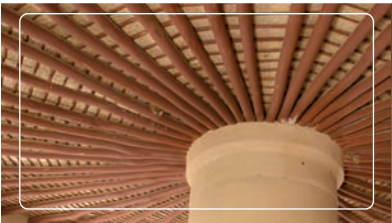




HISTORY & TRADITIONS



'He who does not know his past cannot make the best of his present and future, for it is from the past that we learn.'





HISTORY & TRADITIONS

THE UAE HAS A LONG HISTORY stretching back over 100,000 years, stone tools from the Early Stone Age having been found recently along the edge of the Hajar Mountains. Prior to this the earliest known human occupation for which there is significant evidence dated from the Neolithic period, 5500 BC or 7500 years ago, when the climate was wetter and food resources abundant. Even at this early stage, there is proof of interaction with the outside world, especially with civilisations to the north. These contacts persisted and became wide-ranging, probably motivated by trade in copper from the Hajar Mountains, as the climate became more arid and fortified oasis communities focused on agriculture.

Foreign trade, the recurring motif in the history of this strategic region, seems to have flourished also in later periods, facilitated by domestication of the camel at the end of the second millennium. At the same time, the discovery of new irrigation techniques (*falaj* irrigation) made possible the extensive watering of agricultural areas that resulted in an explosion of settlement in the region.

By the first century AD overland caravan traffic between Syria and cities in southern Iraq, followed by seaborne travel to the important port of Omana (probably present-day Umm al-Qaiwain) and thence to India was an alternative to the Red Sea route used by the Romans. Pearls had been exploited in the area for millennia but at this time the trade reached new heights. Seafaring was also a mainstay and major fairs were held at Dibba bringing merchants from as far afield as China.

The arrival of envoys from the Prophet Muhammad in 630 AD heralded the conversion of the region to Islam with Dibba again featuring, this time as a battleground in the wake of the Prophet's death. By 637 AD Islamic armies were using Julfar (Ra's al-Khaimah) as a staging post for the conquest of Iran. Over many centuries, Julfar became a wealthy port and pearling centre of considerable importance from which great wooden dhows ranged far and wide across the Indian Ocean.





The earliest known inhabitants of the UAE seem to have arrived in the Early Stone Age, over 100,000 years ago. Their stone tools have been found along the edge of the Hajar Mountains.



Many stone tools have been found in the UAE.

Preserving the heritage and traditions of the past is a key focus of Government policy.



c.5500 BC	Evidence of extensive human occupation in UAE.	
5500–3000 BC	Occupation by skilled groups of herders using finely made stone tools (so-called 'Arabian bifacial tradition').	
3000–2500 BC	Hafit period – era of earliest collective burials first noted on the lower slopes of Jebel Hafit in the interior of Abu Dhabi.	
2500–2000 BC	Umm al-Nar period – era of first oasis towns (e.g. at Hili, Tell Abraq, Bidiya, Kalba) dominated by large, circular fortresses; burial of the dead in round communal tombs; wide-ranging trade contact with Mesopotamia, Iran, Indus Valley, Baluchistan, Bactria (Afghanistan); first intensive use of copper resources of Hajar Mountains; area referred to as <i>Magan</i> in Mesopotamian sources.	
2000–1300 BC	Wadi Suq period and Late Bronze Age – an era which is characterised by fewer towns; change in burial customs to long, generally narrow collective tombs; close ties to Dilmun (Bahrain).	
1300–300 BC	Iron Age – introduction of new irrigation technology in the form of <i>falaj</i> (pl. <i>aflaj</i>), subterranean galleries which led water from mountain aquifers to lower-lying oases and gardens; explosion of settlement; first use of iron; first writing, using South Arabian alphabet; contacts with Assyrian and Persian empires.	
300 BC–0	Mleiha period (or Late Pre-Islamic A–B) – flourishing town at Mleiha; beginnings of local coinage; far-flung imports from Greece (black-glazed pottery), South Arabia (alabaster unguent jars); first use of the horse.	
0–250 AD	Ed-Dur period (or late Pre-Islamic C–D) – flourishing towns at ed-Dur and Mleiha; extensive trade network along the Gulf linking up the Mediterranean, Syria and Mesopotamia with India; imports include Roman glass, coinage, brass; massive production of coinage by a ruler called Abi'el; first use of Aramaic in inscriptions from ed-Dur and Mleiha.	
240 AD	Rise of the Sasanian dynasty in south-western Iran, conquest of most of eastern Arabia.	
6 th /7 th cent. AD	Introduction of Christianity via contacts with south-western Iran and southern Mesopotamia; establishment of monastery on Sir Bani Yas by Nestorian Christian community; Sasanian garrisons in inner Oman and evidence for contact in the UAE shown by coins and ceramics from Kush (Ra's al-Khaimah), Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah.	
630 AD	Arrival of envoys from the Prophet Muhammad; conversion of the people to Islam.	
632 AD	Death of the Prophet Muhammad; outbreak of the <i>ridda</i> movement, a widespread rebellion against the teachings of Islam; dispatch of Hudhayfah b. Mihsan by the Caliph Abu Bakr to quell rebellion of Laqit b. Malik Dhu at-Tag at Dibba; major battle at Dibba, collapse of the rebels.	

