

Qidfa' 1:
Excavation of a
Late Prehistoric Tomb,
Fujairah Emirate,
United Arab Emirates

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With a contribution by Kathleen McSweeney



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المخلص:

يقدم هذا المطبوع نتائج حفائر في موقع أثري تم اكتشافه في إمارة الفجيرة بطريق الصدفة قبل ثلاثة عقود ونصف، وذلك بعد أن شرع مزارع بتجريف أحد التلال الصغيرة المحاذية لمزرعته في منطقة قدفع الكائنة شمال مدينة الفجيرة. وبعد تجريف الجزء العلوي مما يقرب من نصف التل، الذي يتراوح قطره عشرون متراً، ظهر تجويفان متجاوران أثارا انتباه سائق الجرافة الذي توقف عن مواصلة العمل، وكذلك ابناء المنطقة لاسيما الأطفال منهم الذين كانوا يراقبون عملية التجريف. لقد تجرّء البعض من هؤلاء الأطفال الدخول في أحد هذين التجويفين والخروج من التجويف الآخر، وفور وصول خبر الاكتشاف إلى الجهات المعنية بالإمارة، قام ديوان الحاكم في الفجيرة بالتحقق من الموضوع تم على إثره التحفظ على الموقع. ولعدم وجود إدارة للأثار ترعى مثل هذه الحالة في حينه، فقد طلبت إدارة ديوان الحاكم من إدارة الآثار والسياحة، عبر ديوان ممثل الحاكم في المنطقة الشرقية بالعين، ارسال أحد خبراءها لتقييم الحالة التي انتهت بإجراء عمليات تنقيب تمت بموسمين متتاليين في ربيع عام 1986 والعام الذي تلاه.

لقد كنتُ محظوظاً للقيام بهذه المهمة التي بدت بأنها ستكون عملية تنقيب سهلة وسريعة في مدفن مسروق حاله حال معظم مدافن العصرين البرونزي والحديدي التي تنتشر في إمارة أبوظبي التي سبق وأن قمْتُ بالتنقيب في البعض منها. ولكن الحقيقة كانت عكس ذلك، فقد تبين أن مدفن قدفع الذي أسميناه بالموقع رقم 1 هو مدفن من نوع جديد لم يماثله من اكتشافات آنذاك سوى مدفن "فشغه 1" الكائن في وادي القور شرق منطقة الحويلات في القاطع الجنوبي من إمارة رأس الخيمة، والذي تم اكتشافه في نفس العام من قبل فريق بريطاني صغير. ورغم تشابه عمارة المدفين لحد كبير، من حيث أن هذا النوع الجديد من المدافن قد صمم ليأخذ شكلاً يشبه شكل حدوة الحصان أو حرف الـ "U" الإنكليزية، فإن مدفن قدفع قد تميز عن مدفن فشغه ذو الدور الواحد، من حيث أنه يتكون من دورين، أحدهما تحت سطح الأرض والآخر فوقها، ليس هذا فقط بل بثرانه بالقطع الأثرية التي تم اكتشافها في الدور العلوي والذي قُدرنا تاريخها بنهايات العصر البرونزي المتأخر (1600- 1300 قبل الميلاد) وبدايات العصر الحديدي (1300- 1100 ق.م). وعلى نقيض الدور العلوي من المدفن فإن الدور السفلي الذي يرجع إلى الفترة الزمنية المسماة «وادي سوق» (2000- 1600 ق.م)، وجد منهوباً ولم يعثر فيه إلا على القليل من مكتشفاته الأصلية والتي كانت كافية لإرجاعها إلى فترة وادي سوق المذكورة. ولا غرابة من عملية نهب المدفن السفلي دون العلوي لأن الحقيقة هي أن كلا الدورين قد أخليا من محتوياتهما بشكل شبه كامل وذلك بعد مرور عدة قرون على انشاء المدفن، ومن ثم أعيد استعمال الدور العلوي منه فقط. ومما هو معروف فإن استعمال المقابر القديمة في منطقة جنوب شرق الجزيرة العربية أكثر من مرة كانت عادة مألوفة لاسيما في العصر الحديدي، مما حدا بالقوم في حالة قدفع 1، تغطية المدفن بعد إعادة الاستعمال بطبقة من الأتربة والحصى بحيث بدا وكأنه أكمة طبيعية أخفته عن يد العابثين لأكثر من ثلاثة آلاف عام.

