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Foreword



The National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) represents the “memory of the nation” by documenting, preserving and promoting national interest in the UAE’s centuries-old rich history and heritage.

A key event of the 40th anniversary celebrations of the NCDR in November 2008 was the International History Conference on the theme “New Perspectives On Recording UAE History”.

The papers presented in the conference covered a diverse range of subjects related to the history and heritage of the Emirates from the prehistoric period up until the establishment of the Federation of the UAE in 1971.

Knowledge shared is knowledge gained. Drawing some of the best intellects from around the world and within the country, this forum provided excellent opportunities for fostering intellectual interaction amongst archaeologists, historians and academics specializing in the history and culture of the UAE and the Arabian Gulf.

I thank all the scholars for their important contributions which should be an invaluable learning experience for researchers, scholars and interested readers in the UAE and should lay the groundwork for research co-operation worldwide.

Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Presidential Affairs
Chairman of the NCDR

Our History, Our Identity

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this volume comprising the proceedings of the International History Conference organized by the National Center for Documentation and Research (NCDR) under the patronage of H.H. Shaikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Presidential Affairs and Chairman of the NCDR.

New ideas and viewpoints based on authentic records and documents form the intellectual lifelines of a nation's history. With this objective in view, the NCDR chose "New Perspectives On Recording UAE History" as the theme of the conference.

The papers presented in the conference by national and international scholars from multi-disciplinary fields offered valuable insight into the latest researches on the history and heritage of the UAE from prehistoric times up to the establishment of the Federation.

The stimulating debates and the interest aroused during the conference sessions encouraged us to proceed with the publication of the proceedings. Furthermore, in order to widen the scope of understanding and dissemination of these scholarly presentations, we undertook the task of translating the papers from English to Arabic and vice versa. This proved to be a painstaking task in view of the relatively short time at our disposal. We apologize for the errors that may have escaped the 'rigorous filters' to which the publication has been subjected.

We sincerely hope that this volume authored by some of the best experts from around the world and within the country, will be appreciated by researchers and readers alike.

In conclusion, we must record our sincerest thanks to H.H. Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, H.H. Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, H.H. Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, and H.H. Shaikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Presidential Affairs and Chairman of the NCDR, for their active encouragement and unfailing support to the cause of historical research in the UAE.

Abdulla Mohammad El Reyes
Director - General

Conclusion

In the archaeological discoveries in Mleiha, documents were written on various materials such as bricks, copperware, stones and pottery. From these we can establish a structure for religious beliefs through the names of gods; Wad, Shams, Kahl, Manat, al-Llat and Kutibi. This diversity in worship bears witness to religious pluralism in one area, although chronologically such discoveries are not too far apart.

As far as proper nouns cited in the texts are concerned, we find names like 'Abdain, Aous, Thi Bint, Chamtkutibi, 'Umro' al-Shams and Wahab al-Llat. Regarding the compound name 'Umro' al-Shams, the word 'Umro' may be Aramaic and means a man, like 'Umro' al-Qais. This implies that the inhabitants of the area used some Aramaic words which nevertheless were written in al-Masnad handwriting. Thus, we can conclude that the handwriting on the bronze containers might have been added in another region, probably Yemen.

The importance of such documents lies in the fact that they documented the name of an area in UAE, that is, Muki. This name could be a corruption of the name of the area mentioned in Mismaric writings, Majan or Makan.

Mleiha is the most important archeological site for inscriptions in the United Arab Emirates. Even though some inscriptions suggest that they may be Thamudic writings, this still requires a great deal of research.

Introduction

This report provides an introduction to the archaeological sites known on Sir Bani Yas island. After discussing the environmental and geological setting, the history of archaeological research on the island is outlined. The chronology of human settlement is evaluated based on archaeological evidence retrieved from both surveys and excavations conducted since 1992.

Please note that all dates cited in this report are given as "CE" = common era, or "BCE" = before the common era.

The island of Sir Bani Yas is located 170kms west of Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (FIGURE 1). It lies 9kms offshore from Jebel Dhanna. The island is 17.5kms from north to south and 9kms from east to west. The bare mountains in the central area of the island rise to a height of 148 m.