Julfar used as staging post for Islamic invasion of Iran.

Julfar used as staging post for Abbasid invasion of Oman.

Buyids (Buwayhids) conquer south-eastern Arabia.

Geographer Yaqut mentions Julfar as a fertile town.

Close commercial contact between Northern Emirates and kingdom of Hormuz, based on Jarun island in the Straits of Hormuz.

Portuguese circumnavigation of Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama using Arab navigational information.

Portuguese–Ottoman rivalry in the Gulf.

Venetian traveller Gasparo Balbi's description of coast of UAE from Qatar to Ra's al-Khaimah; mention of Portuguese fortress at Kalba; first mention of Bani Yas in Abu Dhabi.

Description of the East Coast of the UAE by a Dutch mariner sailing in the *Meerkat*.

Growth of English trade in the Gulf; increasing Anglo–Dutch rivalry.

Sharjah and most of Musandam and the UAE East Coast, all the way to Khor Fakkan, under control of Qawasim according to Carsten Niebuhr, German surveyor working with the King of Denmark's scientific expedition.

Repeated English East India Company attacks on Qawasim navy.

General Treaty of Peace between British Government and sheikhs of Ra's al-Khaimah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ajman, Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Survey of the Gulf resulting in the publication of the first accurate charts and maps of the area.

Collapse of the natural pearl market; first agreements signed by rulers of Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi for oil exploration.

Oil exploration agreements finalised in Ra's al-Khaimah, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ajman.

First export of oil from Abu Dhabi.

British Government announced its intention to withdraw from the Gulf region; discussions begin on formation of a federation of the emirates.

First export of oil from Dubai.

Agreement reached amongst rulers of the emirates to form a union.

Formation of the State of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Zayed, 1st President of the UAE died.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan elected as new President of the UAE.

637 AD

892 AD

963 AD

c. 1220

14th–15th cent.

1498

16th cent.

