ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCHES IN THE GULF
— A Preliminary Report of the Excavations in Bahrain and Qatar, 1987/8 Season —

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INTRODUCTION

First of all, we shall briefly state hereby on the history of Gulf archaeological studies, and on our own aims in carrying out the project. It should be noted that archaeology of the Gulf has been long neglected being obscured by the shadows of the first great civilizations of the ‘Orient’ till 1950s when the Danish archaeologists explored the Gulf countries to discover innumerable archaeological sites there clarifying the importance of them, especially their rôles played in the ancientmost trade mechanism during the 3rd–2nd millennia B.C. among the great civilizations so far well known.(1) However, if we take the example of Bahrain, it was as early as 1879 that the significance of the land was first realized as regards the connection with the Mesopotamian world, when Captain E. L. Durand discovered the cuneiform inscription bearing the name of Inzak (Enşag),(2) significance of which being stressed by Rawlinson in 1880.(3) Discussions followed partly as regards the identification of ancient Dilmun, Magan and Meluhha, and excavations and researches were also carried out by Theodore Bent in 1890,(4) F. B. Prideau in 1906–7,(5) further followed by Ernest Mackay,(6) P. B. Cornwall,(7) Richard Bowen,(8) et al.

The discussions were mainly centering around the identification of Dilmun, and as the archaeological evidences came to be revealed, more scholars joined the debates. However, the problem of identification of Dilmun, Magan, etc. should be more firmly based on scientific excavations, and it is also to be noted that the problem to locate the ancient geographical names is not the sole aim of the Gulf archaeology. We have to wait for more and more archaeological

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results in these countries to clarify the pre- and proto-historical formations of cultures in each region, and in this respect, we have had so far quite a number of archaeological reports from various regions in the Gulf ranging from the stone age to the Islamic period.

We do not go into the details here of the history of archaeological researches carried out in the Gulf, but it may be mentioned only that the stone age was well studied by H. Kapel of the Danish Mission in Qatar during the 1950s, followed by B. de Cardi of the British Mission (1973–74) revealing as well the significant evidence of Ubaid Culture there. It is now known that the culture extends eastward to the west coast of Qatar through a part of Bahrain, but the evidence is yet too sporadic, and the real significance is to be further studied in the context of the series of stone age cultures ‘A’ to ‘D’, as put by Kapel.

While the stone age cultures have been thus studied mainly around Qatar, problems of the proto-historic period were first realized in Bahrain as stated before, but a number of important archaeological evidences have been revealed and accumulated by more recent excavations carried out by M. Ibrahim, M. R. Mughal, H. H. Andersen, et al., and the real picture of the ‘Barbar’ culture of the 3rd–2nd millennia B.C. with innumerable tumuli, shrines-temples and settlements have been clarified. The artefacts included the round ‘Gulf-type’ (or ‘Dilmun’) seals and steatite/chrolite vessels, both serving as the good evidences of long-distance maritime as well as land-route trades between Mesopotamia-Iran-Indus regions.

Important discoveries have been also made in the United Arab Emirates and in Oman. A small island called Umm an-Nar has revealed impressive circular tombs of stone masonry and the culture with painted pottery, chrolite vessels, bronze objects, etc. This Umm an-Nar culture was soon found to be spreading towards Oman through Al Ain, which was obviously the trade centre then connecting the east and west coasts of the Oman Peninsula cutting through Jabal Akhdar Range. Copper mines through the ages since prehistoric times upto present have been traced especially on the eastern foothill of the Range. While the main cultural traits with the typical ‘beehive’ tombs represent the individuality of the Umm an-Nar culture, the painted design or certain forms of the pottery may also show certain connections with the Harappan (Indus), Kulli (S. Baluchistan) and Bampur (S. Iran) cultures, which deserve further serious studies.
During the early decades of researches, when the important intermediary rôle played by the Gulf in the Mesopotamia-Indus trade was stressed, the Gulf area has been treated as more or less one region, but we now know that there prevailed at least two important and distinct cultures predominating in the Gulf, viz. ‘Barbar’ in and around Bahrain, and ‘Umm an-Nar’ in U. A. E. and Oman, leaving the possibility of still other culture(s) in the area. Be they may respectively Dilmun and Magan or not, there had been at least two or more comparatively minor but important middle-scale civilizations, to inter-relate, or to support in a sense, the bigger civilizations across the Gulf and the Arabian Ocean.