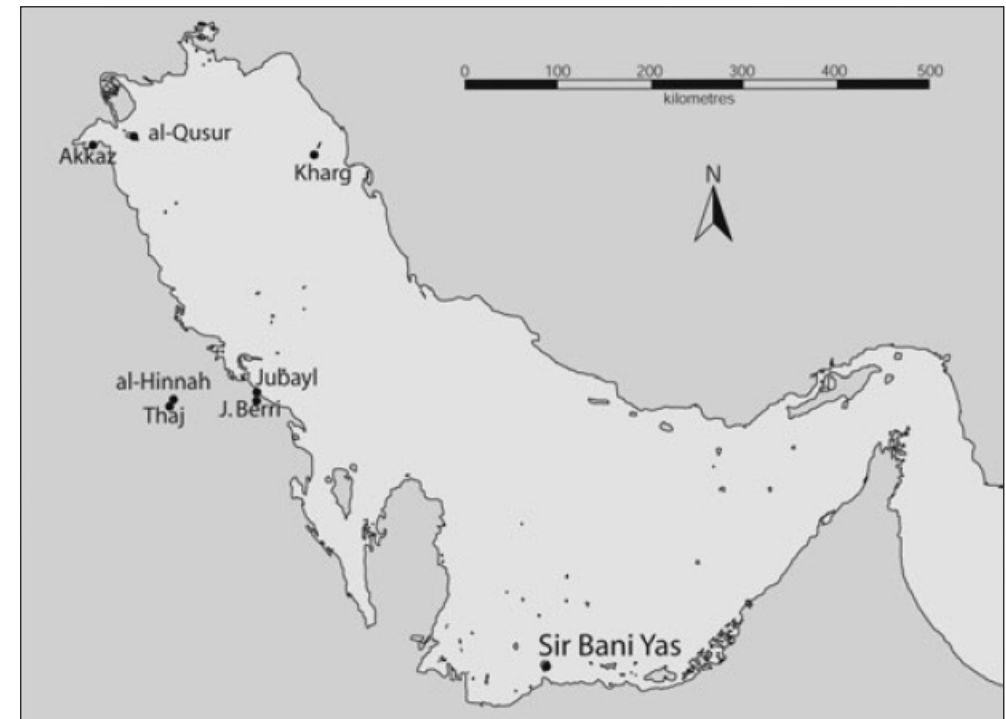


FIGURE 1. Location of Sir Bani Yas and other Christian sites in the Gulf (after Carter 2008: 72, Fig.1).

Geology of Sir Bani Yas Island

The island is a salt dome island which is very similar geologically to Jebel Dhanna. Since the mid-Cretaceous (c.100 million years ago), local topographic highs (and major structural traps for petroleum) have been created by salt domes rising from thick Cambrian salt deposits that underlie many areas of the southern Arabian Gulf (Aston 1985). These salt deposits lie at depths of more than 6,000m. After a prolonged surge in late Cretaceous times, the salt column neared the surface and in early Tertiary times formed a local sea floor hump. In Miocene times, approximately 15 million years ago, as the layers of sediment accumulated, they all thinned over this hump. Then in late Miocene times the pillar gave a gentle upward surge of movement, and arched up these (Lower Fars) sediments. They were rapidly eroded but two small rafts remain on the tip of the salt dome within the mountains on Sir Bani Yas. Today the original salt layer is probably more than 6000 metres below sea level and the column of salt reaches from there up to the surface. It is about 3000 metres wide and has penetrated the topmost layers of sediment- forming mounts up to approximately 150 metres high.

When the salt reaches the surface it is mostly dissolved - a small salt cave exists on the island today - but the associated sediments, often rocks and minerals which have been brought up from the great depths within the salt, are left as an insoluble cap. These insoluble rocks form hills of beautiful colours - mauves, greens, yellows, reds and oranges.

The salt pillar mountains are composed of masses of gypsum, sometimes crystalline, sometimes as amorphous mats. Although gypsum is normally a colourless or white mineral, contact with the iron has tainted it yellow-orange-red and deep brown. Iron ore is also common. It is a type of haematite (Fe_2O_3) called specular iron ore. It occurs as flaky or platy crystals of a brightly shining, metallic-looking, heavy mineral. The flakes break off easily and frequently form a glittering, sparkling blanket along the narrow wadis among the mountains.

Areas of green or mauve shales, siltstones and sandstones and of very rotted dolomite and of yellow ochres are common. Hard crystalline volcanic rocks, particularly feldspathic lavas and porphyries, are also present. Small amounts of crystalline sulphur apatite (a complex calcium phosphate), geodes of silica (cavernous nodules whose interiors are lined with tiny quartz crystals or agate) also occur.

Today these salt domes are responsible for certain coastal hills, such as Jebel Dhana and Jebel Ali, and for many of the UAE's offshore islands, such as Sir Bani Yas, Das, Zirku, and Sir Abu Nu'air.

History of Sir Bani Yas Island

Sir Bani Yas has been mentioned in European sources since 1590 when the Venetian jeweller Gasparo Balbi listed 'Sirbeniast' as an island around which pearls were found. It was described in some detail during the 1820s and 1850s by British naval officers surveying the lower Gulf waters.

Local tradition has it that salt used to be mined on the island, as was kohl, a powder

made from ground antimony ore and used as an eye-cleansing agent.

From the late 1980's the island was completely transformed by the late President HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan through a programme of tree planting coupled with the introduction of gazelle, oryx, llama, rhea, giraffe, ostrich and various other species of both birds and animals. The original inhabitants of the island were resettled either on Dalma island or on the mainland.

Today the island is managed by the Tourism and Development Investment Company (TDIC) who have extensive plans for further development of the island. A hotel is already open at the northern end of the island which is open to visiting eco-tourists who may make safari tours around the island to see the animals. TDIC has further plans to develop the island.

History of Archaeological Research

Archaeological investigations carried out since 1992 have discovered a total of 86 locations with archaeological finds/remains on the island.

A team from the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey, ADIAS, carried out the first comprehensive archaeological survey of Sir Bani Yas island between the 25th to 30th March 1992 (Hellyer 1993; King and Hellyer 1994; King 1998). This survey identified a total of 36 major sites, described as SBY1 – SBY36. Sub-sites or components of these sites were allocated additional numbers, e.g. SBY2.1 & SBY2.2.