1580

1666

1720s

1764

1800–1819

1820

1820–1864

1930s

1945–1951

1962

1968

1969

10 July 1971

2 Dec 1971

2 Nov 2004

3 Nov 2004

IBN MAJID

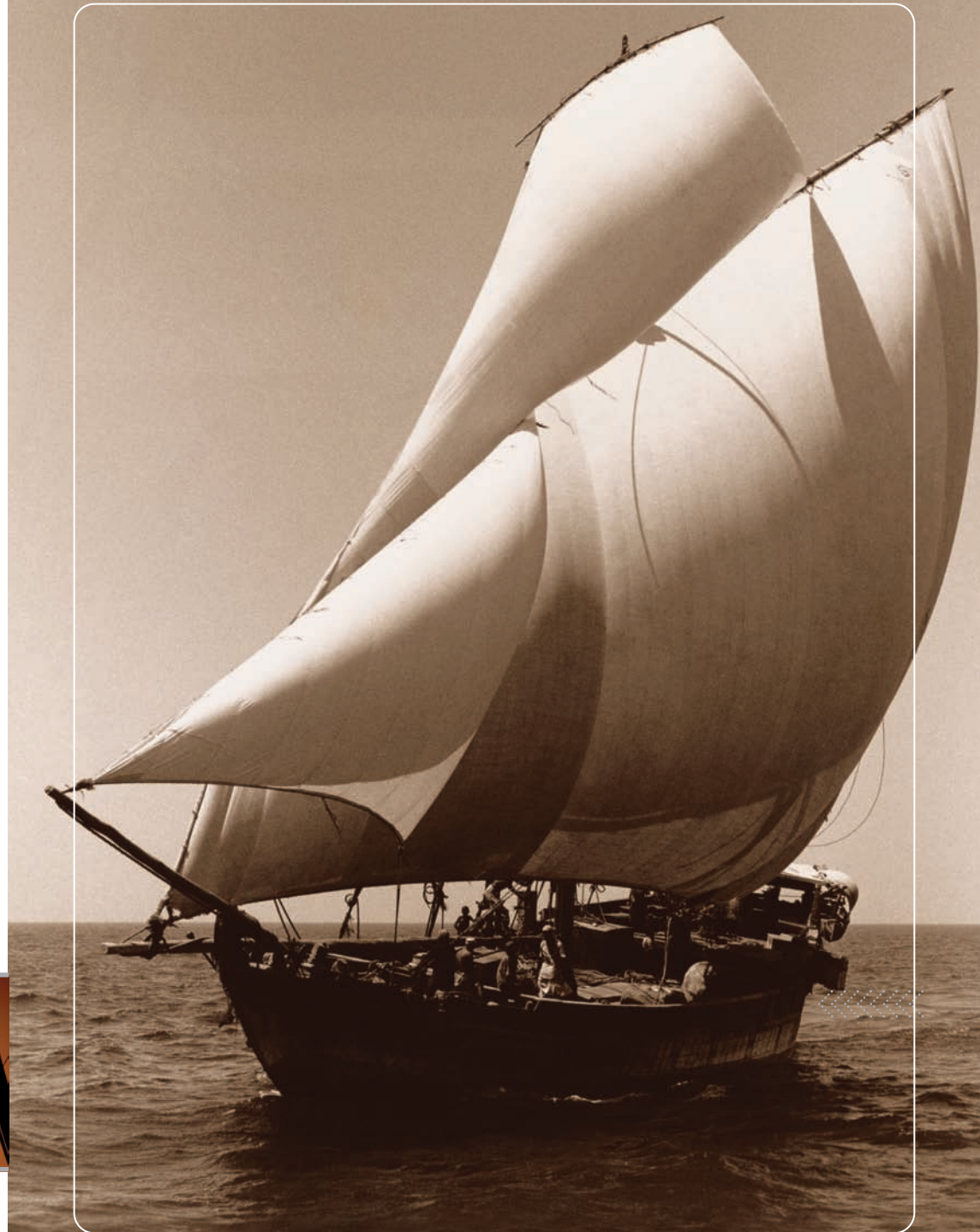
We use 32 rhumbs and we have tirma, zam and qiyas (measurement of star attitude) but they are not able to do these things nor can they understand the things which we do although we can understand what they do and we can use their knowledge and travel in either ships.

They acknowledge that we have the better knowledge of the sea and its sciences and the wisdom of the stars in the high roads of the sea.

For we divide the ship in length and breadth according to the compass rose and we have measurements of star altitudes.

They have no similar division or any means of dividing them from the prow of the ship to guide themselves; neither do they use star altitude measurements to guide them when they incline to the right or left.