If so, then, what was the position of Qatar during the contemporary 3rd–2nd millennia B. C. in between the two already known cultures of the Gulf? We do not know much about it; while, there have been revealed still another enigmatic cultures in Qatar. One is a series of ‘cup-marks’ engraved on rocks,(20) and the other is the series of rough and low cairns with diametres of 2 to 3 metres, which can be also seen in some parts of Oman, but cannot be compared with the conical tumuli of Bahrain nor with the massive ‘beehive’ tombs of well-dressed stone masonry work seen in U. A. E. and Oman. Some of these sites have been excavated both on the east and west coasts of the Qatar Peninsula by the British and French teams,(21) but nothing certain to give the date or the characteristics of the culture except the scattered bones and fragmentary artefacts thus unearthed.

For the Japanese archaeological team, quite late comer in these fields, problems and targets to tackle with were naturally and unavoidably many-folded. Masatoshi A. Konishi, Professor of South Asian Studies, Rikkyo Univ., Tokyo, has been working long on the Harappan problems, and has visited Bahrain first in 1977 to find out the importance of the Island as the entrepôt between the two civilizations.(22) Takeshi Gotoh, now Curator, Near Eastern Antiquities Section of Tokyo National Museum, has worked in Iran and Syria, and has had much interest in the late stone age cultures of the Arabian Peninsula, visiting also the Gulf countries in 1986 to study archaeological sites and materials.(23)

The Japanese Archaeological Mission to the Gulf was thus formed by both of them in 1986 as a part of the Gulf Archaeology Project of Rikko University, Tokyo, to study the pre- and proto-historic cultural intercourses during the 3rd–2nd millennia B. C. around the Gulf in general. The Mission could get
the chance to carry out the general and preliminary survey in Bahrain, Qatar, U. A. E., Oman and Pakistan in 1986/7, and was fortunate enough to have got every possible help in each country rendered through the relevant government offices and their able staffs, to whom we are so much obliged.

According to their suggestions and due to various other reasons and circumstances, we decided to carry out our first diggings in Bahrain to excavate one or two tumuli to know the cultural context, and in Qatar, to excavate a few cairns still remaining enigmatic in the Gulf archaeology. We started our first season’s work in December, 1987, and concluded it in February, 1988, with Yoshihiko Akashi of Kyushu Historical Museum as the Field Master of the Mission. Since the period and extent of excavations has been so limited that not much substantial evidences have been obtained, still certain fresh evidences so far not noticed have been brought in the light. Following is the preliminary results of our work.

**BURI PREHISTORIC TUMULI, BAHRAIN**

Bahrain has been known by its vast stretch of ancient tumuli especially in the northwestern parts of the main island (Fig. 2). It was even conjectured that the whole island once constituted a sort of necropolis for the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, as no settlements or habitation sites had been yet discovered then. Though we have now ample evidences to prove that the Barbar culture was full-fledged culture with rich artefacts and structures unearthed not only from those burial mounds, still we need more archaeological evidence on chronology and typology of the burial mounds proper, too. As our first season’s work, therefore, we decided to take up a few mounds for the sample diggings, and selected the site near Buri village to the north of Hamad Town and east of the well-known Aali site.

The same type of vast stretch of burial mounds can be observed at Buri, too, and is in fact the continuation of the burial complexes at Hamad Town and Aali. We selected there a typical and small mound labelled as “Buri Road Mound No. 7” (our R–1), which was to be soon removed due to the new road construction. Another mound we chose (our R–2) was a nameless but obviously prominent one due to its size about 242 m. south and about 10° west of our first mound selected, situated by the western side of the newly constructed road by which the eastern end of the mound had been already cut. Excavations
of these two mounds were started on 13th December, 1987, and were resumed on 27th December. Summary of the results is as follows.