The 1992 survey concentrated on systematic fieldwalking and mapping of the

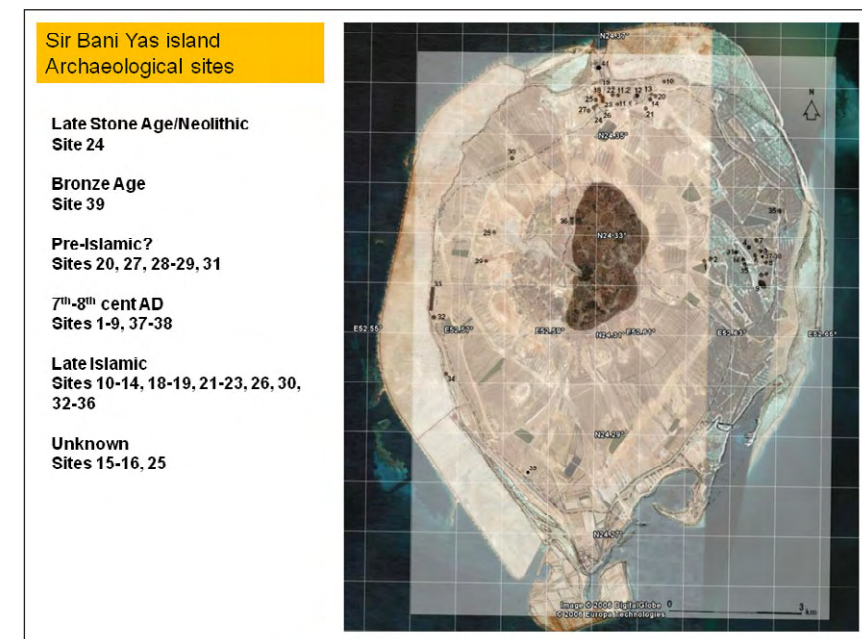


FIGURE 2. Location of Archaeological Sites on Sir Bani Yas (Source: ADIAS/Google Earth).

distribution of archaeological sites across the island. This resulted in the production of a basic map of the location of sites (FIGURE 2). A number of additional sites (SBY37 – SBY41) were then recorded during subsequent fieldwork which took place on the island between 1993-5 (King et al. 1995).

This survey identified a particular important group of sites located on the eastern side of the island between the foothills and coastal plain, in an area known as Al-Khawr, which were to prove to be of great interest. These were sites SBY2, SBY3, SBY7 and SBY9 (FIGURES 3-7).

Work subsequently carried out in 1993 concentrated on completing the survey of the island, together with the excavation of SBY3, a courtyard house, located inside the llama pens. The excavation was directed by Dr Joseph Elders, together with Katrin Gundel. The 1994 excavation season saw the completion of the excavations at SBY3, and the initiation of excavations at SBY9, the church and monastery. Excavations at SBY9 were directed by Dr Joseph Elders, together with Dr Mark Beech and John Martin. The 1995 and 1996 excavation seasons concentrated on the investigation of sites SBY2 (water cistern and associated buildings), SBY7 (courtyard house) and mainly on the completion of the excavations of the church at SBY9. Excavations at SBY2 were directed by Salvatore Garfi, at SBY7 by Elizabeth Popescu, and at SBY9 by Dr Joseph Elders, Dr Mark Beech and John Martin.

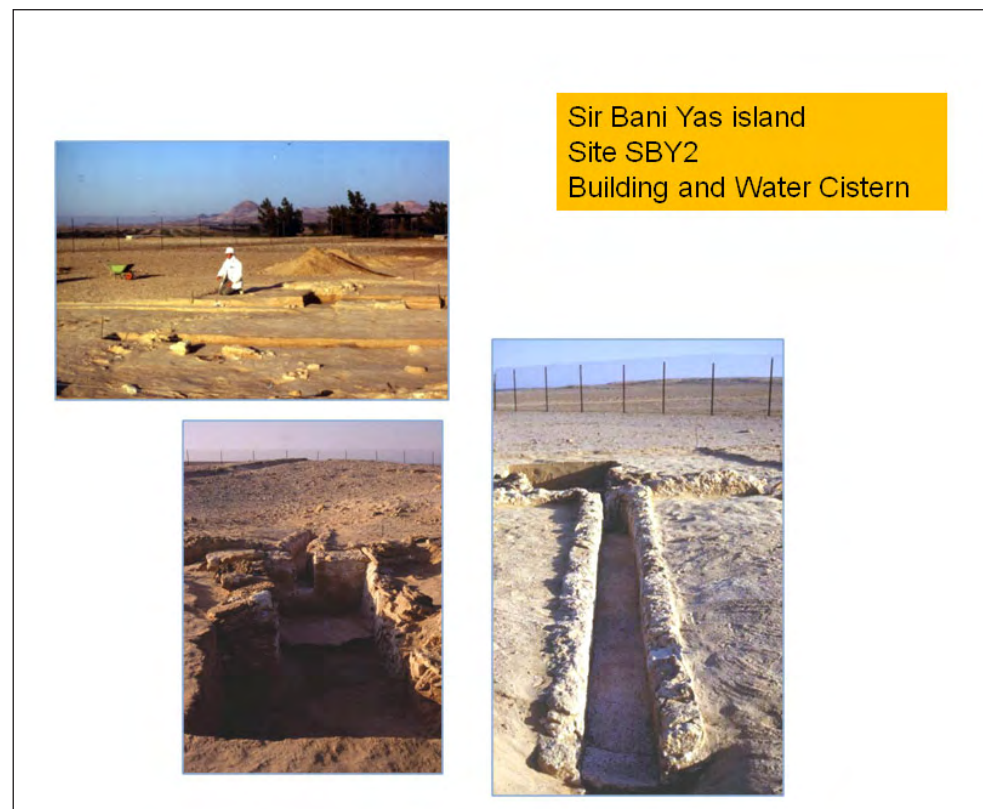


FIGURE 3. Site 2, Building and Water Cistern with Channel (Photographs : Dr Mark Beech).