Ibn Majid, the 'Lion of the Sea' and a legendary figure in UAE history, wrote the verse quoted opposite long before Vasco da Gama ever rounded the Cape of Good Hope or set foot in the Arabian lands from which Ibn Majid, his equally skilled father, grandfather and other forebears had been sailing and exploring throughout their working lives. The 'they' of whom he wrote were, of course, Europeans, and it is true to say that the Arabs had sailed into European waters long before the Europeans had mastered the art of crossing the Indian Ocean. Born in Julfar, close to present-day Ra's al-Khaimah, in around 1432–37, Ibn Majid came from a long line of intrepid sailors. His reputation as a navigator is based upon 40 surviving works, 39 of which are in verse. Some are brief, others, such as the 805-verse *al-Sofaliya* describing the sea route from India to Sofala on the Mozambique coast, are considerably longer. One treatise (the *Fawa'id*) is a lengthy opus that not only summarises all of Ibn Majid's own knowledge of navigation, but also draws extensively on the work of early Arab astronomers. His last-known poem was written in 1500 AD and it is believed that he died soon after, at a little over 70 years of age.





A cannon outside the walls of Umm al-Qaiwain Fort

The British offensive was based on a desire to control the maritime trade routes between the Gulf and India.

The Portuguese arrival in the Gulf in the sixteenth century had bloody consequences for the Arab residents of Julfar and East Coast ports like Dibba, Bidiya, Khor Fakkan and Kalba. However, while European powers competed for regional supremacy, a local power, the Qawasim, were gathering strength. At the beginning of the nineteenth century they had built up a fleet of over 60 large vessels and could put nearly 20,000 sailors to sea, eventually provoking a British offensive to control the maritime trade routes between the Gulf and India.

Inland, the arc of villages at Liwa were the focus of economic and social activity for the Bani Yas from before the sixteenth century. But by the early 1790s the town of Abu Dhabi had become such an important pearling centre that the political leader of all the Bani Yas groups, the Sheikh of the Al Bu Falah (Al Nahyan family) moved there from the Liwa. Early in the nineteenth century, members of the Al Bu Falasah, a branch of the Bani Yas, settled by the Creek in Dubai and established Maktoum rule in that emirate.

Following the defeat of the Qawasim, the British signed a series of agreements with the sheikhs of the individual emirates that, later augmented with treaties on preserving a maritime truce, resulted in the area becoming known as 'The Trucial States'.

The pearling industry thrived in the relative calm at sea during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, providing both income and employment to the people of the Arabian Gulf coast. Many of the inhabitants were semi-nomadic, pearling in the summer months and tending to their date gardens in the winter. However, their meagre economic resources were soon to be dealt a heavy blow. The First World War impacted severely on the pearl fishery, but it was the economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, coupled with the Japanese invention of the cultured pearl, that damaged it irreparably. The industry eventually faded away just after the Second World War, when the newly independent Government of India imposed heavy taxation on pearls imported from the Gulf. This was catastrophic for the area. Despite their resourcefulness, the population faced considerable hardship with little opportunity for education and no roads or hospitals.

Fortunately oil was on the horizon and in the early 1930s the first oil company teams arrived to carry out preliminary surveys and the first cargo of crude was exported from Abu Dhabi in 1962. With revenues growing as oil production increased, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who was chosen as Ruler of Abu Dhabi on 6 August 1966, undertook a massive programme of construction of schools, housing, hospitals and roads. When Dubai's oil exports commenced in 1969, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, *de facto* Ruler of Dubai since 1939, was also able to use oil revenues to improve the quality of life of his people.

FEDERATION

At the beginning of 1968, when the British announced their intention of withdrawing from the Arabian Gulf by the end of 1971, Sheikh Zayed acted rapidly to initiate moves towards establishing closer ties with the emirates. Along with Sheikh Rashid, who was to become Vice-President and Prime Minister of the newly formed state, Sheikh Zayed took the lead in calling for a federation that would include not only the seven emirates that together made up the Trucial States, but also Qatar and Bahrain. Following a period of negotiation however, agreement was reached between the rulers of six of the emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Fujairah and Ajman) and the Federation to be known as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was formally established on 2 December 1971. The seventh emirate, Ra's al-Khaimah, formally acceded to the new Federation on 10 February 1972.