كشف التنقيب الذي أجريناه في الدور العلوي من هذا المدفن والذي يزيد ارتفاعه عن المتر بقليل عن طبقتين متداخلتين من العظام المتراسة، تتم على أن الذكور والإناث والقليل من الأطفال قد دفنوا سوية مع حاجياتهم الشخصية، التي تضمنت الكثير من أواني الفخار وحجر الكوراييت والنحاس، بالإضافة إلى الخناجر ورؤوس السهام والفؤوس والحجول والمعاضد المصنوعة من النحاس أو البرونز، والحلي من أصداق منقوشة وخواتم وأقراط وأختام وخرز. بالرغم من أن المدفن العلوي (الأحدث) لم تمسه يد العابثين، إلا أن تجريف الأكمة التي كانت تعلوه، أصاب الكثير من مكتشفاته بالضرر الكبير، وكان ذلك بسبب الوزن الثقيل للجرافة (بلدوزر) والتي لحسن الحظ لم تصل إلى طبقة العظام. وبعد اكتمال التنقيب في المدفن العلوي الذي كان يتم الدخول إليه عبر فتحة في الجدار المقوس تتجه نحو الجنوب الشرقي (جهة البحر)، تبين بأن أرضيته ما هي إلا سقفاً للمدفن السفلي (الأقدم) والذي يبلغ عرضه 90 سنتيمتراً فقط. وتحت تلك الأرضية التي أنشئت من صخور مسطحة، عثر على القليل من أواني الحجر والفخار وبقايا العظام البشرية وجدت في حيز لا يتجاوز ارتفاعه 40 سنتيمتراً، وهذا أقل بكثير من الحيز الذي وجدت فيه مكتشفات المدفن العلوي والذي بلغ 110 سنتيمتراً.

باختصار شديد نقول إن عمارة مدفن قدفع 1، تعتبر من حيث المضمون امتداداً للعمارة الجنائزية في منطقة جنوب شرق الجزيرة العربية وإن كانت قد اختلفت عن سابقتها من حيث الشكل، فبعد أن ظهرت مدافن العصر البرونزي المبكر في نهايات الألف الرابع ق.م في جبل حفيت وهي أحادية الغرف، تطورت في منتصف الألف الثالث لتصبح ذات أشكال دائرية متعددة الغرف وقد روعي، كما هو واضح في مدافن جزيرة أم النار، وغيرها من مناطق أخرى في جنوب شرق الجزيرة العربية، بأن يُبنى محيطها الخارجي من صخور منحوتة كانت ترص الواحدة جنب الأخرى وفق مخطط دائري دقيق كان كما يبدو يرسم على الأرض سلفاً. أما في بداية الألف الثاني قبل الميلاد ومنتصفه فقد ظهرت أشكالاً جديدة أقل تطوراً من سابقتها لكنها متعددة الأشكال منها المدافن المستطيلة والدائرية أو البيضوية، وقد تكون أحياناً أحادية التقسيم أو متعددة الغرف، كما هو الحال في مدافن منطقة البدية بامارة الفجيرة، وشمل برأس الخيمة، والقصيص بدبي وغيرها. ومن أشكال مدافن تلك الحقبة كذلك، هو ما وجدناه لأول مرة في كل من مدفني فشغه 1 شرق منطقة الحويلات وقدفع 1 موضوع هذا البحث.

أثناء عمليات التنقيب في المدفن موضوع البحث والذي يحمل الرقم 1 وبعدها، تجولنا بين بيوت القرية ومزارعها ورصدنا ثلاثة مواقع أثرية اسميناها قدفع 2 و 3 و 4. فالموقع رقم 2 المجاور للمدفن 1 وهو عبارة عن أكمة صغيرة لا ترتفع عن سطح الأرض إلا القليل ربما تضم مدفناً، أما الموقع رقم 3 فهو كما تبين لاحقاً من خلال عمليات سبر أجراها متحف الفجيرة، وتنقيب أشمل قام به مؤخراً فريق ألماني الجنسية، فإنه بقايا مستوطنة تعود للعصرين البرونزي والحديدي، هذا في حين أن الموقع 4 والذي تم تنقيبه

من قبل متحف الفجيرة ظهر بأنه مدفناً شبيه بالمدفن 1 من حيث العمارة والمكتشفات الأثرية، أما الموقع 5 وهو الموقع الوحيد الذي يقع غرب الطريق المؤدي إلى مدينة خورفكان فيبدو من خلال أنقاضه الظاهرة على سطح الأرض بأنه مدفناً كذلك. بالإضافة إلى هذه المواقع فقد عثرنا على عدد من المنشآت الحجرية بأشكال دائرية قد تكون مدافن من عصور أقدم تقع على سفوح الجبال التي تحيط بالمزارع المحيطة بالمدفن من جهتها الشمالية، ووجدنا كذلك القليل من أكوام الحجارة على مرتفع صخري ليس ببعيد عن ساحل البحر، كما ولاحظنا وجود بعض النقوش الصخرية في أكثر من مكان .