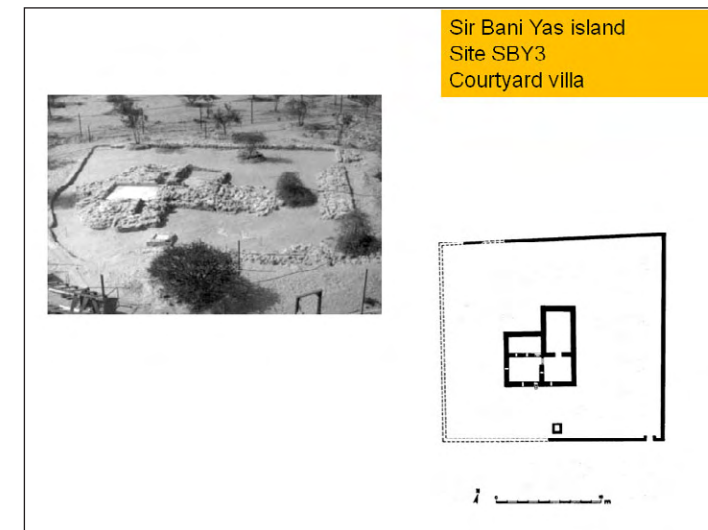


FIGURE 4. Site 3, Courtyard Villa (after King 2001).

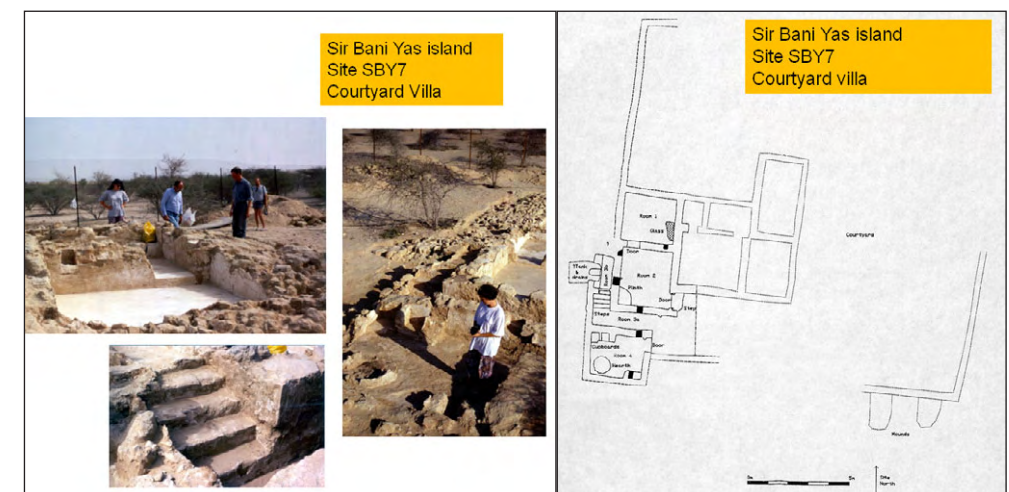


FIGURE 5. (a) Site 7, Plan of the Courtyard Villa ; (b) Site 7, Views of the Courtyard Villa during excavation (Photographs : Dr Mark Beech).

SITE SBY2 – Building and Water Cistern

A remarkably well made plastered cistern and channel (FIGURE 3) was identified on the rocky plateau located immediately above the complex of Nestorian sites described below. The site was excavated by Salvatore Garfi from the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey team between 1994-5. Small quantities of pottery were found on the surface, as well as the nearby remains of several rooms forming part of a major building. This building is well made with local limestone blocks, the walls and floors being plastered in a similar style to the complex of sites discussed below.

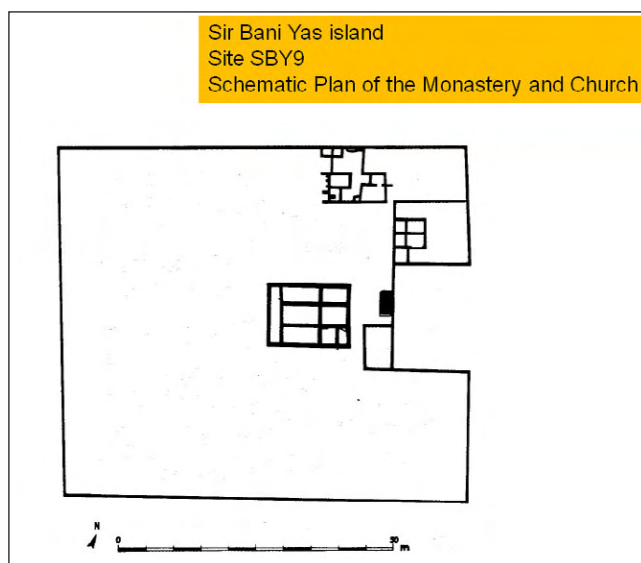


FIGURE 6. Site 9, Schematic plan of the Monastery and Church (Source : ADIAS).

SITE SBY3 – Courtyard Villa

The site was first discovered in 1992 when investigating the interior of the animal enclosure for llamas. Llamas are still kept in the adjacent pen. The site is currently protected with its own fence. Access to the site is through a gate from the track immediately south of the site. The site was completely backfilled in 1995. Breathable nylon mesh was used as barrier material. This was done to protect the site which now has the appearance of a low mound.

The courtyard villa SBY3 was excavated by Dr Joseph Elders and Katrin Gundel from the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey team between 1993-4. Excavations revealed that the central building had four rooms, two of which had plastered floors (FIGURE 4). The rooms were of uniform size never more than 2.7m. Traces of the courtyard wall survived, as did a plastered rectangular shaped cistern in the courtyard. Pottery indicated that the courtyard house was occupied at the same time as the monastery, SBY9.

SITE SBY7 – Courtyard Villa

The site is located within a large fenced enclosure. Additional internal fencing was placed around the perimeter of the site, and the site was completely backfilled in 1995. Breathable nylon mesh was used as barrier material. This was done to protect the site which now has the appearance of a low mound.

The courtyard villa SBY7 was partly excavated by Elizabeth Popescu (nee Shepherd) from the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey team in 1995. Excavations revealed that this was the best preserved of all the courtyard houses so far investigated (FIGURE

5a,b). Traces of at least four plastered rooms were uncovered, including a remarkable kitchen, complete with cupboard units and oven, as well as an external staircase and? ablution/toilet facility. Remarkable finds from the house included a large glass vessel and a half complete wine glass.