ZAYED AND THE UAE

The prosperity, harmony and modern development that characterises the United Arab Emirates, led today by President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, also the Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and his fellow-members of the Supreme Council of Rulers of the seven emirates, is due to a very great extent to the role played by Sheikh Zayed, both prior to the formation of the Federation and in the nearly 33 years that followed until his death in November 2004. The achievements of

The United Arab Emirates was formally established on 2 December 1971.



THE DISCOVERY OF OIL



It is now over four decades since oil production first began in the United Arab Emirates. The story of oil, however, goes back much further. In the 1930s, the consortium of what became BP, Shell, Total, ExxonMobil and Partex, operating in Iraq as the Iraq Petroleum Company, turned their eyes to the Lower Gulf. Over the next few years, several concession agreements were signed, of which the most important was that with Abu Dhabi in January 1939.

To handle those in the Trucial States, as the UAE was then known, IPC established a subsidiary, Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast), PD(TC), which drilled its first well at Ra's Sadr, north-east of Abu Dhabi, in 1951. Although dry, it was, at the time, the deepest well ever drilled in the Middle East.

PD(TC) drilled several other wells before finding traces of hydrocarbons at Murban, (now known as Bab), south-east of Abu Dhabi, in 1954. With its third well on this structure completed in 1960, PD(TC) declared the field commercially viable and it went into production in 1963. The company was later renamed the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company (ADPC).

Meanwhile, in 1953, BP had negotiated an offshore concession, assigned to a specially created subsidiary, Abu Dhabi Marine Areas Ltd (ADMA). Surveys were carried out with the assistance of the famous French underwater explorer, Jacques Cousteau. The first well was drilled on a structure called Umm Shaif in 1958, and struck oil in massive quantities. With Das Island as the export terminal, Umm Shaif went into production in 1962.

Since then, many more important fields have been identified, while the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), established in 1971, has now taken controlling shares in the concessions, with ADMA being replaced as operator by the Abu Dhabi Marine Operating Company (ADMA-OPCO) and ADPC by the Abu Dhabi Company for Onshore Oil Operations (ADCO), although foreign shareholders retain a share.

Memories of the early days of exploration are now fading fast. The results of the efforts of those, both UAE nationals and expatriates, who took part, however, continue to define the economy of the United Arab Emirates today.





Sheikh Zayed on camel back photographed with his falcon in 1949.

Sheikh Zayed had a clear vision of what he wanted to achieve.

his career are well summed up elsewhere in this *Yearbook*, but a brief overview of his life and achievements is appropriate here.

Born around 1918 in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed was the youngest of the four sons of Sheikh Sultan, Ruler of Abu Dhabi from 1922 to 1926. He was named after his grandfather, Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa.

At the time that Sheikh Zayed was born, the emirate was poor and undeveloped and life, even for members of the ruling family, was simple.

Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, as Sheikh Zayed grew to manhood, he displayed an early thirst for knowledge that took him out into the desert with the bedu tribesmen and into the sea with the fishermen and pearl divers, to learn about the people and the environment in which they lived. He later recalled with pleasure his experience of desert life and his initiation into the sport of falconry, which became a lifelong passion.

These travels provided Sheikh Zayed with a deep understanding both of the country and of its people. In the early 1930s, when the first oil company teams arrived to carry out preliminary surface geological surveys, he obtained his first exposure to the industry.

In 1946, Sheikh Zayed was chosen to fill a vacancy as Ruler's Representative in the Eastern Region of Abu Dhabi, centred on the oasis of Al Ain, approximately 160 kilometres east of the island of Abu Dhabi itself. The job involved not only the task of administering the six villages but also the whole of the adjacent desert region, enabling Sheikh Zayed to learn the techniques of government as well as deepening his knowledge of the tribes.

Sheikh Zayed brought to his new task a firm belief in the values of consultation and consensus, in contrast to confrontation. Foreign visitors, such as the British explorer Sir Wilfred Thesiger, who first met him at this time, noted with approbation that his judgements 'were distinguished by their acute insights, wisdom and fairness'.

Sheikh Zayed swiftly established himself not only as someone who had a clear vision of what he wished to achieve for the people of Al Ain, but also as someone who led by example.