1. **Excavation of the Mound R-1 (Buri Road Mound No. 7) (Fig. 3)**

   As stated above, this is one of the most typical small burial mounds, extensively spread in this wide area. It is 1.9 m. above the ground level (21.30 m. above the sea level on the top), and 9.4 m. in diameter. It had been covered by the whitish soil with gravels all over, and we could well estimate that it was surrounded by a ring wall beneath and a stone chamber deep in the centre, as in other cases.

   We decided, therefore, to excavate it by cutting the whole mound into four parts by the right N-S and E-W axes which cross at the summit point, and soon found the portions of the stone ring wall at the foot of the mound only 20-50 cm. below the surface. The diameter was about 6.5 m., and the stones formed a simple circle without any additions.

   The stone chamber was also revealed rather soon, and was found to be of T-shaped plan with two alcoves at its eastern end. The lowermost stones to form the stone chamber had been placed on a shallow pit cut into the natural bed-rock layer.

   The main axis of the stone chamber is c. 82° E from the magnetic North, thus it is slanted at the end towards the north a little, though the orientation is essentially E-W, as in most of the other cases. The main chamber is roughly rectangular in shape, though it narrows slightly towards the front wall. The width of the main chamber is thus 65-76 cm. and the length at the centre is 200 cm. The width at the end wall with alcoves is 142 cm.

   Walls of the chamber is constructed by roughly hewn stones with smaller chipped stones between them, without any trace of the use of mortar. Although the front and end walls stand up more or less straight, side walls tend to be slightly corvelled with huge capstones above. The lowermost stones are bigger in size and placed horizontally supporting 5 to 6 rows of rough stones of various size. The inner height of the chamber thus formed is 60-85 cm., lower at the both ends thus to make the ceiling a sort of shallow concave.

   Capstones are four in number, and the size is impressively big enough; the biggest one being 110×75 cm. and 35 cm. thick (maximum), and the smallest being 55×50×27 (do.), which was obviously laid first on the top of the end wall, then the biggest one towards the front. The last (fourth) one is
laid in a little lower level on the front wall itself. The capstones do not cover the whole width of the walls below, but are supported only by one-third or half of the latter. Supporting wall of the alcove was loose enough to support the big stones at its top, and after removing the outer soil by excavation, there was a danger of collapse at any time. People might have piled soils outside the chamber, well before placing the bigger and heavier capstones.

Inside the chamber was almost hollow but loose soil with gravel was running in from the western side. Below it were thin sand layers and a hard layer above the bed-rock. The skeletal remains had been piled in one heap on the bed-rock within the hard layer by the side of the end wall nearer to the left alcove. As far as being observed from the layers, there seemed to be no trace of the later disturbances, however. We still do not know whether they had a practice like secondary burial collecting bones after the primary inhumation. There was no trace of other objects whatsoever, not only within the chamber nor from the soil covering it.

2. **Excavation of the Mound R-2** (Fig. 4)

The mound is one of the few highest and biggest tumuli around this area. It is about 4 m. high above the surrounding ground level and 19 m. in diameter, and the topmost point is 27.02 m. above the sea level. It had been totally covered by soft whitish soil with loose gravels.

Likewise R-1, we divided the whole mound into four parts by N-S and E-W axes with the cross point at the summit, and named the four quarters Q-I to IV in the same way as R-1. Each quarter was further marked by lines 2 m. apart from the axes to retain the baulk in Q-I and III, thus making it possible to dig the two L-shaped trenches, 2 m. wide each, along with the axes in Q-II and IV.

Several big stones appeared soon below the surface in the peripheries of the L-shaped trenches in both quarters, which seemed to form the ring wall(s). Several other big stones also appeared right below the surface which later came to be known as to form the topmost wall of the grave shaft. Excavation of Q-II further revealed that walls forming the shaft still going down. Further diggings showed that the scattered loose stones around the ring wall did not in fact form any sort of the ‘subsidiary chambers’, so common sometimes in this type of burial mounds in Sar and elsewhere.

