 155) suggested more simple explanation, comparing *mḫrb* with *mḫrm* (temple); a sound change *m* to *b* which is found in the South Semitic languages.[2]

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In conclusion, I would like to point out the importance of following social media groups in Yemen, especially Facebook, as many individuals happen to share photos or valuable information about new artifacts, before it finds its way to international auctions, or simply disappear.

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(1) Ibn Duraid said: that the plural of *sahm*, in the sense of portion, is *suhmān*, while the plural of archer's *sahm* is only *sihām*. (1987, II: 862)

(2) I am grateful to Dr. Yusuf Gürsey for this addition.

Photos:
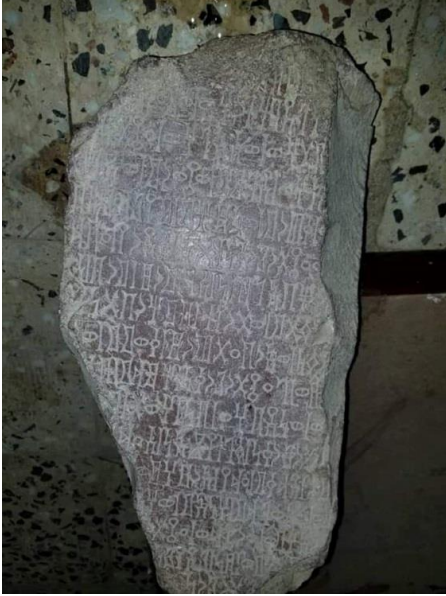
Fig. 1

Fig. 2
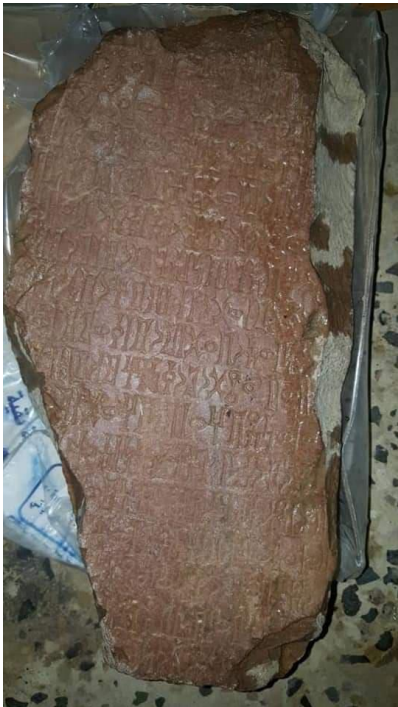
Fig. 3

Abbreviations and symbols

- CIH: = Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum, Inscriptiones Himyariticas et sabaeas continens. Paris: 1889-1932.
- DASI — Digital Archive for the Study of pre-Islamic Arabian Inscriptions DASI http://dasi.cnr.it .
- Ir: al-Iryānī, M. (1990).
- MAFRAY-ad-Durayb: Robin, C. J. & Ryckmans, J. (1980).
- Nāmī NAG: Inscription edited by nāmī, khalīl yaḥyā (1960).
- RES: Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique V–VIII. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1928-68.
- SD: Beeston A.F.L., Ghūl M.A., Müller W.W., Ryckmans J. (1982). *Sabaic Dictionary*. Louvain-la-Neuve–Beirut: Edition Peeters and Librairie du Liban.
- ( )   Uncertain or partial reading.
- (( ))   Variant (alternative reading or interpretation.
- [ ]   Supplied text (restored lacuna).
- [.], [..], [...]   Letter Gap, (unrestored lacuna).
- [… …]   Undefined gap, (unrestored lacuna).
- * *   Correction (because of a mistake in the source).
- —   Broken word.

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When the Past Meets the Future: Archaeology And Contemporary Architecture In AlUla

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Abstract: The ongoing transformation of AlUla, the ancient Kingdom of Lihyan, into a global tourism destination is a cornerstone of the strategy adopted in Saudi Vision 2030. Saudi Arabia intends turning AlUla into the Kingdom's cultural capital.This study explores the link between past and future in the AlUla area:

1- AlUla's illustrious origins will be recalled.

2- The decision of the Royal Commission (RCU) for AlUla to adopt identity for AlUla as a tourist destination.

3- The establishment of the RCU has made the AlUla governorate the most important archaeological site in the world in 2022

4- The blending between contemporary architecture and the surrounding landscape to reflect and enhance AlUla's beauty and inviting visitors to value the tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

5- The challenge to transform AlUla into a world-class destination for cultural and regenerative tourism, rather than mass tourism.

Keywords: AlUla, Archaeology, Contemporary Architecture.

الملخص

عندما يلتقي الماضي بالمستقبل: علم الآثار والعمارة المعاصرة في العلا

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تُعدُّ الأعمال والجهود المبذولة حاليًا في تحويل العلا (لحيان قديمًا) إلى وجهة سياحية عالمية حجر الأساس في استراتيجية رؤية المملكة العربية السعودية ٢٠٣٠، وتعتزم السعودية تحويل العلا إلى عاصمة المملكة الثقافية. تكشف هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين ماضي العلا وحاضرها ومستقبلها، على النحو الآتي:

١– تناول (الإشارة) إلى أصول العلا العريقة.

٢– قرار الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا تبني هوية العلا كوجهة سياحية.

٣– إنشاء الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا جعل منها أهم موقع أثري في العالم عام ٢٠٢٢.

٤– المزج بين الهندسة المعمارية المعاصرة والمناظر الطبيعية المحيطة بها عكست جمال العلا وعززت دعوة الزوار إلى تقدير التراث الثقافي المادي وغير المادي لمدينة العلا.

٥– التحدي المتمثل في تحويل العلا إلى وجهة عالمية للسياحة الثقافية والتجديدية، بدلًا من السياحة الجماعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العلا، علم الآثار، العمارة المعاصرة.

Introduction

The ongoing transformation of AlUla, the ancient Kingdom of Lihyan, into a global tourism destination is a cornerstone of the strategy adopted in Saudi Vision 2030 for making the tourism sector the number two industry behind hydrocarbons: "We will prepare and develop our historical and heritage sites" (p.44).

"Saudi Arabia's gift to the world", "an untold story", "a wonder of Arabia", AlUla has become *the* Saudi destination since September 2019, when the Kingdom started issuing tourist e-visas for 49 countries. ~~And~~ in addition to its tourism ambitions, Saudi Arabia intends to turn Al-Ula into the cultural capital of the kingdom.

This study explores the link between past and future in the AlUla. First, AlUla's illustrious origins will be recalled (Heading 1), as they justify the decision of the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) to adopt sustainability as the guiding principle creating a global identity for AlUla as a tourist destination (Heading 2). Following the visits of the first Western explorers to the area, AlUla has witnessed the arrival of several archaeological missions since the 1960s, regularly involving Saudi and international scholars, and the establishment of the RCU has made the AlUla governorate the most important archaeological site in the world in 2022 (Heading 3). While the glorious past is being unearthed with the aid of the most sophisticated tools now used for preventative surveys, the future has already arrived in AlUla. Contemporary architecture of sensitive and eco-friendly design blends with the surrounding landscape — first and foremost Maraya, but also AlUla's Design Gallery and the International Airport, with the Sharaan resort and the Kingdoms Institute to follow —, reflecting and

enhancing its beauty and inviting visitors to value the tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Heading 4). Also, if the most intriguing discoveries about its mysterious past are perhaps yet to be made, it can be expected that while AlUla is flourishing at the crossroads between the past and the future, the challenge will be to transform it into a world-class destination for cultural and regenerative tourism, rather than mass tourism (Heading 5).

1. The Illustrious Origins

Located in the Medina region, 300 km north of Medina and 1,100 km from Riyadh, AlUla is a living museum covering an area of 22,561 km2 that includes the 52-hectare ancient city of Hegra (Hijr) — also known today as Mada'in Saleh, lying 22 km north of AlUla and 500 km south of Petra, Hegra is Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, listed in 2008, best known for its well-preserved tombs hewn from the rocks — the main city in the southern part of the Nabataean Kingdom; also Dadan (DDN), the ancient capital of the Kingdoms of Dadan and Lihyan; thousands of ancient rock art sites and inscriptions in Jabal Ikmah, an "open-air library", unofficially known as "the whispering canyons"; and AlUla Old Town, a settlement of hundreds of mud brick and stone houses overlooked by a fort and surrounded by a lush oasis. The Old Town was built around the 13th century, reusing the stones of the Dadanite and Lihyanite ruins. Outside of the heritage sites, the desert is dotted with sand-drifted canyons and unique rock formations, of which the latest to be documented, in Summer 2022, is the Fish Rock (Arab News Japan, August 4, 2022).

Pre-eminent Saudi archaeologists having notable expertise in the field of North Western Arabia — and the AlUla region in particular — have been associated with the King Saud University (KSU) in Riyadh, the oldest

university in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula (1957), and studied abroad under government scholarships.

This study draws on the works — where an English translation is available — of three Saudi scholars, and a few others including non-Saudis. The Saudis are: Al Ansary, a faculty member at KSU from 1966 to 1999, considered the pioneering Saudi academic who established the study of archaeology in the country, first by creating an archaeology concentration in the KSU Department of History, and later (1978) setting up a Department of Archaeology and Museology in the same university, which was the first in the Kingdom; Nasif, who authored a pivotal research, published in 1988 by KSU, on the qanats (irrigation systems) in AlUla; and Al Theeb, accomplished interpreter of ancient Nabataean and Aramaic inscriptions in North Western Arabia.