Excavations were not completed at the site in 1995. Bearing in mind the material discovered to date from the site, it would be worth completing the excavation of the remainder of the site, in advance of presentation of the site.

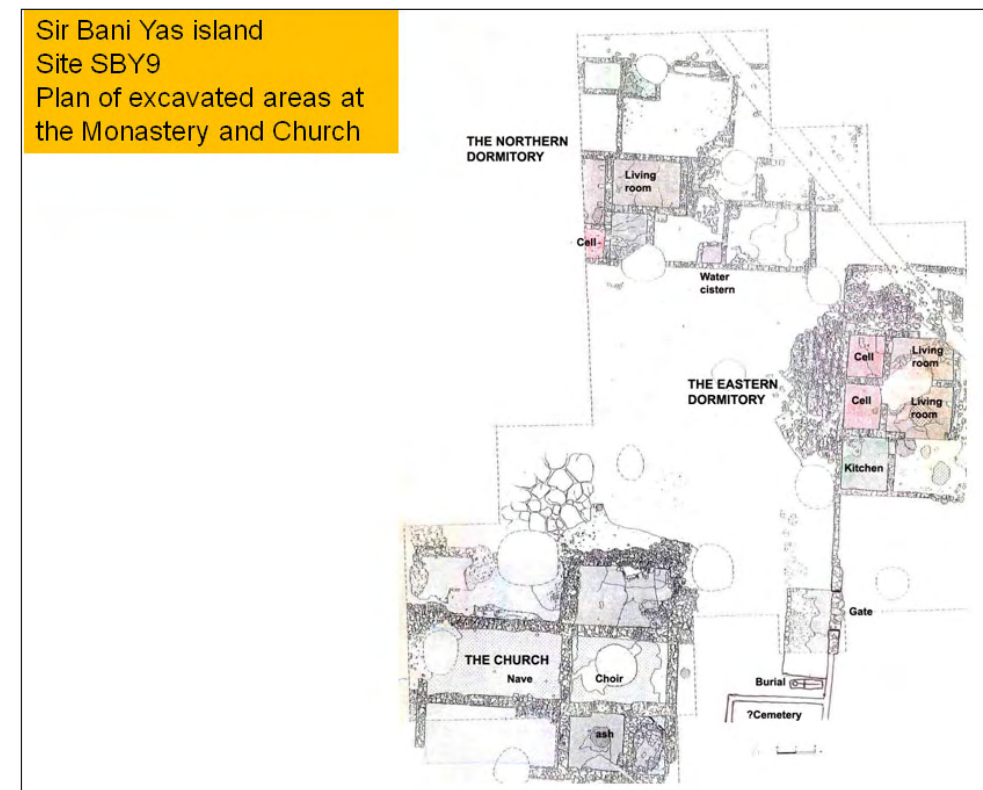


FIGURE 7. Site 9, Plan of Excavated areas at the Monastery and Church (Source : ADIAS).

SITE SBY9 – Walled Monastery Including Church and Dormitory Buildings

When the site was first discovered it already lay inside a plantation enclosure. Small bushes were planted at approximately five metre intervals throughout the area. When excavations ceased in 1996 all the major parts of the site, namely the church and dormitory buildings were all backfilled, breathable nylon mesh being used as suitable barrier material. This was done to protect the site. A request was also submitted to the main office on Sir Bani Yas that all planting activities should cease in this area with no access being allowed for heavy vehicles.

The church and monastery, SBY9, was excavated by Dr Joseph Elders, Dr Mark Beech and John Martin from the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey team between 1994-1996. Excavations in 1994 concentrated on the series of rooms forming the eastern dormitory (FIGURE 6-7). The 1995 and 1996 excavation seasons concentrated on excavation of the church and its immediate vicinity.

One of the highlights of the 1994 excavation of the eastern dormitory was the discovery of a kitchen. This had traces of cooking activities and abundant environmental remains including mammal and fish bones, crabs and marine mollusca. The palaeoenvironmental data provided a valuable insight into the environment and economy of the Nestorian community inhabiting Sir Bani Yas island during the mid-7th to mid-8th centuries (Beech 2004).

The discovery of the church on Sir Bani Yas island, as well as traces of the remainder of the monastery during the 1995-6 excavation seasons, provided further evidence of the presence of Nestorians in the southern Arabian Gulf. Probably the most important discoveries during the excavation of the church and its immediate vicinity were the series of plaster stucco fragments. Most of them were found to the east of the church, concentrated within a 2m radius of the central point in the chancel east wall. These stucco pieces included Christian (both Latin and Greek crosses), classical (vine scrolls and geometric designs) as well as Sasanian (palmettes, flowing floral designs) decorative motives. The finds provide important evidence for the presence of Nestorian Christians in southern Arabia prior to the arrival of Islam. These finds are not, however, unique in the region.

A church with similar plaster stucco remains has been identified at Al-Qusur on the island of Failaka in Kuwait (Bernard and Salles 1991). At Kharg island in Iran a monastery with a church as well as a number of tombs have been found decorated with distinctive Nestorian crosses (Ghirshman 1965). At Jubail in Saudi Arabia a church, consisting of an walled courtyard and three rooms on the east side, was found in 1986. Cross designs were seen to have been impressed into the plaster flanking the doors of the structure. Christian gravestones were also found at the site of Jubail. At Thaj, 90km to the West, what appears to be a smaller church or chapel, built of reused stones and perhaps dating to the fifth or sixth century, has been discovered. 10km NNE of Thaj at al-Hinnah there is evidence of a Christian cemetery of ancient but unknown date (Langfeldt 1994). Not far to the South of Jubail, at Jabal Berri, three crosses have been found dating possibly to the period when Sassanian Persia had influence over the region (Potts 1994).