In order to prove this, we also set other four narrow but deep test-pits at
NE, SE, SW and NW ends of the mound, and could get the exact position of the outer ring wall at the bottom of the eight test-pits, ascertaining that it rests more or less directly on the bed-rock, or only partially on the slightly dug-in level of the bed-rock. The diameter of the ring wall thus obtained was about 12.2 m. to form more or less a perfect circle.

While the big but loose stones found outside the ring wall can be considered to be the fallen parts of the wall, only enigmatic problem lying with us was the sporadic appearance of stone lines right above the ring wall with thick debris in between, sometimes upto 80 cm. thick. It is a broken line with several stones only, not necessarily forming any continuous circle but appears only in some places. This upper row of stones above the debris seems to have been piled after the collapse of the upper part of the ring wall, and after the accumulation of the debris over there. If so, then, one may estimate that the whole mound could have been rebuilt and the upper row of stones could have been placed at the time of the secondary construction, possibly to prevent the lower surface of the mound from further decay, but such conclusion is yet premature.

By digging down Q-II, three vertical walls came to be unearthed. The topmost one was revealed right below the surface nearer to the top of the mound and rested on the second wall further below, to form there a narrow terrace. The height is c. 40 cm. at the centre and c. 60 cm. at the both ends of the wall. The size of the stone used is a little bigger than those used in the lower walls, but the piling is very rough. The other parts of the wall towards west are totally missing, or it has never been constructed, as the surface of the mound itself slopes down towards west.

The second or middle wall of the shaft formed a rough square with round corners in shape, c. 3.9×3.4 m. at the top and c. 3.7×3.1 m. at the bottom, with its longer axis in E-W direction. It is a pile of roughly dressed stones, with hard mud-filling behind. The highest remaining portion at the eastern end is about 1 m. with 12–14 rows of stones, but originally it could have been a little higher still. A portion of the southern side of the wall was totally missing in semicircular shape, c. 2 m. wide as is observed on the E-W section-wall, unmistakably the robber’s trench. The top of the disturbed layer reaches upwards to the surface of the mound at this point, and is observed to be reaching down in tapering shape right to the corner of the entrance to the stone chamber at the bottom. It is obvious that the robbing took place quite long time back as to restore the shape of mound as natural as the original.
The deepest and lowermost wall is rectangular and smaller in shape, thus again forming a sort of terrace, 40–70 cm. wide from the bottom of the upper one. Length of the axis which also runs E-W at the top is 2.8 m. and 2.3 m. at the bottom (both measured at the inner sides), and the width at the top is 1.8 m. in average and 1.1–1.4 m. at the bottom. The height is c. 1.6 m. with 14–18 rows of roughly hewn stones of the similar size as those used in the middle wall, but placing bigger stones especially at the bottom of the west end of the wall. The slanting degree is 5–8, little more than that of the wall above, though the lower part stands almost straight.

The lowermost stones rest directly on the natural soil with the usual white granules, and the floor thus confined by the walls is flat nearer to the west and extends for about 1.2 m. eastwards, then suddenly goes down towards the stone chamber by a step, cutting down into the natural soil.

The end of the westernmost capstone of the chamber had been already revealed in due course of digging the eastern side of the third shaft wall, at the level of 1.1 m. below the top of the wall. Since 2 to 3 rows of stones below the capstone at this point had been missing, possibly due to the robber’s plundering, part of the loose soil which was filling the whole shaft had run inside the chamber, especially nearer to the entrance. (Layers are not shown in Fig. 4).

**Stone Chamber:**

Main axis of the stone chamber coincides with that of the shaft. It is essentially E-W in orientation, but the “East” here is in fact nearer to the South by 31 degrees. The burial chamber is 2.75 m. long, 1.1 m. wide and 1.4 m. high in the clear. It had two alcoves on the both sides at the end wall, forming a T-shaped plan, thus the width of the end wall being 1.75 m. Total plan seems to be symmetrical and well-ordered, and can be considered to be well planned beforehand.