Saudi and international scholars believe that much remains unknown about the past of the pre-Islamic Kingdoms of Dadan and Lihyan. The ancient Dadan is mentioned in the Bible as an oasis kingdom whose inhabitants, the Dadanites, traded in saddle blankets. Dadan was built on the site of a Minaean settlement situated on a vital artery of trade at the northern end of the Incense Road, on the main trading route connecting the south of the Arabian Peninsula with Mediterranean countries. A cultural melting pot, Dadan was a place where traders and travellers could replenish their supplies of food and water.

It is probable, though questions remain, that the Sheikdom of Dadan developed into the Kingdom of Banu Lihyan between the fifth and the fourth century BC.

Nasif (1981) explains that AlUla, under the biblical name of Dadan, was one of the most important centres in Northern Arabia until the first century BC, when the Nabataeans conquered Hegra and occupied Dadan, which was the Lihyanite capital. Under the Nabataeans, the trade route was shifted 15 km east of Dadan, which subsequently declined and fell, with Hegra, 18 km north of Dadan, becoming the main centre of the area (Al Theeb, 2014). When the Romans overthrew the Nabataeans in 106 AD and the trade route was moved from land to sea, Hegra declined. Although the Romans annexed Nabatea, they never reached Dadan; consequently, Hegra was the southernmost outpost of the Roman Empire.

Nasif notes that, according to the classical Arabian writers, the main city in the Dadan area during the jahiliyya and the medieval Islamic period was Qurh, also known as Wadi Al Qura, one night's journey south of Hegra. During the 13th century, with the fall of the Abbasid dynasty and the spread of unrest throughout the Peninsula, Qurh declined and with time its name was forgotten. AlUla, situated 3 km south-west of the ruins of Dadan, became the chief town in the area, and remains so. The valley is no longer known as Wadi-Al Qura, but Wadi-AlUla (p.iii).

Nasif also mentions a seldom reported anecdote: in his capacity as governor of Riyadh (1963-2011), when asked where he would like to live other than in his ancestral hometown, Riyadh, King Salman would answer "AlUla".

Al Ansary explains that the name DDN, as Dadan occurs in many inscriptions and excavations, was derived from the name of the Minaean deity Wud, which means love: "For caravan travellers this love was associated with the moon, their friend and even their deity, and so AlUla

became the town of that love". He adds that in giving the Sheikdom of DDN this name, scholars followed the wording that appears in just one single text, "Mata El Kabeer DDN" (Al Ansary, 1999, 191). Based on excavations and inscriptions, we know that Lihyanite contributions to the development of commerce, writing, arts and architecture were prodigious, to the point that during the centuries when the Kingdom of Lihyan was at its most flourishing, the Gulf of Aqaba was called the Gulf of Lihyan (Al Ansary, 1999, 195).

Al Theeb (1989) points out that in the 19th century several European explorers focused their attention on North Western Arabia — the first European ever to visit Hegra was Charles Doughty in 1876 — and more followed after the construction of the Hijaz railway. The first and most detailed study of the AlUla area was made by the French Dominican fathers Jaussen and Savignac, who visited the area three times between 1907 and 1910 — in the course of which they had to face many difficulties (see: Salles, 1996, 570-571) — and left a meticulous documentation of the tombs and inscriptions of Hegra. In the following decades, Musil and Philby also explored North Western Arabia and left written records of their travels.

Following the expeditions of Jaussen and Savignac however, there was no systematic scholarly activity in AlUla until the 1960s. The mission undertaken in 1962 by Winnet and Reed of the University of Toronto, who uncovered an abundance of epigraphic material, was the first of several missions conducted by Saudi and international archaeologists (p.5).

Moreover, Al Theeb relates that under the umbrella of a comprehensive program of archaeological research launched in 1975 by the Department of Antiquities and Museums of the Saudi Ministry of Education,

missions were sent to North Western Arabia — and to the AlUla area in particular — during the 1970s and 1980s, with Saudi scholars and archaeologists publishing the results of their research (p.6).

By the late 1990s, it was felt that there was much yet to be done, the outlines of the history of Hijaz were still far from clear, and future missions to the area would hold immense promise (Bowersock, 1996).

2. The Royal Commission For AlUla For A Sustainable Development

Saudi Arabia's approach in its plan for the transformation of AlUla into a global tourist destination seems to be much in keeping with a typically Saudi Arabian attitude — documented since the foundation of the modern Kingdom (1932) but dating back centuries — of strong resilience coupled with a propensity for action stemming from a balanced combination of "capacity to aspire" (looking ahead) and "capacity to remember" (looking back), which reflects the UNESCO perspective on the cultural futures of all nations (Pavan, 2014, 37-46).

In 2020 Saudi Arabia appointed a female Saudi royal, Princess Haifa Al Mogrin as the Permanent representative of the Kingdom to UNESCO. A UNESCO co-founder and a member of the Organization since 4 November 1946, Saudi Arabia presently hosts six UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Mada'in Salih (2008), At-Turaif (2010), Historic Jeddah (2014), Rock Art in the Hail Region (2015), Al-Ahsa Oasis (2018) and the Hima Cultural Area (2021). The Kingdom also has ten sites currently on a tentative list of properties that the government intends to consider for nomination, indicative of a strong commitment to the protection of its heritage.

The development of the leisure tourism industry from scratch in Saudi Arabia plays a central role in the comprehensive strategy for economic

diversification envisaged under Saudi Vision 2030, launched in April 2016 by Crown Prince Mohammed b. Salman. The Vision states that tourism and leisure are among the promising sectors due to become new pillars of the Saudi economy: "We will create attractions that are of the highest international standards, improve visa issuance procedures for visitors, and prepare and develop our historical and heritage sites" (p.44). The Saudi leadership is working hard to make the tourism sector the number two industry behind hydrocarbons by 2030.

The transformation of AlUla, and similarly the ongoing giga-projects (Red Sea Project, Ad Diriyah, Qiddiya, Neom), are being pursued with the overarching goal of sustainability (A Sustainable Saudi Vision) as the guiding principle for the human, social and economic progress of Saudi Arabia.

The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU), set up by royal decree in July 2017 and chaired by the Crown Prince, with a board of directors including the Ministers of Culture and Education and a body of Saudi and international experts, was created with the stated goal of protecting and safeguarding AlUla's tangible and intangible heritage, and implementing a "sensitive and sustainable transformation of the region".

The priority given to sustainability permeates the communication strategy of the Royal Commission for AlUla, which is based on ensuring responsible development of "the world's largest cultural oasis and living museum". The AlUla Masterplan, an "ambitious roadmap to protect, preserve and sustainably rejuvenate AlUla, and form the backbone of the world's largest and oldest cultural landscape" (RCU, Journey Through Time Masterplan), is committed to achieving a harmonious coexistence between

nature and humankind, preserving the cultural legacy of AlUla for the world, creating employment opportunities for the local population and delivering sustainable economic growth. The Masterplan aspires to become a global model for responsible development: "Designed by time and shaped by history, fostering cultural dialogue and understanding. Rediscovering perfect harmony with nature. Creating a new legacy for the world" (Alkouatli, 2022).

"Robust" and "resiliency-oriented" policies — zero-carbon strategy coupled with circular economy principles, improved water management, vegetation planting, sustainable agricultural production and off-road policies — are governed by twelve development principles, which include developing light touch tourism, enabling the local community, incorporating imaginative infrastructure, integrating invisible security and embedding resilience, among others.

The Comprehensive development value of the Masterplan, on full completion in 2035, is estimated at over USD 15 billion. AlUla will be able to welcome 2 million visitors a year by 2035, potentially creating 38,000 new jobs for the local population.

3. The Past: Archaeological Missions

As already mentioned, French, British and North American missions have been active in the AlUla area since the second half of the last century, whilst the Saudi school of archaeology, based at the King Saud University, has been conducting well-regarded research and excavations since the inception of the university system in the Kingdom in the 1960s.

Between 2001 and 2005, a team of twenty Saudi and French experts and archaeologists, in collaboration with the Saudi Commission for Tourism

and Antiquities (SCTA), conducted the first comprehensive survey of Hegra (Nehmé, 2004, 631-682), thus reviving a cultural partnership that can be seen as having begun with Jaussen and Savignac. Methodical exploration of Hegra has continued ever since.

The Saudi-French partnership received the endorsement of the Crown Prince in April 2018, when he and Emmanuel Macron signed an agreement of cooperation in Paris; this consisted essentially of multiple agreements between the two ministries of culture, academic institutions, management consultants and heritage organizations. Saudi Arabia pledged to pursue a sustainable development of AlUla, preserving its cultural and natural heritage, and ensuring that the growth of tourism would not affect the preservation of archaeological sites (French and Arabic versions available online at https://www.afalula.com/en/media-gallery/#publications).

AfAlula, the French Agency for AlUla development, was created in July 2018, in the wake of the agreement between the Crown Prince and President Macron. Saudi Arabia and France share a vision to implement a new economic and touristic development model, focused on the absolute preservation of the environment, respectful of history, and inclusive of local populations.

According to its website (https://www.afalula.com/en/), AfAlula is committed to mobilizing the full breadth of French expertise to support the RCU's transformation project for AlUla in the key fields of cultural engineering, archaeology, architecture and urban planning, agriculture and botany, tourism, education, security, water, and sustainable environmental management.

A bilateral meeting in Paris in February 2022 hailed the success of the current French archaeological mission, involving nearly 120 researchers and archaeologists and making the AlUla governorate currently the most important archaeological site in the world (French Ministry of Culture, January 31, 2022). As of 2022 there are, in all, 13 archaeological and conservation project teams from all over the world collaborating with Saudi experts in AlUla (PR Newswire, January 10, 2022).