The plaster stucco panels from Sir Bani Yas are, however, definitely amongst the finest examples known from the region. Other finds retrieved from the excavation of the monastery included small quantities of pottery, glass, animal bones, charcoal and marine mollusca. An important discovery during the excavation of the gate in the east perimeter wall of the monastery was a single inhumation burial. This was of an adult male. Unfortunately the grave had been truncated by tree planting so only parts of the individual's arm, ribs and legs survived. It appeared to be a typical Christian burial, an extended inhumation, laid on its back with the head at the west end of the grave. There were no associated finds. The preparation of a detailed publication on the 1993-1996 excavations and all these finds is currently underway (Elders et al., in prep.).

Radiocarbon dating of a charcoal sample from a fireplace within the monastery

complex near the church, directly sealed by a fallen wall, provides a good terminus ante quem for the abandonment of the monastery. The calibrated dates (2-sigma) were as follows: 432 - 677 CE (GU-9185) and 644-862 CE (AA-40740/GU-9185A). These dates indicate that the monastery may have been abandoned anytime between the mid 7th to mid 9th century, by which time the Islamic conquest had overtaken this area. The monastery complex covers a large area. The outer walls enclose an area of some 90m east-west and 70m north-south. The full extent of the monastery has not been excavated but it has been revealed by a combination of contour survey, proton magnetometer survey, test-trenching, excavation and surface observation. The walls stood to a maximum height of 0.65m but in many places were truncated or destroyed.

Any future presentation of the site needs to take into account that large parts of the area within the monastic complex have yet to be excavated. As large parts of the site, particularly the church and dormitory complexes, have been backfilled, it will take a considerable effort to remove this spoil in a careful and controlled manner. Ideally any such future work should be done in collaboration/consultation with one or more of the original archaeologists involved in the 1993-1996 excavations at SBY9. Further archaeological recording will definitely be required during the process of preparing the site for future display.

A protective shelter or building would be required if all the buildings within the monastic complex are to be left permanently exposed. To prevent erosion of the deposits it would be sensible to design walkways over the site for visiting tourists.

As the monastery is really the focal point of this series of sites, this may be an optimal point to have somewhere in the vicinity a visitor or information centre providing information about the site, its finds and their wider relevance.

Analytical and post-excavation studies

In 1995 geophysical survey using proton magnetometers was undertaken at SBY9, the monastery, at SBY24, a series of burials, and at SBY39, the 2nd millennium BCE building by the airport. This was carried out by Dr Roman Krivanek of the Institute of Archaeology, Czech Academy of Sciences (Krivanek 1997).

No fieldwork of any consequence has taken place on the island since 1996, besides short visits made by Dr Mark Beech to check the existing mapping of sites. A number of articles have been however published on the results of the earlier work (Elders 2001, 2003; Hellyer 2001; King 1997a,b), as well as the overall results of the zooarchaeological analyses from the excavations (Beech 2004).

Recently, the analysis of the pottery from the excavations has been completed (Carter 2008). This provides a better idea concerning the dating of the sites associated with the Nestorian monastery, which appear to date to the mid 7th to mid-8th centuries CE.

The results of the excavations originally carried out by the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey are currently being prepared for publication in a forthcoming monograph (Elders, King and Beech, in prep.).

More recently the Historic Environment Department from the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage has undertaken further GPS mapping of the archaeological sites on the island, as well as monitoring and inspection visits. A Preliminary Cultural Review (PCR) is currently being undertaken of Sir Bani Yas which will provide further information, mitigation strategies and recommendations for the future management of all the sites on the island.

The chronology of occupation on Sir Bani Yas Island

The earliest traces of human occupation on Sir Bani Yas island date back to around 7000 years ago. Small scatters of flint tools which date back to the Late Stone Age or Neolithic were discovered at two locations on the eastern and northern sides of the island (SBY1.1 and SBY24).

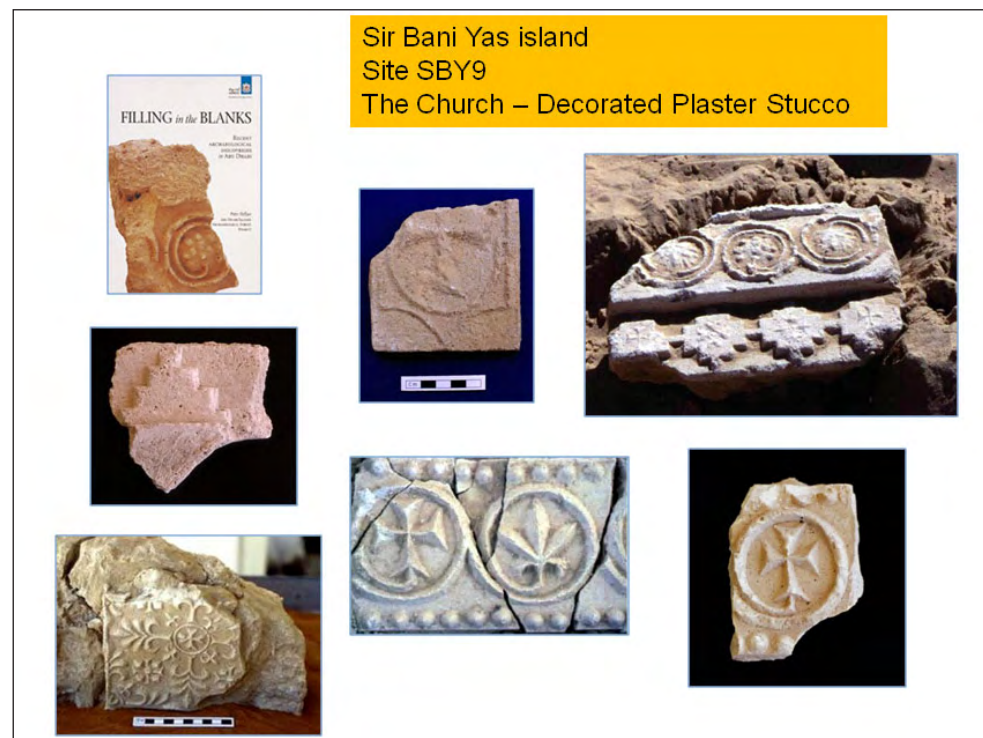


FIGURE 8. Some of the Decorated Plaster panels from the Church (Photographs: Dr Mark Beech).