The end wall stands up almost straight, but the upper portion seems to swell a little inside, possibly due to the heavy pressure of the soil above. Stone used are roughly dressed to make them flat, and piled up to 9–11 rows to support the capstone. Some more tiny gravels and chips of stones are inserted between the bigger rocks. The side walls are also made in similar way with 7 rows of even more finely dressed rocks horizontally laid. The lowermost stones are less thick and are less carefully prepared, but the two rows of stones above are
the biggest. The side walls are slanting by about 6 degrees but look almost straight as seen from inside.

Capstones are consisted of four huge rocks, roughly dressed but not so flat or smooth at the bottom. They are carefully placed horizontally one by one in a row to cover the whole chamber, but they seem to rest only on one third or almost half of the stones beneath, so far as we can observe from inside. The first (westernmost) capstone or the entrance part of the stone chamber itself stretches out by about 40 cm. from the lowest wall of the shaft, almost like a lintel. Two or three rows below the first or the front capstone are missing. Several rocks found among the fallen-in soils with gravels over the floor of the chamber could have been the missing part of the front wall.

The floor of the chamber is flat, and is about 1.5 m. below the deepest floor level of the shaft outside. Obviously the whole chamber rests on the deep-cut pit into the natural soil. Over it is a thin layer of very fine sand, 3 to 5 cm. thick, which is totally different from the loose soil with gravels which had fallen in from outside the chamber. Skeletal remains were scattered towards the end wall, even more so nearer to the both alcoves, on or in the thin sand layer above the natural soil. Skull and pelvis rest together along with tibia and other bones near the left alcove, and thigh, rib and other bones were in a pile near the right alcove, obviously due to the later disturbance. It came to be known later that a few animal bones were mixed among them. We could find no artefacts at all inside the chamber, besides a few tiny pieces of bronze fragments and several chipped fragments of red pottery, far enough to suggest the original shape or the nature of the artefacts.

3. Some Remarks on Buri Tumuli

Throughout the excavations of two mounds, what troubled us was the problem as to when and how they were constructed, and how they were used. By 'when', we do not necessarily mean the chronology proper. Although we did not unfortunately get any artefacts useful to date these mounds, it did not matter so much, as we have many similar and parallel examples of burial mounds in and outside our site, like Aali, Hamad Town, Sar and elsewhere, from which we may be able to somehow correlate ours to them. Rather we are more concerned with a sort of 'contemporary' problem. When were the burial chamber and the mound, especially the grave shaft actually made? Was that before, or after the death of the buried? If the latter is the case,
how many years later than the occurrence of death?

As in the case of R-2 with such an elaborate stone piling job for the stone chamber as well as the shaft, it could have necessitated much time and energy. Could the corpse wait until the resting place to be completed before being decayed? Or was there a kind of the secondary burial in which the bones could be collected some years after the primary inhumation? Or was the structure made well before the death of the person concerned? Existence of the deep shaft with three vertical walls must have meant the necessity to be used later for bringing in something, corpse or grave goods or offering of any kind, to the stone chamber. In this connection, we are reminded of the fact that skeleton was lying over the 3–5 cm accumulation of fine sand on the natural soil, and not directly on the latter. Was that layer a later accumulation or the prepared bed for the corpse right after the death or the construction of the stone chamber?

We do need still more evidences to answer these questions both archaeologically and ethnologically.

**Umm al-Maa Cairn Field, Qatar**

It seems rather strange if the Qatar Peninsula should lack archaeological evidences of 3rd-2nd millennia B.C. and on, in spite of its geographical position between the two ancient cultures of the Gulf, viz. Barbar and Umm an-Nar. There should have been also any prehistoric cultures in Qatar if not it was totally uninhabited in those days. It is, therefore, archaeologists’ urgent task to tackle with the problems to solve the Qatar’s prehistory, as well as its position and rôle in connection with the ancient maritime route through the Gulf.

It was December, 1986, when M. A. Konishi and T. Gotoh made a short travel along the northwestern coast of the Peninsula, accompanied by Qatari archaeologists of the Department of Tourism and Antiquities. Then, several number of cairns drew the Japanese Mission’s attention in Umm al-Maa district. We came to think it necessary to examine these constructions in order to clarify the nature and the dates, if possible, because some of them, at least, could have belonged to the period of the question.