Under the RCU sponsorship, archaeological missions have expanded steadily and on an unprecedented scale during the last few years.

The AAKSAU And AAKSAK Projects

In 2018, the RCU commissioned the AAKSAU project (Aerial Archaeology in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – AlUla) as part of the Identification and Documentation of the Immovable Heritage Assets of AlUla programme (IDIHA). The AAKSAK project (Aerial Archaeology in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – Khaybar) was commissioned in 2019, after the RCU incorporated certain areas of Khaybar into its remit. Since 2018, consequently, an international team of over 60 experts from the University of Western Australia, King Saud University and Oxford University have been working in a core area of the AlUla Valley and Khaybar Oasis. Initially, the operation took place in an area of 2,800 km^2 (Oxford Archaeology, June 7, 2018), including prehistoric burial remains, early settlements and extensive rock art, but with the use of satellite imagery, helicopter-based aerial photography, ground surveys and excavations, it would spread subsequently to cover an expanse of at least 160,000 km^2.

For four years, the team have taken a multiscalar approach (Dalton et al., 2022, 183-199), deploying the most sophisticated tools now used for

preventative surveys: satellite remote sensing, drones, low altitude aerial photography (cameras suspended from light aircraft), cutting-edge aerial orthophotography, ground surveys, excavation and radiometric dating. Aerial archaeology can ensure that no future building work will encroach on archaeological sites, while subsequent excavations are limited to specific locations.

Providing an adjusted image every two to three seconds, the thousands of pictures measure true distances, then specialist software combines the pictures into a high-resolution, detailed model of the landscape. The light aircraft cameras are set at a 45-degree angle, and in addition, drones are used with cameras set at the same angle; this allows archaeologists to view not only the horizontal plane, but also the vertical to some extent.

In the final stage of the survey, specialist team members go out into the field on foot (Smith, October 3, 2019).

Preliminary findings of the AAKSAU/AAKSAK project have been published in a few academic articles, but unfortunately only two of them afford open access to all scholars. Highlights from the two accessible articles will be presented following the chronological order of their publication.

Thomas et al. (2021) describe their archaeological research on mustatils (from the Arabic word for rectangle), which are among the earliest stone monuments in the Arabian Peninsula. First recorded by surveys in the 1970s, these structures are approximately rectangular in shape (hence the name mustatils, assigned by the RCU), comprising two parallel short walls/platforms linked by two parallel long walls, perpendicularly disposed. Ranging from 20 to 620 metres in length, at present more than 1,000 mustatils are known across an area of 200,000 km² in the AlUla and Khaybar

governorates. Ground-surveyed mustatils reveal key features not visible formerly via satellite remote sensing analysis.

Excavations suggest that mustatils functioned as monumental ritual structures, probably dating back to the late sixth millennium BC, thus predating the first Egyptian pyramids and Stonehenge and making North Western Arabia one of the world's largest monumental ritual landscapes. Aerial and ground surveys have shown that mustatils present significant variations in size, form and complexity, allowing a distinction between simple and complex mustatils. Whatever the dimensions and configuration, they are usually oriented according to local topography.

In situ faunal remains (horns and cranial elements, identified as cattle, sheep, goats and gazelle) can be interpreted as ritual offerings and provide the first evidence for the possible existence of a cattle cult in North Western Arabia during the Neolithic period (6000 to 4500 BC). It is perhaps no coincidence that scenes of cattle herding and hunting frequently appear in the rock art of the region.

Although mustatils are one of the most architecturally homogeneous building traditions identified in the Arabian Peninsula so far, their concentration, scale and form in the AlUla area have no equivalent elsewhere, signifying that North Western Arabia may host the world's oldest ritual landscape (The University of Western Australia, January 14, 2022).

Dalton et al. (2022) discuss the results of the ongoing project with a focus on the funerary avenues, and present several interpretations and hypotheses. Drawing on systematic satellite imagery analysis, hundreds of hours of helicopter-based aerial reconnaissance and photography, radiometric dating and subsequent extensive ground survey and selective

excavations, the team have identified three types of funerary monuments: ringed and un-ringed cairns, small circular towers and, most numerously, tailed pendant structures. The article focuses primarily on these same structures, referred to simply as 'pendants', which are identifiable with a wide variety of seemingly funerary or memorial monuments across the Arabian Peninsula and Levant, having a distinctive head and one or more associated tails.

After the Holocene Humid Period (HHP) in the Arabian Peninsula (8000-4000 BC), arid conditions began to be established, followed by a period of increased rainfall during the early to mid-third millennium BC. Some pendants yield human remains dating to the mid-third millennium BC.

In the RCU's 56.5 km² Khaybar Oasis Core Zone alone, 9,500 drystone funerary structures were recorded, including 2,800 pendants; a density of prehistoric funerary monuments such as this, surrounding some oases, finds no equivalent elsewhere. In all, the research project has identified around 17,300 pendants. They appear to be arranged alongside and oriented — usually perpendicular — in relation to clearly identifiable pathways (funerary avenues), affording a wealth of clues from which to reconstruct past aspects of human mobility, settlements, social structures and, of course, funerary practices.

Funerary avenues are concentrated almost exclusively in the 500x300km region of North-West Saudi Arabia, with Khaybar at the heart of the phenomenon. The avenue-like arrangement of the funeral monuments and their proximity to perennial water sources, plus their concentration in such a vast area, "are likely the outcome of specific mobility, subsistence and settlement strategies, mediated through the opportunities and limitations

of prevailing environmental conditions, and underpinned by complex sociocultural, technological and economic factors" (p.193).

The article observes that prehistoric hydrology and human development of most water sources within the study areas remain unknown. Where associated with funerary avenues, therefore, it is assumed that perennial groundwater was available via shallow wells or natural springs.

Dalton et al. conclude that most aspects of the social life around inter-oasis connectivity in North Western Arabia remain largely unexplored, while bemoaning the widespread ongoing illicit excavation and massive land clearance for agricultural development that damage the cultural heritage of the surveyed areas.

4. The Future: Maraya, And More

Designed by Milan-based Italian visionary architects Giò Forma, Maraya is the world's largest mirrored building, rising from the sand of Ashar Valley like a mirage. It has become the centrepiece of AlUla's growing cultural scene: a fully functioning, 3-storey multi-purpose venue. Besides hosting exclusive events and concerts, it can accommodate business meetings, conferences, functions and weddings.

The iconic Maraya complex, a spectacular example of land-art architecture, forms an integral part of the sustainable approach to the development of AlUla.

Between 2019 and 2021 Giò Forma architects introduced Maraya to the Italian and international media. Some of the ideas behind the design are of particular interest, helping understand the meaning and purpose of Maraya.

Giò Forma explained that the first brief from the client (RCU) was to provide a complex capable of hosting concerts and events in an area of enormous archaeological and scenic value. Accordingly, the mission was one of considering how they might build in such a special place, and wondering how to establish a relationship between the construct and the existing environment in the most respectful way possible. When asked to think in terms of a permanent architecture, their initial response was: "No, it is not possible to build in such a beautiful place".

The biggest challenge was having to place a man-made creation in pure and untouched territory. Creating a site-specific landmark was the key element. The aim was to add something to the past, not to replace it. They were inspired by the genius loci of AlUla's desert, i.e. its distinctive atmosphere, the spirit of the place.

The most successful site-specific buildings all have a particular feature in common: the capacity to blend in perfectly with the environment they occupy, becoming the undisputed focal point but always making the most of the surrounding landscape.

Hence the idea of the mirror: if a building cannot compete with the landscape, it should enhance it. In the case of Maraya, the building becomes a theatre for its natural surroundings, which are the real attraction. The silent and respectful mirror cube finds a way to create a dialogue between nature, history and the future.

Giò Forma made every effort to let the art and the architecture and the sense of place emerge from the place itself. They sought to dialogue with what was there. To be inspired by what was there. It was a man-made vision of living in harmony with a desertscape that is very agile and resilient at the

same time. The environment in which they had to design has a life of its own, even the rocks themselves — they have their own spirituality and identity, they have a presence. They may simply be rocks, but they are very much alive.

It was decided that the cube should be a steel structure, not least in order to benefit from the non-invasive nature of this construction method.

The building is clad with 9,740 m^2 of mirrors, and indoor facilities include the conference hall, which has a seating capacity of 560 and is 26 metres high, a roof terrace, a conference centre, exhibition space and a restaurant. Most notably, Maraya Hall has a stage of Grand Theatre proportions (50m x20m), with a giant retractable window of 800 m^2 that opens onto the surrounding terrain, allowing shows to take place directly on the desert level, where mass-choreography can be staged in a unique in-and-outdoor scenario, blending landscape and entertainment. The automation of the giant window is the main technological innovation of the Maraya Concert Hall and can become part of the scenic movement adopted for theatrical performances.

The interior design favours restraint, with a preference for the use of local materials wherever possible, especially stone, to evoke a construction fashioned from the rock by man and by the wind. Indeed, the interiors feature materials that reflect the natural world, blending with the colours and textures of the landscape. For the decor, the decision was made to design a custom-made tile that would reproduce the spirit and shades of AlUla, like the custom Poltrona Frau seats and terrace materials.

The main concept of Maraya is one of "reflected beauty". The architects made use of "the most beautiful local raw material: the reflecting image that gives life to a container for shows".