Traces of Barbar pottery, originating from Bahrain and dating to the 2nd millennium BCE, were identified by Beatrice de Cardi from the surface of site SBY39. This site is a small mound located less than 30 metres to the east of the main airport building on the south-west coast of the island. Pottery was evident on the surface of the mound. A protective fence was established around the site in 1995 to protect it. The mound appears to cover a collapsed prehistoric structure of some kind. Geophysical investigations using a proton magnetometer suggested that the mound covers the remains of a quite well preserved

rectangular shaped building which probably had no internal subdivisions (Krivanek 1997). No excavations have so far been undertaken at this site. This site represents the only major surviving prehistoric structure on Sir Bani Yas island. It would be worth excavating this site at some future date to investigate its form, function and date. An information board should be provided adjacent to the site, once it has been excavated and more data are available.

The most important group of archaeological sites discovered on Sir Bani Yas island date to the Late Pre-Islamic to Early Islamic period, 7th-8th centuries CE. This are the church, the monastery and several associated courtyard houses located at Al Khor on the eastern side of the island. These all belong to the Nestorian community of the southern Gulf. The Nestorians were a Christian schism which formed in the 5th century CE. The Sassanid Persian kings, who were at constant war with Byzantium, saw the opportunity to assure the loyalty of their Christian subjects and supported the Nestorian schism. The Assyrian Church produced many zealous missionaries, who traveled and preached throughout Persia and Central and East Asia in the seventh and eighth centuries. Also during this time many Nestorian scholars, having escaped the Byzantines, settled in Persia and Muharraq in Bahrain, bringing with them many ancient Greco-Roman philosophical, scientific and literary texts. "Nestorian" Christianity had even reached as far as China by 635 CE.

Some historians have speculated that the monastic complex on Sir Bani Yas might be the one founded by Jonah, a monk who it is reported lived during the time of the Nestorian catholicus Barb'ashmin (343-346 CE), on a 'black island' south of Bet Qatraye, i.e. Qatar and eastern Saudi Arabia. This date, however, seems rather early compared to the archaeological data obtained from Sir Bani Yas, so the 'black island' may well lie elsewhere.

Archaeological excavations of the monastic complex on Sir Bani Yas island between 1993-1996 uncovered some quite remarkable finds. Stucco decoration found during the excavations of the church included fragments of Nestorian crosses and vine-and-scroll patterns (FIGURE 8). Radiocarbon dating of a charcoal sample from a sealed layer at the monastery provided a date in (FIGURE 9). Excavations in the eastern dormitory of the monastery, particularly in the kitchen area, provided valuable evidence concerning the economy of the site and the diet of its inhabitants (Beech 2004). The inhabitants of the monastery and surrounding courtyard villas had a broad diet which included domestic sheep/goat, marine turtle, dugong, dolphin, as well as a wide variety of fish and crabs (FIGURE 10-11).

The remainder of the archaeological sites uncovered during the survey of Sir Bani Yas island date to the Late Islamic period, i.e. to the past few hundred years. These range from simple pottery scatters (SBY18), to marine turtle/dugong butchery sites (SBY23.1 & SBY23.2), campsites (SBY18.1, SBY23.4, SBY30, SBY32, SBY33 & SBY41), more permanent traces of settlements (SBY14, SBY21 & SBY22), a dry stone wall mosque (SBY10), tower (SBY35), salt mine (SBY36), water cistern (SBY12) and cemeteries (SBY11, SBY24, SBY26, SBY30, SBY34 & SBY38).

A number of these aforementioned sites are clustered at the northern end of the island which was the site of the former village known as al-Zahir (or al-Thahir). Scattered remains are present throughout the plantation enclosures. Whilst most have been heavily disturbed, some delightful features remain including the walled date palm

garden with its rectangular water cistern (SBY12), the dry stone wall mosque (SBY10), and adjacent cemeteries (SBY11.2, SBY11.2 and SBY13).

A number of sites were enigmatic and had no associated dating evidence with them. These included cairns (SBY15, SBY24, SBY27, SBY28, SBY29 & SBY31), circles of stones (SBY16), campsites (SBY19), and a depression (SBY25.1).

Sir Bani Yas Island – Future Plans

Sir Bani Yas island is now an important tourist destination in Al Gharbia, the western region of Abu Dhabi emirate. The Historic Environment Department from the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) is currently working together with the Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC) to provide access and information concerning the archaeological sites on the island. Future visitors to Sir Bani Yas island will be able to visit two main areas of interest: (1) the church, monastery and courtyard villas located on the eastern side of the island, in an area known as Al-Khawr, and (2) the remains of the deserted village of Al-Zahir at the northern end of the island, which included an old mosque, three cemeteries, and a walled date palm garden with water cistern.

The first phase of this work will be to develop a heritage trail around the sites located in the area of the deserted village of Al-Zahir at the northern end of the island. This will provide information to visiting tourists about traditional life on Sir Bani Yas.