In 1988 season following the preliminary research in 1986, we excavated two of them and re-examined some of the already excavated and neglected ones.
possibly done by a foreign archaeological team. Our works in the site was started on 5th of January and resumed on 21st of the same month.

1. **Environment of Umm al-Maa Cairns**

Umm al-Maa is the name of a district near the northwestern coast of the Qatar Peninsula about 18.5 km. south of Zubarah old fort. A new road called Zubayyat Road was under construction here during our work in the field. There is a low hill with diameter of 1 km., where we found a number of piled stone heaps scattering (Fig. 5). Later explorations suggested that the distribution of the stone piles was spreading farther south, and also west towards the shore. According to our rough survey, the number of them was estimated to be more than hundred only within a radius of one kilometre.

The stone heaps as observed externally here were varied both in shape and size. Most remarkable of them were relatively larger ones with an average height of 0.5–1.2 m. above the surrounding field, sometimes with the flat or slightly sunken top where soil or fine sand was covering there instead of stones. We could not infer then whether the condition of the tops was the result of robber’s diggings or the original shape. The plans were more or less circular or oval with a diameter (or a length) of 5–8 m., and the surfaces were generally covered by local stones, 10 to 25 cm. big, with a few exceptions of those with larger ones of 30 to 60 cm. Next group consisted of simple stone piles, with similar plan and size of stones to those of the previous group, but without the flat or sunken top covered by soil or sand above. Inconspicuous but in fact largest in number were flatter types of piled stones with a circular or oval plan of various size. They were only 15 to 30 cm. high and sometimes difficult to be distinguished from natural upheavals of the exposed bedrock.

These piles of stones have been generally called ‘cairns’ or ‘tumuli’ in some publications, but it still remains as an important question as to which term is most appropriate for them. In this report, we tentatively call them ‘cairns’.

The first purpose of our research was to get necessary data on the variation of them through fresh excavations of a few number of them, and through the re-examination of the already excavated ones. The cairns we excavated were situated on the south-western gentle slope of the hill and hereby named J–1 and J–2 (Fig. 5).
2. **Excavation of Cairn J-1** (Fig. 6)

Cairn J-1 is larger in size than J-2 and fine soil was deposited in the depression at the top before the excavation. A small piling of stones seemed to have been attached to it, but we left it unexcavated this season.

All the surface stones piled and scattered around to a considerable extent were measured and recorded on the plan to show their distribution, and loose stones were subsequently taken off to reveal the original plan of the construction below before the further digging. It was oval in shape, and 5.5 m. long and 4.5 m. wide. One large stone was set nearer the top. As a result of the first clearance, we found a part of the structure which looked like a stone chamber in the depression at the top.

After removing the soil inside, it was proved to be a rectangular chamber with walls of roughly hewn stones. Four trenches were dug then at right angles to the walls to examine the outside of the chamber and to get the cross-sections. The chamber had been constructed on the bottom of a rectangular pit roughly of 2.6 m. × 1.0 m. with a depth of 0.2 to 0.4 m. from the original ground surface cut into the bedrock. The bottom was gently sloping from the west to the east. The NE and NW walls of the chamber were partly broken by the robbers' diggings and the rest was remaining almost intact. The piled stones were roughly cut and the straight walls were built vertically to form a well-regulated rectangular inner space. The chamber is 1.8 m. long and 0.35 to 0.40 m. wide in the inside measurement. It is wider in the NW extremity, possibly suggesting the direction of the head of the dead.

No capstone was found to be set on the chamber, but it can be presumed that several big stones could have been originally put on the top, side by side. The large stone found near the top of the upper structure might have been one of them, moved by the robbers later.

3. **Excavation of Cairn J-2** (Fig. 7)

Cairn J-2 is smaller and about 10 m. away from J-1. Surface stones were scattered within a radius of 5.5 m., and the flat top with a soil deposit showed a similar condition to that of J-1. Cleaning after measuring all the surface stones suggested that the original plan had been an oval of 3.4 m. × 2.5 m. with the longer axis of NW-SE, and that an underground structure with capstones was buried underneath.