Extensive study went into selection of the mirror, which had to ensure degrees of reflectivity and brilliance that would maintain a high level of fidelity to the AlUla colours in the surrounding landscape. A total of 3,000 pre-tempered panels were manufactured locally by Guardian Glass, which adapted its highly durable UltraMirror product to withstand harsh conditions like wind, sandstorms and extreme temperature fluctuations.

The mirror façade was a challenge due to the coplanar proximity of the single panels, which need air passages and cavity space since they tend to expand in high temperatures; to maintain maximum possible visual uniformity, close attention was given to the joints between the panels and the effect that the material would have. A subtle curvature built into the façade means that, from a distance, the building looks like a shimmering mirage of the surrounding panorama, but as visitors move closer, they see their image perfectly reflected.

In the words of the designers: "AlUla is a powerful place, a cultural landscape shaped by nature and humans for millennia, it is not a place upon which to impose an architecture. AlUla guides the designer – if we observe, we will see. If we listen, we will hear. The purpose of design is to contribute to harmony and balance – it is to bring us closer to AlUla and AlUla closer to us." And again, "The reflections (maraya) give an overwhelming balance and a deep sense of the connection of human heritage with nature."

Interestingly, mirrors are playing a more and more important role in Saudi Arabia's new and audacious urban planning projects: in Summer 2022

it was announced that the futuristic zero-gravity vertical city, The Line, will have a mirror façade — The Mirror Line — a glass façade through which eyes on the inside can see out (Designboom, August 11, 2022).

AlUla Design Gallery and The International Airport

To date, the involvement of Giò Forma in the AlUla transformation plan has extended to three other buildings besides Maraya.

They designed the AlUla Powerplant in the Ashar Valley, currently under construction, a completely ventilated building that uses traditional perforated brick to create a spectacular design pattern (Giò Forma, 2022).

With Black Engineering and the RCU Design Team, Giò Forma conceptualized the 500-square-metre AlUla Design Gallery in the AlJadidah district, which was inaugurated in Spring 2022.

The U-shaped building presents an outer skin of Corten weathering steel, and other materials used in construction include glass and polished concrete. The steel frontages are pierced with subtle geometric patterns resembling those of the concrete breeze blocks widely used in the area. This design feature is intended to convey the feeling of transparency and permeability between the interiors of the building and the public realm. Four traditional Al Jadidah patterns were selected, fed into the computer and distributed algorithmically across a grid filling the entire façade (Archilovers, May 19, 2022).

Giò Forma also designed the renovation of the Prince AbdulMajeed Airport (35 km from AlUla).

AlUla international airport opened to international flights in Spring 2021 (Al Arabiya English, March 5, 2021), and is now the fifth largest Saudi

airport, capable of handling 400,000 passengers per year. In keeping with the AlUla Masterplan, it embodies the RCU's approach to development that balances innovation with heritage, arts and culture, while unlocking economic potential to provide new opportunities for the local community.

Besides the expansion that will facilitate the 15,000 aircraft movements per year required to serve the expected 2 million visitors a year by 2035, and the renovation of the main building, with new interior and exterior designs for both arrival and departure halls, the development project included the construction of a VIP lounge terminal, built using local materials and reflecting the picturesque Al-Ula environment, and incorporating structural updates to improve passenger experience (RCU, July 3, 2020).

The Sharaan Resort by Jean Nouvel

With completion expected by 2024, and sustainability as its guiding principle, the Sharaan resort by Jean Nouvel promises to be a truly unique experience for visitors, and a journey through time and space. The concept designs were unveiled in October 2020, presented with the aid of renderings set in the majestic natural surroundings, from which observers can gain a full understanding of the ideas behind the construction.

Embracing the principles of ecotourism, the luxury resort will use emission-free power and set new standards in sustainability. Revitalize, restore and regenerate are the key words.

A resort carved into the rocks and desert of the Sharaan natural reserve, Nouvel's first major example of contextual architecture uses abstraction, sculpting within the landscape itself rather than competing with it. Since the temperature of the rocks is always at 20 degrees, guests can be

welcomed inside without consuming large amounts of energy. The facilities will include 40 suites, 3 villas and a retreat summit centre featuring 14 private pavilions. The resort is inspired by the way the Nabataeans interacted with their environment, exploiting both verticality and horizontality, and reconnected to the earth. The stated aim of the project is to play on the old ways of living to build on the present and meet the challenges of the future.

The resort will serve the wider aim of the Sharaan Nature Reserve, namely becoming a mechanism through which to build relationships at international level, enabling dialogue, collaboration and best practice in the realm of conservation, wildlife protection and environmental restoration (RCU, 2022a).

"AlUla deserves to acquire a degree of modernity", says Nouvel. "Envisioning the future is a never-ending obligation that requires us to be fully alive to places in the present as well as conjuring up the past". And this resort represents an opportunity to create a strong spatial, sensorial and emotional experience on the borders of nature, architecture and art — where the sound, musicality, harshness, tactility, power and complexity of nature are everywhere, from finely chopped stones on balconies to the singular granularity of each rock wall: all becomes an artwork in itself (RCU, October 27, 2020).

The Kingdoms Institute

The Kingdoms Institute, at present active as a research organization running nine core research programs — the Jabal Ikmah Inscription and Rock Art Research Project, the AlUla Cultural Oasis Assessment, the Dadan Archaeological Project and the Digital Survey of Key Heritage, among

others — will open its doors to the public by 2030 on a 28,000 m^2 site in AlUla (RCU, 2022b and 2022c).

The RCU expects that it will become a world-class centre for archaeological and conservation research, the first of its kind in the region, where the archaeological heritage of the AlUla area will finally have the showcase it deserves (see for example: Salles, 1996, 587, on the urgency to re-arrange an already rich, at the time regional museum in AlUla).

The Institute will be dedicated to the study of the history and prehistory of the Arabian Peninsula. It will also feature a university campus. Design work on the future Institute is still in progress, but the word is that it will be a red sandstone structure echoing the monumental works of the Dadan civilization and incorporating all the technological advances in modern archaeology. It is expected that when completed, the Institute will be an inspiring site-specific landmark able to attract scholars and tourists alike.

5. Conclusions: Remembering The Past, Always Looking Ahead

The ongoing archaeological projects in AlUla reveal a vast and enigmatic monumental landscape, suggesting that the Sheikdom of Dadan, and thereafter the Kingdom of the Banu Lihyan, flourished and developed a far more complex and distinctive culture than once thought.

The Royal Commission for AlUla is sparing no efforts to build the transformation of AlUla around the pivotal principle of sustainability, which means that progress must not be at the expense of AlUla's glorious but fragile tangible heritage, and this also reflects the mandate of UNESCO.

There is a strong and steady commitment to reconcile protection and preservation of AlUla's illustrious legacy with a strong focus on the present

— translating first and foremost into job creation for local communities — and an ambitious vision for the future, reflected in the contemporary architecture projects.

AlUla has become a year-round leisure tourism destination offering eco-friendly entertainment opportunities that cater for all tastes, ages and budgets. However, its destiny will be primarily that of a global cultural destination — the recently launched Wadi AlFann initiative, along with others, points to this role (AfAlUla, June 28, 2022) — attracting cultural and regenerative tourism rather than mass tourism.

 AlUla has always been a place of cross-cultural exchange, and the most intriguing discoveries about its largely mysterious past may not yet be made.

Maraya stands in the desert, silent and respectful, reminding the world that unspoiled beauty deserves to be shared and universally enjoyed.

It takes audacity and vision to insert modernity into the past, and although the transformation of AlUla is still a work in progress, it is undoubtedly a promising one.

It is important to raise awareness internationally as concerning the intrinsic historical value of this destination. Accordingly, it would be desirable for all works on AlUla and Northern Arabia authored by past and present Saudi archaeologists and historians to be translated into English and widely circulated. This would also help promote the commitment of the leadership to sustainable development.

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The Intercession with King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud:
An Analytical Study

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Abstract: Intercession is a phenomenon and a social pattern prevalent in ancient and modern human societies. It means meditation with authority to repel harm or bring benefit without concealing what is right or fulfilling what is wrong. Within this context, the topic "Intercession with King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud: An Analytical Study" comes to address some cases of intercession with King Abdul-Aziz, whether he is an intercessor or being interceded. This research is based on the thesis that King Abdul-Aziz's intercession did not only reflect one of the well-known and important aspects of his personality, which is the aspect of tolerance and forgiveness, but it was also related to his wisdom and political and diplomatic statesmanship, which indicated an insightful vision of events internally and externally. Sources indicate that King Abdulaziz was dealing with intercessions that are offered to him with a kind of wisdom and mercy; He would accept or reject it based on what his religion, humanity, and position as a political leader dictated to him. Intercession with King Abdulaziz varied between religious, political, and social, and the people participating in it varied among scholars, rulers, leaders, intellectuals, and others who participated in its various stages, starting with the request for intercession, and ending with its acceptance or rejection. This is what the research is going to deal with in the light of two main sections. The first was devoted to defining intercession and its verdict in Islamic jurisprudence because of its importance in understanding the nature of intercession and its impact on Muslim society. The second section discuses a number of cases of intercession with King Abdul-Aziz.

Keywords: King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud; Intercession; Forgiveness; Interceding on behalf of others; Foreign Relations.

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الملخص

الشفاعة لدى الملك عبدالعزيز آل سعود: دراسة تحليلية

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تعد الشفاعة ظاهرة ونسقًا اجتماعيًا سائدًا في المجتمعات الإنسانية، قديمها وحديثها، وهي تعني التوسط بالجاه لدفع مضرة أو جلب منفعة دون غمط حق أو تتميم باطل. يأتي ضمن هذا السياق موضوع "الشفاعة لدى الملك عبدالعزيز آل سعود: دراسة تحليلية" ليتناول بعض حالات الشفاعة لدى الملك عبدالعزيز، سواء كان شَافِعًا أو مشفوعًا إليه.