لكي نبين أهمية قدف 1 سواء من حيث مكتشفاته الغزيرة وأثرها على عمليات التنقيب في المنطقة نستعرض وعلى عجلة تاريخ الاكتشافات الأثرية في إمارة الفجيرة قبل قدف، وذلك حين زار السيد جيفري بيبي، الذي كان ينقب في جزيرة أم النار مع بعثة الآثار الدنماركية في بداية الستينيات من القرن العشرين، مدينة دباب للتحقق من طبيعة خندق حفرتة قوة ساحل عمان وكشفت فيه عن عدد من القطع الأثرية التي نسبت إلى العصر الحديدي. أما السيدة بياترس دي كاردي الأثرية البريطانية الجنسية فقد أجرت مسحاً في العام 1968 شمل مناطق من ساحل الإمارة حددت بموجبه بعض المواقع الأثرية دون أن تجري أي تنقيب. وفي العام 1975 قامت بعثة الآثار العراقية بالتنقيب في بقايا استيطان سطحي من العصر الإسلامي كان يقع على مقربة من مواقع قدف السالفة الذكر. لقد كان لنتائج التنقيب في مدفن قدف 1، وأيضاً تلك التي قام بها المؤلف فيما بعد، في منطقة البدية في ثمانينات القرن العشرين، والتي أسفرت أيضاً عن اكتشاف خمسة مواقع أخرى ترجع إلى العصور البرونزية والحديدية والإسلامية، أثراً كبيراً في تطور عمليات المسح والتنقيب في منطقة الساحل الشرقي لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، حيث اجتذبت تلك الاكتشافات عدداً من فرق المسح والتنقيب من دول مختلفة، منها سويسرا/إمارة لختنشتاين وأستراليا وفرنسا وألمانيا، وبريطانيا، وتوصلت إلى اكتشاف العديد من مواقع الآثار التي ترجع إلى عصور زمنية مختلفة. وبفعل اكتشاف موقع قدف 1 ومعثوراته التي ترقى إلى اعتبارها كنزاً أثرياً، قامت حكومة الفجيرة بتخصيص مبنى ليكون متحفاً للآثار كان لنا شرف تحمل مسؤولية اعداده وذلك من خلال عملنا في إدارة الآثار والسياحة بمدينة العين في حينه، لقد تم افتتاح متحف الفجيرة في 30/11/1991، كما وتم تأسيس إدارة للآثار تطورت فيما بعد لتصبح هيئة للسياحة والآثار.

ختاماً لا بد من القول بأنه لولا اهتمام ودعم صاحب السمو الشيخ حمد بن محمد الشرقي عضو المجلس الأعلى لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة حاكم الفجيرة الذي شرفنا بزيارته لمواقع قدف والبدية أثناء التنقيب، وكذلك زيارته وتوجيهاته عند اعدادنا لمتحف الفجيرة، لما كان من الممكن تحقيق هذين المنجزين وما تلاهما من اكتشافات أثرية ودراسات قام بها فيما بعد زملاء لنا في إمارة الفجيرة، فإلى سموه جلّ احترامنا وتقديرنا، وسوف لن ننسى من توجيه الشكر والامتنان لكل من سمو الشيخ طحنون بن محمد آل نهيان ممثل الحاكم في المنطقة الشرقية من إمارة أبوظبي وسعادة سيف بن علي الدرمني وكيل إدارة الآثار والسياحة السابق بمدينة العين على إيفادي للقيام بهذه المهمة. والشكر موصول كذلك إلى زملاء آخرين أدرجت أسماؤهم في النص الانكليزي .

والله ولي التوفيق

المؤلف

ابريل / نيسان 2022

Preface and Acknowledgments

The following reports about archaeological fieldwork of a tomb, Qidfa^c 1, which remained in use from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age, which accidentally came to light in 1986. There are many reasons for the pause of many years since excavation took place, several of which are beyond the author's responsibility, not the least of which are the author's retirement, but also higher priority daily professional duties and at the time a lack of budgeted funds to render the report in a style commensurate with the importance of the find. But now the report and some photos might appear rough and ready. Please be aware that this report results from an ad hoc salvage operation with little staff. From the beginning it was a matter of personal initiative.

Certain words are used in a special sense. Given the lack of metal analyses for most of the metal finds, we refer to "copper-based" if not just to "metal" and do not differentiate between copper and bronze by virtue of surface colour. The author is well aware of the risks involved in such field identifications. Few gold, silver and no iron artefacts occurred. Similarly, for lack of laboratory analyses so-called chlorite and steatite vessels are referred to non-committally as "soft stone."

Arabic place-names and personal names are anglicised in simple fashion as they appear in the archaeological literature.