Two quarters of the cairn were then excavated to reveal the stucture and
to examine the cross-sections. A total of seven capstones were found to have been arranged side by side along the longer axis of the upper structure. Arrangement of the capstones were then measured and drawn before they were removed for the examination inside.

A narrow cist was revealed under the capstones which contained an amount of soil and almost complete but badly decayed human skeleton beneath. There was a small disturbance by some of the side stones slipped off from their original places. The cist was 1.7 m. long and 0.3 m. wide in the inside measurement and consisted of 5 or 6 large stone slabs set along the walls of a roughly rectangular pit dug into the bedrock deepened from the upper face of the virgin soil layer on it. Floor of the cist was flat to form the bottom of the pit, 35 cm. down from the lower faces of the capstones. The upper surface of the capstones was as high as that of the bedrock. The direction of the cist was roughly NNW-SSE and the head of the corpse was towards NNW direction.

The skeleton was fragile and slightly disturbed especially in the upper half by the fallen slabs as already stated. The skull was crushed into small fragments and scattered in the northern half of the cist, and the upper half of the left thigh bone was found on the stomach. Most of the bones were, nevertheless, found in their original positions suggesting the dead was set on the right shoulder facing WSW.

Estimating from the condition of bones showing the aging process, particularly observed on some of the bones like jaws, the dead was possibly a middle-aged or elderly female, as being less sturdy built. But it may be too premature to conclude so because of the bad condition of certain important bones like the skull and the pelvis.

4. Some Remarks on Umm al-Maa Cairns

After the excavations of these two, we mapped 10 more cairns (Cairns D-1 ~10 in our temporary list) already excavated by the people, whom we estimate as the Danish archaeologists who worked here some 30 years ago, because no other archaeological report has not mentioned about Umm al-Maa cairns but that by P. V. Glob.(18) The underground constructions of Cairns D-1~4, 6 and 7 were re-examined and measured by us for the comparison with our own results.

Cairns D-1~4 form a large complex adjoining each other, and are situated about 300 m. north of our cairns J-1 and J-2. Cairn D-5 is found
a little apart by 100 m. east of them. Cairns D-6 and D-7 are situated lower on the southern gentle slope of the hill, roughly 300 and 400 m. SSW of ours. Cairns D-8 and D-9 are found on the western slope of the hill about 350 m. west of ours, around which are a number of other unexcavated medium-sized cairns widely distributed. Cairn D-10 is farthest of all, situated about 600 m. SW from our site.

While the detailed results of the re-examination will be stated in our successive report, we shall describe here only about some important points. Cairn D-1 is a part of a cairn complex (D-1～4) and its underground structure is a relatively small oval pit, vertically cut down into the bedrock as in the case of the rest of the complex. The body was buried beneath perhaps in a contracted position in each case. A number of adult human bones, three beads and some bronze or copper fragments were discovered from the soil layer in the pit of D-1. Two of the beads were of dark brownish glass and the third was probably an amethyst. This proves that the original excavators had not reached the bottom as they excavated.

We also identified other types of underground structures. In the case of D-6, it was a long and narrow pit for a body to be put in full length, and some capstones were used to cover it, of which only two were still remaining at the both extremities. The underground structure of D-7 was the largest and most elaborated among those we examined in this season. It was a roundish rectangular semi-underground stone chamber of 2.4 m. x 0.8 m. in the clear, and one of the capstones was still mounted on it.

Burial custom is essentially a reflection of the contemporary society and their ideological concepts, and there should not have been so many variations in their burial methods in a society in a particular period of time. Variety of the underground structures as we observe, therefore, suggests that they were constructed at the several different stages of the history of Qatar. So, much more evidences are needed and should be added to those revealed here, and to the already reported ones by the Danish, British and French archaeologists, to make a sort of corpus in future.