ينطلق البحث من أطروحة مفادها أن الشفاعة لدى الملك عبدالعزيز لم تعكس فقط أحد جوانب شخصيته المعروفة والمهمة، وهو جانب التسامح والعفو، وإنما اقترنت أيضًا بحكمته وحنكته السياسية والدبلوماسية التي دلّت على رؤية ثاقبة للأحداث داخليًا وخارجيًا، إذ تُشير المصادر إلى أن الملك عبدالعزيز كان يتعامل مع الشفاعات التي تُعرض عليه بنوعٍ من الحنكةِ والرحمة في آن؛ فكان يقبلها أو يردّها بناءً على ما يمليه عليه دينه وإنسانيته وموقعه كقائد سياسي.

تَنَوَّعت موضوعات الشفاعة لدى الملك عبدالعزيز، ما بين دينية وسياسية واجتماعية، كما تَنَوَّع الأشخاص المشاركون فيها بين عُلماء، وحُكّام، وزُعماء، وقادة رأيٍّ وفِكر، وغيرهم ممن ساهموا بأدوار في مراحلها المختلفة، بدءًا من طلب الشفاعة، وانتهاءً بقبولها أو ردّها. هذا ما سيحاول البحث تناوله في ضوء مبحثين رئيسين، خُصص الأول للتعريف بالشفاعة وحكمها في الفقه الإسلامي لما لذلك من أهمية في فهم طبيعة الشفاعة وتأثيرها في المجتمع المسلم، ثم ناقش المبحث الثاني عددًا من حالات الشفاعة لدى الملك عبدالعزيز.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الملك عبدالعزيز آل سعود، الشفاعة، العفو، بذل الجاه، العلاقات الخارجية.

1- Introduction

Intercession means mediating on behalf of the needy with the people of authority and Power to provide and protect their rights and needs, and shield them against injustice. Allah calls for good intercession and warns us against bad intercession. The Almighty said, "Whosoever intercedes for a good cause will have the reward thereof, and whosoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a share in its burden. And Allah is Ever All-Able to do (and also an All-Witness to) everything".[1]

Thus, Allah, the Almighty, legislated intercession as one an aspect of righteousness that includes calming people and reducing their embarrassment; and relieving their distress. In general, intercession is an established social pattern in all societies throughout ages.

This Paper tackles the issue of intercession with King Abdul-Aziz in the light of a number of questions, most notably: What were the most important intercessions Presented to King Abdul-Aziz, how were they presented, who submitted them, what was his position towards them, what were the consequences and implications, and what were the most important intercessions that he made, in addition to some questions that may have had arisen during the preliminary discussion of each separate intercession. These are discussed after an introduction of the definition of intercession and its verdict in Islamic jurisprudence, as this is important for understanding its nature, evaluating its results, and examining its implications during the reign of King Abdul-Aziz. Then the researcher will summarise his findings at the end of his paper.

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(1) Surat Al-Nisā': verse 85.

It should be noted that the researcher will present quoted texts to some of these intercessions without any intervention limiting himself on commenting on them because of the importance of understanding the purpose of the intercessor and the stages the intercession went through until it reached a positive or negative end.

2- Definition of intercession and its verdict in Islamic jurisprudence

Intercession has several definitions; one of which is duality, i.e. joining between two things which the opposite of singling (al-Watr) when one gives to another something and asks for something in return (Ibn Allan, 2004, 1: 41). In addition, it can also mean mediating, so that a person can gain an earthly or otherworldly benefit or get rid of harm (Al-Ojaili, n.d, 1: 206), and in this way, it is the mediation for the delivery of good or the prevention of evil, whether upon the request of the beneficiary or not (Ibn Ashour, 1969, 5: 143).

It is said to be a request for a favour (Al-Nasafi, 1893, 119), or to grant fame (Al-Mawardi, 1986, 334), and asking the assailed to transgress sins (Al-Atheer, 1979, 2: 485), as it is 'the speech of the interceder to the King in a need he asks for others (Ibn Manzour, 1993, 8: 184). In general, intercession is 'a person's demand from someone else to provide a worldly need for another person'(Alghannam, 1425AH, 2: 25). It demonstrates the status of the interceder to the intercession granter and the delivery of the benefit to the intercession seeker (Al-Qurtobi, 1964, 5: 295). It is the mediation between fame granters and authority owners and asking them to meet the needs of others by giving them their rights and needs or protecting them from injustice (Al-Judaie, 1996, 16).

The interceder is the seeker of intercession that they seek for others; the one for whom intercession is asked and the interceder is called a mediator of intercession. If their intercession is accepted, they are called intercession granter (Ibn Manzour, 1993, 8: 183-184; Al-Fayrouz Abadi, 2005, 1: 733-734).

In Arabic, intercession means combining two things, as a duality that is the opposite of uneven (Al-Faraheidi, n.d, 1: 260-261; Al-Qazwini, 1979, 3 :201; Ibn Manzour, 1993, 2: 291), which is the singular. By combining the intercessor with the intercession granter and supporting them, they became double after they were singular, and in this way, it means adding other people to you and your fame (Al-Qurtobi, 1964, 5: 295). In addition, intercession is normally in the form of a demand or question: A intercedes to B if the second person comes to seek their support (Al-Qazwini, 1979, 3 :201). If someone intercedes to me by enmity, meaning to support someone who is against me or fights against me (Al-Faraheidi, n.d, 1: 262; Ibn Manzour, 1993,4: 184), then it is as if he makes his enemy an intercessor (Al-Qazwini, 1979, 3 :201).

However, the term 'mediation' in the modern era, which refers to intercession, affects the concept of good intercession among many people negatively. Most people believe that mediation is misconduct as it is associated with injustice and giving rights to the unworthy, but the truth is that good mediation is essential for Islam and should be spread in society.

King Abdul-Aziz adopted this concept of intercession when he received the intercessions offered to him. He was aware of using legal opinions that called for accepting good intercession and, following the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), serving public interest,

and refusing anything else. This can be noted in the following examples of intercessions.

3- Intercession with King Abdul-Aziz and its implications

Before listing and discussing intercessions with King Abdul-Aziz, it is worth mentioning that there is a strong bond between a good intercession and justice. The first calls for justice and undermining injustice while the second considers good intercession as a means for spreading and achieving justice. Many accounts demonstrate King Abdul-Aziz's eagerness to establish justice in society (Al-Juraisi, 2008, 88-99; al-Zailai, 2012, 73-79), and he certainly proceeded from this principle when accepting or refusing the intercessions presented to him.

King Abdul-Aziz dealt with the intercessions presented to him with statesmanship sense of experience and mercy at the same time. He accepted or refused them based on the dictates of his religion, humanity and his position as a political leader.

One important document spoke of King Abdul-Aziz's refusal of an intercession requested by the Egyptian minister, Muhammed Ali Allouba Pasha,[1] to pardon the young Saudi national Abdullah Al-Qasimi.[2] This

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(1) Muhammed ʿAli ʿAllouba Pasha was born in Assuit, Egypt, on 1292 AH/1875 AD. He studied law and became a professional lawyer in a law firm. He also held many ministries in Egypt including the Ministry of Endowments in 1925 AD, the Ministry of Education in 1926 AD, the Ministry of State for International Affairs in 1939 AD, and the Minister of Endowments again in 1946 AD in the Government of Al-Nuqrashi. (Alzirikly, 2002, 6: 307).

(2) ʿAbdullah al-Qasimi: ʿAbdullah bin ʿAli Alṣaeidi al-Qaṣimi, a Saudi thinker born in Al-Qasim Province, Saudi Arabia in 1907 AD and moved between Riyadh, Sharjah, Iraq, India and Syria, then settled in Cairo and joined Al-Azhar University on 1927 AD. He is considered one of the most distinguished controversial Figures in the Arab culture milieu throughout the last century, because of

intercession was in the form of a letter sent by the minister to King Abdul-Aziz on the 10th of Rabi' al-Thani 1366 AH/ 3rd of March 1947 AD (Appendix No.1), requesting forgiveness for al-Qasimi. King Abdul-Aziz replied in a letter detailing the case of al-Qasimi, and stated that he would not grant forgiveness unless the latter comes to his senses and realizes his wrong doing (Refaei, 1977, 2:102-104; Appendix No.1).

In his book "Rijāl Wamwāqi"', Muhammed Ali Refaei[1] gave the details of the incident stating 'The man (King Abdul-Aziz) was Keen to his religion, and does not accept any harm to it, and so he does not accept the intercession for a corrupted person, even if he was of a value and respect….. 30 years ago, the latter, Muhammed Ali Allouba Pasha; one of previous Egyptian ministers, told me while we were in his house at Masr al-Gadida, about the intensity of King Abdul-Aziz adherence to his religion' While talking about the view of certain arab leaders towards Islam and its message. He said, 'A Saudi Youngman named Abdullah Al-Qasimi asked for my intervention with King Abdul-Aziz for forgiveness and pardon, and to return him to his care and kindness. So, I wrote to the King asking for his forgiveness, and then I ,soon, received a letter from his majesty, full of care for religion and resistance of its enemies with no mercy or kindness. Allouba Pasha pulled King Abdul-Aziz's letter from the drawer of his desk and gave it to me to read; it was dated 10th Rabi' al-Thani 1366 AH/3rd March 1947 AD'(Refaei, 1977, 2:102-103).