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Mohamed Al-Sharqi Member of the Supreme Council Ruler of Fujairah visited the site while the excavation was in progress; not only explaining his interest in the discovery but also discussing the immediate landscape and mentioning ancient water dam in the surrounding area. H.H. visits to Qidfa^c 1 and Bidya were a real inspiration for us.

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Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini
av	average
BC	Before Common era
b. diam.	base diameter
cm	centimetre
diam.	diameter
est.	estimated
h.	height
HED	Historic Environment Department, al- ^ḥ Ain
QDF	Qidfa ^ḥ inventory number
FM	Fujairah Museum
km	kilometre
m	metre
r. diam.	rim diameter
SLFARA	Swiss-Liechtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCL	University College London
UTM	Universal Transverse Mercator system

Introduction

On 15 April 1986 a chance discovery was made at the village of Qidfa^١ (قدفع), when a farm was being enlarged by the levelling of a small mound located on the eastern edge of the property (Plate 1; UTM 40R 435205e, 2798616n, alt. 8 m). While bulldozing the mound, large stone ceilings and two hollows described by the locals as ‘caves’ came to light. With the appearance of the unexpected hollows, the bulldozing stopped and soon curious village children had their turn to enter one hollow and exit from the other, retrieving a small number of stone vessels. The Emiri Court (diwan) in the Emirate was informed of the discovery and invited the author, then the archaeological adviser of the Department of Antiquities in al-^١Ain, to explore the discovery. The author immediately visited the site accompanied by Nasser Hussain al-Abboudi, then head of the archaeological section of the Department of Information and Culture in Sharjah, and Mustafa Toufiq, of the same department. In Fujairah town, Dr Omar Al Sheikh Khalil joined us, then in-charge of the Cultural Section at the Emiri court. Due to the importance of the discovery, the author proposed to the Diwan an immediate rescue excavation, which continued for two seasons. The author, assisted by Mustafa Toufiq excavated the first season. Morkooth Nanu, then a member of the Department of Antiquities in al-^١Ain, succeeded the latter during the second season. The first season commenced on 22 April 1986, a week after the discovery, using four local labourers, and concluded on 22 May 1986. The excavations continued during the entire day so as to watch over the site as long as possible to ensure its protection. The author drew, registered and restored the fragmented pottery vessels, which continued until 8 June 1986, a day before *Eid al-Fitr*. He pursued these activities continued day and night at the diwan building in Fujairah town. Starting on 1 March 1987, the second season ended on the 22nd of the same month.

During the busy first and second seasons spent at the village of Qidfa^١, the author managed to spare some time and carried out a survey in search of other evidence of archaeology visible on the ground surface in the farms and between the old and newly built concrete houses. The discovery of four more archaeological sites resulted, designated Qidfa^١ 2–5 (Plate 2). Three of these were suspected to be burial sites and one a settlement. Qidfa^١ 2 is a low small mound, immediately south-east of Qidfa^١ 1, possibly also a tomb. Qidfa^١ 3, the largest and highest mound, is suspected to be a settlement with a surface covered with small to medium size pebbles. The latter has an irregular shape thought to have resulted by farming operations and the building of a house which surrounding the site on three sides. Qidfa^١ 4 is another tomb slightly smaller than Qidfa^١ 1, located in a large open space, which has been used by the inhabitants as a soccer field, situated between houses. It is about 700m south-east of Qidfa^١1. Unlike the last four sites, which are located to the eastern side of the asphalt road leading north to Khor Fakkan, Qidfa^١ 5 is located on the western one and seems to be a subterranean burial (not marked in Plate 2). A number of old Islamic cemeteries lay in the area extending east of the sites, whilst rock carvings and stone cairns were seen in the foothills of the mountain overlooking the village from the north. A small group of stone cairns have also been located on an outcrop, some 900m east of site 1 (Plate 3).

Excavation at Qidfa^١ 1 revealed a prehistoric collective tomb, in use through the Wadi Suq into the Iron Age. To the best of the excavator’s knowledge its remains count to the richest ever discovered in the UAE. The announcement of the finds at Qidfa^١ 1 rapidly changed the negative attitude of certain archaeologists towards the archaeology of Fujairah and attracted several, as shown below.¹

¹ Several local newspapers, in Arabic and English, first noted this find. The initial results of the excavations were presented, but not published, by the author in 1986 at the Seminar of Arabian Studies in London. Shirley Kay also publicized the archaeology of the UAE in her first book in 1986 (*Emirates archaeological heritage*) for general readers, which is based on a television series, and in a second book (*Land of the emirates*) of 1988, although the Iron Age date of Qidfa^١ 1 was not yet certain. Daniel T. Potts mentioned the site as one among others on the Batina coastal zone (1990b: 1 374).