At present we can say next to nothing about the actual dates of the Umm al-Maa cairns without sufficient datable objects excavated from them. Discovery of the beads and bronze/copper fragments from D-1 is not a sufficient evidence to give a date to the burial, because similar types of beads had been produced for a long time in West Asia since Bronze Age until Islamic Period
There could have been also a number of contemporary settlement sites near our burial site. The cultural complex at Umm al-Maa should be comprehended in a more holistic view. In order to get the clearer total picture, we have to know much more about the distribution of archaeological sites there, and in so doing, precise mappings and surveys are indispensable in future in much wider scale, as we find so lot of cairn-like features scattering outside Umm al-Maa district, and even outside Qatar, also.

Notes

(1) For the general picture, vide T. G. Bibby, Looking for Dilmun, New York, 1969; and for the excavation reports, vide the relevant series of Jutland Archaeology Publications, Aarhus, and papers in *Kuml* after 1954.


(13) Re-examination of the stone artefacts has been also done by the French Mission in Qatar in 1976–78 excavating the sites near Khor on the east coast. J. Tixier (ed.), *Mission Archéologique Française à Qatar*, Dept. of Tourism and Antiquities, Min. of Infm., Doha, 1980.

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(17) In this respect, one has to mention that the Bahrain Historical and Archaeological Society founded since 1958 publishing its organ *Dilmun*, and an international symposium held in Manama, Bahrain, in 1983 with the subsequent publication of the proceedings, have also put forward the studies of Bahraini archaeology quite considerably. Vide Shaikha Haya Ali al Khalifa and Michael Rice (eds.), *Bahrain through the Ages: the Archaeology*, KPI, London, 1986. Besides the above, one should also refer to D. T. Potts (ed.), *Dilmun: New Studies in the Archaeology and Early History of Bahrain*, Berlin, 1983; Michael Rice (ed.), *Dilmun Discovered: the Early Years of Archaeology in Bahrain*, Min. Infm., Bahrain, 1983; M. Rice, *Search for the Paradise Land; An Introduction to the Archaeology of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf*, London, 1984.


(19) It has been reported that the Hadd Project jointly carried out with the Italian and French teams has recently revealed 'Harappan' sherds even near Sur. Mauricio Tosi’s lecture delivered at the Cultural Club at Qurm, Oman, on 26th December, 1986. Vide the article by Bala Menon in *Times of Oman*, 1st, Jan., 1987: 13.

(20) G. Bibby, 'Arabian Gulf Archaeology', *Kuml 1964*: 86–155, 1965; H. Kapel, 'Rock Carvings at Jabal Jusasiyah, Qatar', *Arrayan*, No. 8, Qatar National Museum, Doha, 1983. They lack, unfortunately, the chronological evidences inspite of the fact that their graphic connotations and the typological analysis could be a matter of much interesting discussions.

(21) B. de Cardi (ed.), *op. cit.*; J. Tixier (ed.), *op. cit.*; et al.


(25) It is rather rare case that certain artefacts have been found in the underground structure of a cairn. Vide also Kapel, *op. cit.*; B. de Cardi (ed.), *op. cit.*; J. Tixier (ed.), *op. cit.*.
1. General view of Buri Mound R-1, Bahrain, before excavation.
2. Stone chamber of Buri Mound R-1, from above.
1. Stone chamber of Buri Mound R-1, side view.
2. Human bones accumulated in the end of the chamber, Buri Mound R-1.
1. General view of Buri Mound R–2, Bahrain, before excavation.
2. Buri Mound R–2 under excavation, showing the outer ring wall and a part of the shaft.
1. Shaft access to the burial chamber, Buri Mound R-2.  
2. Inner view of the stone chamber, Buri Mound R-2.  
3. Human bones in the left alcove of the chamber, Buri Mound R-2.
Fig. 1 General map of the Gulf.
Fig. 2 Archaeological sites in northern Bahrain.
(Principal tumuli fields are shaded).
Fig. 3  Buri Mound R-1, Bahrain.
Fig. 4 Buri Mound R-2, Bahrain.
Fig. 5 General map of Umm al-Maa, Qatar.
Fig. 6 Umm al-Maa Cairn J-1, Qatar.
Fig. 7 Umm al-Maa Cairn J-2, Qatar.