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his sudden intellectual transformation. For more about 'Abdullah Al-Qaṣimi and his thinking, (Abdulraḥman, 2015; Wasella, 2001; Al-Khurayif, 2015).

(1) Muḥammed 'Ali Rafeai: A Journalist, Researcher, and Historian, who studied at the college of Dar Al-'Olum in Cairo. He is described by Ibrahim Al-Ibiary in the introduction of his book as, 'The honest journalist, the trustworthy narrator, and the reliable historian…'. See the Introduction in: (Refaei, 1977, 1: f).

Al-Refaei gave the details of the letter sent by King Abdul-Aziz to Allouba Pasha. It included a clarification of the King's position towards Abdullah Al-Qasimi and how he was fully cared for when he was performing his duties according to religion. However, afterwards, he changed and deviated from the right path and followed the wrong path: 'Since the afore-mentioned was one of our subjects, it became necessary upon us to call him to the truth. If we noticed something affecting religion, we fight it, no matter who the perpetrator was, whether he was al-Qasimi or anyone else. We have called him to reprent and return to the right path, but he did not do so. Therefore, it is impossible for us to forgive the above-mentioned person unless he goes back to the right path and admit his mistake' (Refaei, 1977, 2:104; Appendix No.1). He concluded his letter by saying: 'This is the truth behind the case; we have explained it to your Excellency to be aware of it…'(Appendix No.1).

The previous incident raises many questions, including: why did al-Qasimi choose Muhammed Ali Allouba Pasha to intercede for him with King Abdul-Aziz? And why did the minister accept to intercede on his behalf while knowing that he was a controversial person any way?

The truth is that Muhammed Ali Allouba Pasha had a strong relationship with King Abdul-Aziz. He had come as a member of an Arab delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1934 AD to meet King Abdul-Aziz to mediate between him and the Yemeni Imam; Yahiya Hamid al-Deen (1901–1948 AD)[1] after the war between the two countries commenced (for more about these incidents: Abdulaziz, 1999).

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(1) Yaḥia Bin Muḥammed Ḥamid Aldeen was the ruler of Yemen after the death of his father in Sana'a on 19 Raby' Alawaal 1322 AH/2 June 1904 AD and took the title of Al-motawakel 'Ala Allah. He

On his part, al-Qasimi was well-aware of the intellectual orientation of minister, Allouba Pasha, as he called for the freedom of thought and opinion. He was among the ministerial team resigned during the reign of King Fouad 1 (1868–1936 AD) after the intellectual debate that was inflamed by the book 'Al-Islām wa'auṣūl al-Ḥukm' by Sheikh Ali Abdulrazik,[1] in 1343 AH/1925 AD in support of Sheikh Abdulrazik and a refusal to dismissing him, 'and erasing his name from the records of al-Azhar mosque and other institutes, firing him from every job, cutting of payment of his salaries any where, and disqualifying him from any religious or non-religious public job.[2]

Consequently, al-Qasimi expected that the choice of the Egyptian minister was the right one, and that his intercession with King Abdul-Aziz would bear fruit by the King forgiving and treating him as one of his Saudi Subjects as he used to do in the past.

However, King Abdul-Aziz refused the intercession of minister Allouba Pasha and thanked him for his good intentions after explaining the reasons for his refusal. He summed up by saying that al-Qasimi was a Saudi citizen enjoying the care of the Saudi government when he was a supporter of religion and doing his duties but after he had deviated and harmed religion as this appears in the ideas of his book 'Haḏhi Hiā Al-'Alghlāl', 'these are the shackles', and when he was advised to return to the right path, he refused

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continued to rule for 44 years until he was assasinated on 7 Raby' Alakher 1367 AH/17 February 1948 AD. For more on his biography, (Motahhar, 1998; Zabarah, n.d, 169).

(1) ʿAli Ḥassan ʿAbdulrazek was born in Minia Governorate, Egypt, in 1888 AD. He was educated in Al-Azhar then Oxford and was elected to parliament. He continued to lecture Ph.D. students at Cairo University for twenty years and died in 1966 AD (Alzirikly, 2002, 4: 296).

(2) For the debate raised by the book 'Al-Islam wa Uṣul Al-Ḥukm by Sheikh ʿAli ʿAbdulrazek, see: (Ridwan, 1966, 3–11; Emara, 1971, 90–111).

and insisted on continuing to do so, subsequently, the Kingdom disowned him.

The vision of King Abdul-Aziz, also, appears in his acceptance or refusal of intercessions presented to him in some incidents as explained by Muhammed Abdou Yamani; the former Saudi Minister of information (d: 1431 AH/2010 AD), in his article titled 'Al-Ietidal fi-hayat al-Malik Abdul-Aziz' 'Moderation in the life of King Abdul-Aziz'.[1] He introduced this by saying, 'When King Abdul-Aziz entered Makkah, he was eager to keep religious scholars (Ulama) in their positions and, judiciary, and to respect their views…..but at the end he was the decision-maker if he believed that a certain opinion was in the interest of the nation or the country and does not contradict Islamic sharia' (Yemani).[2]

Yamani also narrates, 'When (King Abdul-Aziz) was in Makkah in al-Ḥamidia, a youth, who was the son of a high-ranking dignitary and scholar, committed a crime, he applied the punishment on him. People wrote to the King, and then his father interceded, but the King refused, and when they repeated their intercession, he ordered the execution of the Punishment and wrote to the man (the father) saying that whoever does a misdeed is not considered a member of your family'(Yemani).

Although, we do not know the name of this young man or his father who was described as 'one of the high-ranking personalities and scholars' and we have no information about the crime committed yet. The case shows that King Abdul-Aziz was very firm in applying punishments to crimes, even if the perpetrators belonged to the religious or social elite of society.

(1) The article was published on the web site of Doctor Muḥammed Abdou Yemani: http://dryamani.com/ar/News.aspx?NID=215#.VDYVOKBOacs

(2) Al-Ḥamidia was the seat of government in Makkah.

We can deduce that the message the King wanted to convey to the public and elite in his country was that he would never accept intercessions, even from his own court as long as it was against sharia, cause corruption, or might spread through its acceptance that the offence was insignificant, and could be repeated, or imitated.

Yamani continues his narrations on King Abdul-Aziz, saying, 'When an Iranian pilgrim committed an offence against the grand mosque in Makkah, by polluting the black stone, the King ordered him to be brough in front of al-Ḥamidia door and had him beheaded without hesitation. Several mediations came, including that of the father of Shah of Iran, but King Abdul-Aziz refused any intercession thereof'(Yemani).

King Abdul-Aziz would never accept an intercession for such an offensive action despite more than one intercession to pardon the Iranian, including one by Shah of Iran himself. King Abdul-Aziz wanted, as usual, to give an example of a ruler who was aware of his position and rank as a king of the land that is the cradle of Islam, the home of two holy mosques. By doing so, he wanted to demonstrate that he was aware of the feelings of Saudi citizens and Muslim pilgrims: 'If the matter come to hurting Muslims or violating sanctities of God, the house of God, the holy mosque, or the Prophet's Mosque, he would never accept, in any way, (any intercession), and he was firm and merciless in punishment'(Yemani).

Yamani also narrates, quoting Prince, Saud b. Abdul-Mohsen b. Abdul-Aziz on the authority of Prince, Sultan b. Abdul-Aziz, when he was the governor of Riyadh, the incident of arresting a Yugoslavian doctor in Riyadh. The doctor held British nationality. Upon searching his house, the authorities discovered maps of Riyadh and the palace of King Abd el-Aziz;

and the King's daily schedule, including: when he goes for Prayers, his return and meeting with his subjects. The King ordered him to be punished, but Prince Sultan interceded and he was, then, sent to Prince Faisal in Jeddah asking him to re-investigate the doctor and do what was deemed appropriate. Subsequently, the doctor was deported out of the country (Yemani).

Among the famous cases of intercession with King Abdul-Aziz was the one involving Faisal al-Dawish,[1] who was one of the leaders of the 'Ikhwan' (Brotherhood) movement, and the chief of the Mutair Tribe. He was injured during al-Sbalah battle[2] and was brought before the King on a handbarrow surrounded by his daughters and wives who were weeping and interceding for him. King Abdul-Aziz was affected and accepted their intercession, and pardoned al-Dawish after he promised to be obedient (Wahba, 1375AH, 276; Phillby, 1994, 484).[3]

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(1) Faiṣal Bin Ṣulṭan Al-Dawish was the Sheikh of Mutair tribe after his father. He was born on 1299 AH/1882 AD, and he was one of the strongest leaders during the reign of King ʿAbdul-ʿAziz. He died in 1349 AH/1930 AD. (Alzirikly, 2002, 5: 166). For more about Faisal Al-Dawish and his wars with King ʿAbdul-ʿAziz, see: (Almane, 1415AD, 109; Alshara, 2011, 11–50).

(2) Sbala battle is a battle that happened on 30 March 1929 AD between King ʿAbdul-ʿAziz and the rebels of 'Ikhwan' Brotherhood under the leadership of Faiṣal Al-Dawish and Ṣulṭan Bin Bijad in Rwadat Al-Sbala. It ended with a victory for the King's troops, and it is considered the last battle the King participated in to establish the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For more about the Sbala battle. (Costner, 1996, 207). Al-Sbala: One of the biggest Meadows in Al-Yamama region in its northern side near Al-Zulfi. (Ibn Khamees, 1978 2: 8).