The major archaeological sites located at Al-Khawr on Sir Bani Yas, namely sites SBY2, SBY3, SBY7 and SBY9, are all currently protected with strips of geotextile material

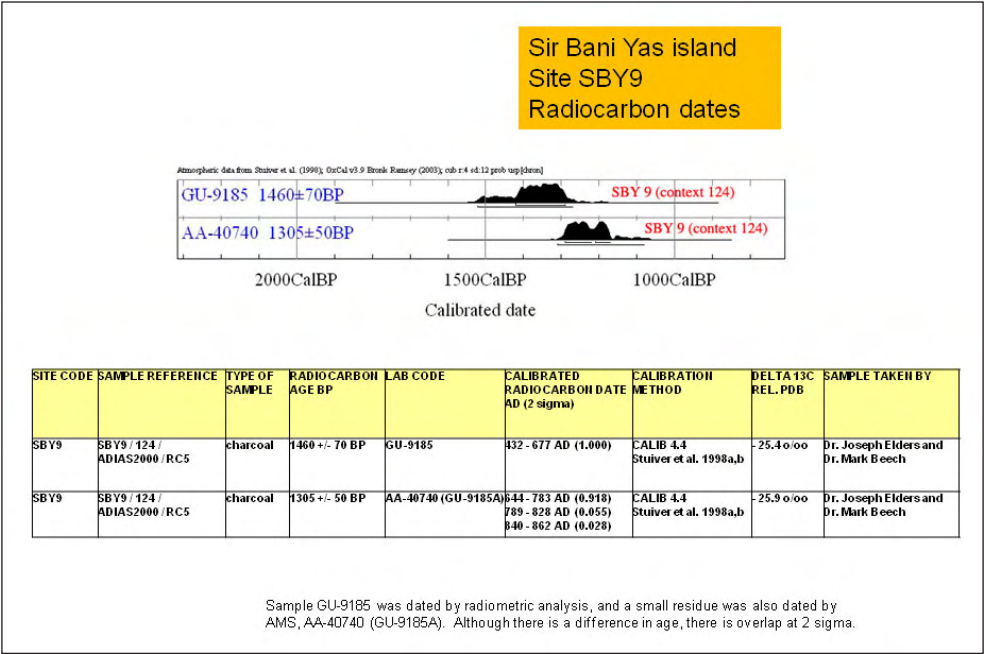


FIGURE 9. Radiocarbon dating of the Monastery.

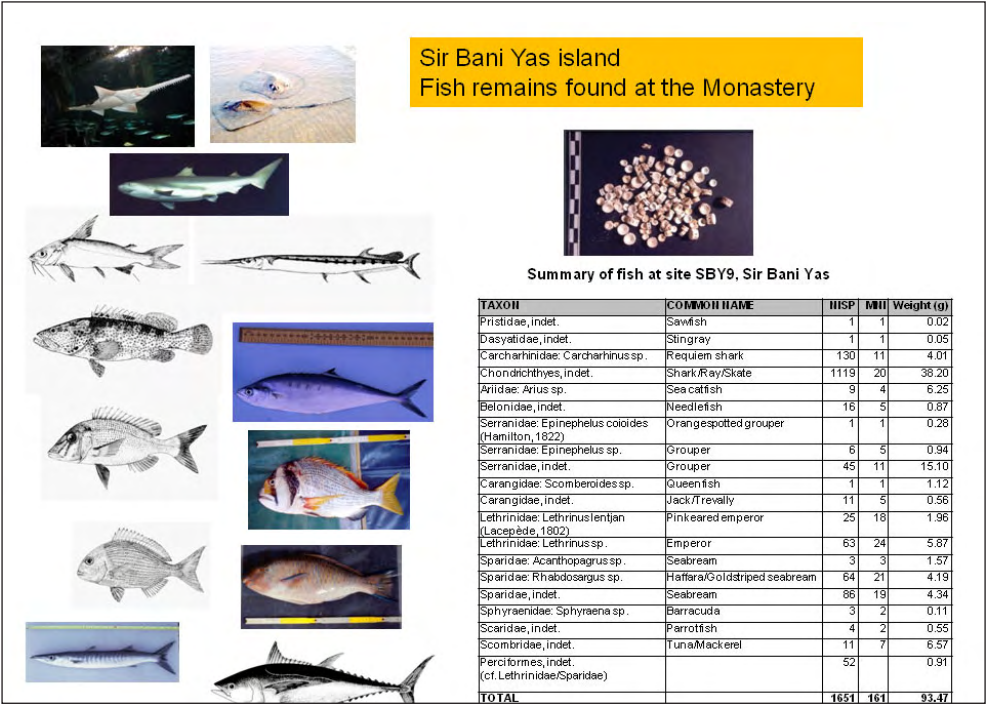


FIGURE 10. Fish remains from the Monastery (Photographs: Dr Mark Beech).



FIGURE 11. Crab remains from the Monastery (Photographs: Dr Mark Beech/ Illustrations: Fishbase).

covering the excavated surfaces which have then been buried with sand. The site are therefore not currently visible to members of the public. This special mesh allows the sites to naturally breathe and prevents the build-up of condensation which would collect in the case of continuous polythene sheeting. This has helped to protect the sites from unnecessary erosion and damage. The second phase of this work will be to tackle these sites, but this will require a more detailed and complex approach.

ADACH is currently working on a conservation and management plan for the cultural heritage of Sir Bani Yas island. Future plans for the development of these particular sites needs to take on board the need for further archaeological excavations and conservation work, as part of the overall management plan for preserving and managing the cultural heritage of the island.

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Part 2

The Islamic Period: Socio-economic transformations in the Arabian Gulf