(3) It seems that King ʿAbdul-ʿAziz paid attention to the services provided by Faisal Al-Dawish for a long time in unifying the country. In this regard, John Phillby says, 'He was brought before the King on a stretcher, so he was awarded Ibn Saud's forgiveness because Faiṣal has served him strongly for long in the path of the religion of God… and he Could have been able then to live and die in peace among his family'(Phillby,1994, 484). King ʿAbdul-ʿAziz knew the Status of Faiṣal Al-Dawish, and the old relations between them, Ḥafez Wahba, in this regard, says, 'The King considered him an old friend and one of his greatest leaders. He does not sit except besides the King… and when he askes to return

The key reason that motivated King Abdul-Aziz to grant pardon to al-Dawish was the latter's bad injury. He also sympathized with Al-Dawish's wives and daughters.[1]

There might have been a political purpose for King's acceptance of this intercession because by forgiving Faisal al-Dawish he wanted to send a message to the Brotherhood' 'Ikhwan' rebel leaders that they may be granted forgiveness as well if they turned themselves (Almane, 1415AH, 147–148).

However, King Abdul-Aziz's acceptance of intercession on behalf of Faisal al-Dawish in the hope that he spend the remainder of his life in peace had negative effects. As a result of the decision, the country experienced a period of disorder and insecurity for another eight months.

After al-Dawish recovered, he felt unease towards King Abdul-Aziz and thought that the king might arrest and jail him; so he rebelled and left al-Artawia.[2] He roamed the area between Kuwait and Hasa and attracted a large number of Brotherhood members from the tribes of Mutair, Utaiba, and al-ʿujman. They caused havoc and disorder all over the country and almost cut off traffic between Makkah, Riyadh, and the Gulf (Alshara, 2011, 26).

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to Al-Artaweia, he submittes to the King a list of requests starting from wells ropes… to weapon, and clothes for him and his children and wives'. See: (Wahba, 1375AH, 299).

(1) Muhammed Al-Maneᶜ mentions that one of the traditions of accepting defeat by the defeated in desert wars was that his wives to be hosted by the victor for 3 days, therefore Faiṣal Al-Dawish's wives stared in the camp of ʿAbdul-ʿAziz for three days after the Sbala battle and before Faisal's surrender: 'It was traditionally agreed upon that the women of the defeated tribe should be given food and a tent and they shall not be harmed because they are in the hospitality of their host (Almane, 1415AD, 147–148).

(2) Al-Artawia: A settlement established by ʿAbdul Moḥsen Bin ʿAbdullah ʿAbdulkareem on 1328 AH/1910 AD. Later Faiṣal Al-Dawish and some of his relatives settled there on 1335 AH/1916 AD. It is located 260 Kilometres to the north of Riyadh (Al-Madi, 2010, 64–66).

King Abdul-Aziz started to deal with the situation created by the Brotherhood rebellion for the second time, and so he strengthened the garrisons in Hasa, al-Qatif and Hail. He, also, fought the Brotherhood in more than one battle, and this ended in their defeat; while, Faisal al-Dawish and some of his followers retreated to the British Consulate in Kuwait, requesting asylum but they were handed over to King Abdul-Aziz, in January 1930 AD (Al-Juraisi, 2008, 17-177).

When examining cases of intercession with King Abdul-Aziz, an important personality come to light immediately. That is his sister, Princess Nourah b. Abdul-Rahman who had a very close relationship with him and used to intercede for many people, in particular, for those who had problems to be solved (Wahba, 1375AH, 289; Al-Mane, 1415AH, 159–187). The King never refused her intercessions, apart from a few cases that were hard to accept.

One example of these was the request from Sheikh Abdul-Rahman b. Saleh Al-Marshad's[1] mother, Latifa b. Ateeq,[2] to Princess Nourah to intercede with the King not to send her only son, Abdul-Rahman, to the war in Yemen. The Princess informed the King, and because of the latter's knowledge of the man's importance and ability to do the task assigned to him, he told her, 'If you interceded for Ibn Marshad, who then would I send?' Consequently, he refused her intercession (Al-Harbi, 1999).

Sometimes, requests of intercession presented to King Abdul-Aziz to went beyond the borders of his country. As a sign of the deep relations between the King and the ruler of Qatar, Sheikh Qasim b. Muhammed Ãl-

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(1) The researcher has not found a biography for Sheikh ʿAbdurraḥman b. Ṣaleh Al Marshad.

(2) The researcher has not found a biography for Mrs. Laṭifa Bint ʿAtiq.

Thani (d: 1331), the King did not accept intercessions or requests of forgiveness for individuals or families who committed misdeeds except for those from Sheikh Qasim.[1]

This happened when Sheikh Qasim interceded for the release of members of al-Bassam's Family, including Sheikh Abdullah Abdul-Rahman Al-Bassam (Al-Bassam, 1419AH, 5: 407–408), when their residency was limited to Riyadh for sixteen months after King Abdul-Aziz annexed Onaiza city in 1322 AH/1904 AD, and appointed a member of al-Sulaim family as a governor (Al-Thani, 1389AH, 36). Consequently, fifteen of al-Bassam's family members were transferred from Onaiza to Riyadh in the month of Safar 1322 AH/1904 AD（Al Bassam, 1419AH, 5:407-408）.

Several high-level authorities sought to intercede for them, including Al-Shareef Awn Al-Rafeek, the Ruler of al-Hijaz (1256–1323 AH/1841–1905AD) (Al-Dhukayr, 3:32), but only Sheikh Qasim al-Thani's endeavours succeeded(Al-Bassam, 1419AH, 5: 408).[2]

Some details regarding another intercession of Sheikh Qasim were mentioned in reciprocal messages between the Sheikh and King Abdul-Aziz (Al Bassam, 1419AH 5:407-408).[3] This was an intercession for a number of al-Hazazina or al-Hazzani family who were the princes of al-Hareek

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(1) The relationship between Sheikh Qasim Āl-Thani and King ʿAbdul-Aziz was characterized by depth, goodwill, and mutual respect. The impact of this relation was reflected on the intercessions of Sheikh Qasim with King ʿAbdul-ʿAziz. For more on the relationship between the two leaders. See: (Asaker, 2011, 19–28).

(2) for more on the details of this incident, See: (Al-Shiḥ ā, 2006 AD, 192-200).

(3) For more about the details of these messages and commenting on them, see Sheikh ʿAbdurraḥman Bin ʿAbdullah Al-Maḥmoud's article. http://www.qatarshares.com/vb/showthread.php?581130; (Al-Obeid, Manuscript, 2:160–162).

city[1]. Eleven of them were arrested, including Rashed b. Abdullah Al-Hazzani,[2] and put in prison by King Abdul-Aziz, then he accepted his intercession and released them(Al-Obaeid, Manuscript, 1:312–315).

The Imam of Yemen, Yahia Hameed al-Deen, also, interceded with King Abdul-Aziz to forgive al-Idrīsis[3] who fled to him after their revolt in Jazan in 1351 AH/1932 AD, under the leadership of al-Hassan al-Idresi.[4] The King accepted his intercession in a letter sent[5] to the Imam in which he secured their blood, money, and honour. He, also, assigned an amount of

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(1) Al-Hareek is atown located above Naam valley. 170 km south of Riyadh. It is Known for its agricultural Products especially dates and Fruits. (Ibn Khamees, 1978, 1: 312–315).

(2) Rashed bin ʿAbdullah bin Rashid Al-Dahmali Al-Hazzani was one of the Princes of Al-Ḥareek. He became the ruler of the town following murder of the Emir Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Hazzani in 1325A.H./1907 A.D. Following long events against King ʿAbdul Aziz, he was captured along with members of his family and imprisoned in Riyadh until Shaikh Qasim Āl-Thani, ruler of Qatar interceded for them with the King who released them. they went To Qatar and stayed there for over two years. Later they were hosted by the Sheriff of Mecca and remained there until King Abdul Aziz entered Mecca in the year 1343 A.H./1924 A.D. when he concluded a Peace with them. Information Provided by Eng. Abdul Rahman bin Abdul Mohsen Al-Hazzani, Riyadh, Saturday 27.7.1444 A.H./ 18.2.2023 A.D.

(3) The Idresis are the descendants to Mr. Aḥmed Al-Idresi who came with some members of his family from the city of Fez in Morocco to Makah in 1214 AH/1799 AD, and then he moved to Ṣabia, near Jazan city in 1242 AH/1829 AD. He started to establish his family until his death in 1253 AH/1837 AD and was followed by a number of sons and grandsons. The most famous was Muḥammed Bin ʿAli Al-Idresi (1327 AH/1908 AD–1341 AH-1923 AD) who was the real founder of the Idresi Emirate in Tuhama, Asir. (Al-Maddaḥ, 2007, 85; Al-Jumaie, 2004, 343–382; Malkawi, 2001, 145–147).

(4) Al-Ḥassan b. ʿAli Al-Idresi ruled the emirate after his nephew ʿAli Bin Muḥammed abdicated to him on 1345 AH/1926 AD and continued until he rebelled against Saudi rule that ended with his defeat and retreat to Yemen in 1351 AH/1932 AD. (Al-Jumaie, 2004, 369; Malkawi,2001, 152).

(5) This was mentioned in the security letter sent by King ʿAbdul-ʿAziz saying: 'He secures Al-Ḥassan and his followers for their blood and honor, and that he will not be punished for all that happened in the past and he will be a dear brother to him'. (Saʿeed, 1934, 605).

2,500 Riyals per month for Hassan al-Idresi for his livelihood (Al-ʿOqaili, 1982, 1054; Al-Juraisi, 2008, 135–138).[1]

It is noteworthy from the previous cases that forgiveness and tolerance were essential characteristics of the Personality of King Abdul-Aziz. He had no objection to the release of his opponents especially when the intercessor is someone close to him, such as Sheikh Qasim al-Thani, who was highly respected by him to the point that the King used to address him in his letters by the respected, honourable father, Sheikh Qasim b. Muhammed al-Thāni Al-Obaeid, Manuscript, 1:162).

Another type of intercession related to King Abdul-Aziz was when he was the intercessor and not the intercession receiver. He sent a telegram to the Ottoman Ministry of Interior, the Assembly of Interiors at the time, on the fourth of the month of Jumada al-Awwal 1327 AH/23 May 1909 AD to intercede for a fair trial for two notables of Nejd. Ibrahim and Ahmed, the sons of Abdullah Al-Ibrahim Al-Rashed,[2] were accused of murdering Khaled al-Awn, the Sheikh al-Zubair.[3] The King also requested that the trial be held in Baghdad not in Basra as the integrity of the evidence submitted to the court were questioned because they were forged by Ibn

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(1) For more details on the letters of Yemen Imam Yaḥya Ḥamid Al-Deen with King ʿAbdul-Aziz about forgiving the Idresis, see: (Ṣawt Al-Hijaz Newspaper, 1933, 1).

(2) Abdullah Al-Ibrahim Al-Rashed took the leadership of Al-Zubair in 1304 AH/1887 AD and continued, until he abdicated under the consultancy of the Al-Zubair people, to Abdullah Bin Ahmed Al-Battaḥ but not for long as he was killed in 1314 AH/1898 AD. The sons of Abdullah Al-Ibrahim were accused of killing him, which led ʿAbdullah to leave Al-Zubair to Kuwait. See: (Al-Bassam, 1971, 118–119).

(3) Khaled Bin ʿAbdulaṭif Bin Muhammed Al-ʿAwn took the leadership of Al-Zubair in 1314 AH/1898 AD and was granted the title of Pasha. He was killed in Basra in the month Shawwal 1325 AH/November 1907 AD. See: (Al-Bassam, 1971, 119-120).

Rasheed's followers[1] who enjoyed the support of Khaled al-Awn and had many followers with influence residing in Basra (Saban, 2012, 47–49).

Ottoman Judicial circles were not convinced with the motives for transferring the accused to Baghdad for trial. The Sublime Porte memorandum submitted to the Ministry of Justice indicated that the accused were arrested because they murdered the Sheikh of al-Zubair, Khaled al-Awn and some of his companions. It also indicated that their trial will be held in Basra not Baghdad due to the difficulty of transferring witnesses, and to prevent the prolongation of the trial, while ensuring fair trial for both of them (Saban, 2012, 50–53).

In another case the details of which may indicate that King Abdul-Aziz interceded with the Ottoman state to prevent a violent action against two families from al-Hasa who were involved in fighting over internal dispute when the region was affiliated with the Ottoman state at the time. The details were stated in a memorandum sent from the Ministry of Interior to the Sublime Porte in the 19th of the month of Sha'ban 1326 AH/September 1908 AD. King Abdul-Aziz intervened to mediate for reconciliation between the Ãl-Awda and Ãl-Mehana Families,[2] and guaranteed the compliance of the two of them to the orders of the state. Therefore, the situation subsided, and the Ottoman state accepted the King's guarantee and intercession (Saban, 2012, 45–46).

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(1) Abdulaʿziz Bin Muteib Al-Rasheed ruled Hail after his uncle Muhammed Bin Abdullah Bin Rasheed from 1315 AH/1897 AD. He died in the battle of Rawdat Muhanna in 1324 AH/1906 AD. (Alzirikly, 2002, 4: 5; Almane, 1415AH, 59–63).

(2) The tension between the two families of Al ʿ Awda and Al Munha goes back to old revenge conflicts that started in 1295 AH/1878 AD. (Al-Subaie, 1999, 64).

These are some examples of intercessions with King Abdul-Aziz, whether they were inside Saudi Arabia or beyond its borders, either in their topics or the people involved in them including intercession seekers, intercessors, or intercession receivers. This reflects the remarkable internal and external role of intercession in some important incidents throughout this period. In addition, it assures the importance of intercession with King Abdul-Aziz and reflects how the concept of forgiveness and tolerance was integral part of the King's character.

4-Conclusion

This paper presented a number of irtercession cases with or by King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud. They varied between religious, political, and social. The intermediaries were personalities in political and social positions at the time and included ministers, princes, judges, Sheikhs, and scholars.

King Abdul-Aziz Al Saud dealt with the intercessions presented to him with wisdom and mercy, simultaneously. He accepted or rejected them based on religion, humanity, and his position as a political leader.

Intercessions with King Abdul-Aziz showed how he met people's needs and helped them. He sat in the morning of every day in his office and received people who came to him with their issues and needs. He listened to the needs of his people with great acceptance and ease, and subsequently, intercession was highly important to him.

This paper demonstrated that there was a consistent approach followed by King Abdul-Aziz in his acceptance or rejection of intercessions presented to him. He took into account that the intercessions needed to be consistent with Sharia and did not violate the values and traditions of the country. Therefore, he rejected certain intercessions for criminals because he

believed that the necessity of their punishment needed to set an example for other people, regardless of the status of the intercession seeker or their position. The King accepted intercession if he found that it was a merciful act that supported the justice and welfare of the country and his people.

Intercessions with King Abdul-Aziz were important internally and externally; for example, he interceded with the Ottoman state in some cases and accepted the intercession of some Arab leaders such as Sheikh Qasim al-Thani, the ruler of Qatar, and Yahia Hamid al-Deen, the Imam of Yemen. His actions were born from his firm belief in the values of tolerance and forgiveness, and his conviction in the positive impact of the results of these intercessions, both internally and externally.

Appendix1.

Zincographic copy of the King's letter to minister Allouba Pasha

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

No. 21/1/58/10549

Date.10/04/1366

From Abdul-Aziz b. Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal to his excellency Muhammed Ali Allouba pasha (God bless him)

Peace and mercy of God be upon you. We have received your Excellency's letter dated 27 Rabia Al-Awwal 1366 and took note of what you stated therein. We thank you for your sentiments and good intentions and want to explain to you the truth behind the case of Abdullah A-Qasimi.

Your Excellency knows that the aforementioned is one of our citizens and we gave him our help and support and took full care of him without default when he was doing his duties towards his religion. However, he,

lately, deviated from the right path and published his book "Hadhi Hia Al-Aghlāl" (These are the shackles), which he filled it with what affects religion and violates Muslims' faith. Since the abovementioned is one of our citizens and close to us, it has become imperative upon us to call him to follow the right path and as far as our concern when we see something affects religion, we fight it no matter who the doer was, whether he was al-Qasimi or anyone else. We have called him to repent and return to the right path, but he did not. Therefore, it is impossible to be pleased with the aforementioned unless he returns to the right path and wrongs himself. You know that we are not fanatic in useless matters as there are many printed books full of corrupted beliefs, but when one of our citizens and followers issues a book like that we cannot stay silent and we disown him to God. If al-Qasimi returns to the right path, he is welcomed; otherwise, it is not. Your Excellency knows that our faith is as clear as the sun and we don't accept or agree to any violating or replacement of it. This is the truth behind the case. We have explained this to your excellency to be aware of it. May God protect us and you and grant peace.

وهذه صورة زنكوغرافية لكتاب الملك :

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الرقم ١٠٥٤٩/٥٨/١/٢١
التاريخ ١٣٦٦/٤/١٠

من عبد العزيز بن عبد الرحمن الفيصل الى صاحب السعادة محمد على علويه يا ابنا سلمه الله
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته • وبعد فقد تلقينا كتاب سعادتكم المؤرخ ٢٧ ربيع الاول ١٣٦٦
واحطنا علما بما جاء فيه • ونحن اذ نشكر لكم عواطفكم وحسن مقاصدكم نحب ان نوضح لكم حقيقة
قضية عبد الله القصيمي •

تعلمون سعادتكم ان المذكور هو من رعايانا ونحن الذين احطناه بمساعداتنا ومعاونتنا وكنا
تعنى بامره العناية التامة ولاقصرنا عنه فى شى • حينما كان يقم بواجبه نحو دينه ولكنـــه
حاد اخيرا عن سبيل الحق وتكب الطريق السوى قاصد كتابه (هذه هى الاغلال) الذى ملأه
بما يمس بالدين ويخالف عقيدة المسلمين ولما كان المذكور من رعايانا وخاصتنا صار لزاما علينا
ان ندعوه الى الحق ونحن اذا رأينا امرا يمس بالدين قاومناه ولانبالى ايا كان الفاعل سواء كان
القصيمى اوغيره وقد دعوناه الى التوبة والرجوع الى الحق ولكنه لم يفعل • لذلك فمن المستحيل
ان نرضى عن المذكور الا اذا رجع الى الصواب وخطأ نفسه • وتعلمون اننا لسنا ممن يتحمسون
فى امور لافائدة منها اذ ان هنالك كتبا لاتحصى مطبوعة مشحونة بالعقائد الفاسدة اما ان يصدو
مثل ذلك من احد رعايانا ومن ينتسب الينا فلا نقدر على السكوت عليه ونبرأ الى الله منــه
فالقصيمى اذا رجع الى الصواب كان بها والا فلا • وسعادتكم تعلمون عقيدتنا هى واضحة
مثل الشمس ولانقبل ولا نوافق على مسها او تبديلها هذه هى حقيقة القضية شرحناها لسعادتكم
لتكونوا على بينة منها تولانا الله واياكم بعنايته وتوفيقهوا السلا،

Refaei, *Rijāl Wamwāqif*, p.102–104

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