A key task in the early years in Al Ain was that of stimulating the local economy, which was largely based on agriculture. He



also ordered a revision of local water ownership rights to ensure a more equitable distribution, surrendering the rights of his own family as an example to others.

With development gradually getting under way, Sheikh Zayed commenced the laying out of a visionary city plan, and ordered the planting of ornamental trees that, now grown to maturity, have made Al Ain one of the greenest cities in Arabia.

Despite the lack of government revenues, Sheikh Zayed succeeded in bringing progress to Al Ain, establishing the rudiments of an administrative machinery, personally funding the first modern school in the emirate and coaxing relatives and friends to contribute towards small-scale development programmes. Oil production was to provide Sheikh Zayed with the means to fund his dreams, with the export of the first cargo of Abu Dhabi crude in 1962.

On 6 August 1966, Sheikh Zayed succeeded his elder brother as Ruler of Abu Dhabi, with a mandate from his family to press ahead as fast as possible with the development of Abu Dhabi. One of his early steps was to increase contributions to the Trucial States Development Fund, while when, in February 1968, the British announced their intention of withdrawing from the Arabian Gulf by the end of 1971, Sheikh Zayed acted rapidly to initiate moves towards establishing closer ties with the emirates, these efforts culminating in the establishment of the UAE. Sheikh Zayed was elected by his fellow rulers as the first President of the UAE, a post to which he was successively re-elected at five-year intervals.

The new state came into being at a time of political turmoil in the region. A couple of days earlier, on the night of 30 November and the early morning of 1 December, Iran had seized the islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb, part of Ra's al-Khaimah, and had landed troops on Abu Musa, part of Sharjah (see section on Foreign Policy).

Foreign observers, lacking an understanding of the importance of a common history and heritage in bringing together the people of the UAE, predicted that the new state would survive only with difficulty, pointing to disputes with its neighbours and to the wide disparity in the size, population and level of development of the seven emirates.



Sheikh Zayed cared deeply about preserving the cultural heritage of the UAE.

Sheikh Zayed was founder of the United Arab Emirates and its President for almost 33 years.

Sheikh Zayed believed that all of the country's citizens have a role to play in its development. Both men and women, he believed, should play their part.

Better informed about the character of the country, Sheikh Zayed was naturally more optimistic and the predictions of those early pessimists were shown to be unfounded.

During his years in Al Ain Sheikh Zayed had been able to develop a vision of how the country should progress. Once Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and then President, he had over three and a half decades to devote to making that vision a reality.

One foundation of his philosophy as a leader and statesman was that the resources of the country should be fully used to the benefit of the people. He saw them to be not as a means unto themselves, but as a tool to facilitate the development of what he believed to be the real wealth of the country – its people, and, in particular, the younger generation.

Within this framework, Sheikh Zayed believed that all of the country's citizens have a role to play in its development. Both men and women, he believed, should play their part. Recognising that in the past a lack of education and development had prevented women from playing a full role in much of the activity of society, he took action to ensure that this situation was addressed rapidly and, under his leadership, the country's women came increasingly to play their part in political and economic life.

Sheikh Zayed also believed in encouragement of initiatives designed to conserve the traditional culture of the people, in order to familiarise the younger generation with the ways of their ancestors. In his view, it was of crucial importance that the lessons and heritage of the past were remembered.

He who does not know his past cannot make the best of his present and future, for it is from the past that we learn. We gain experience and we take advantage of the lessons and results [of the past].

If the heritage of the people of the UAE was important to Sheikh Zayed, so too was the conservation of its natural environment. His belief in conservation derived from his own upbringing where a sustainable use of resources required man to live in harmony with nature. This led him to ensure that conservation of the environment was a key part of government policy.

As in other areas of national life, Sheikh Zayed made it clear that conservation is not simply the task of government. He believed firmly that there was also a role for the individual and for non-governmental organisations, both of citizens and expatriates, applying this belief not just to concerns such as environmental conservation, but to other areas of national life as well.

Sheikh Zayed imbibed the principles of Islam in his childhood and they remained the foundation of his beliefs and principles throughout his life. He was a firm and dedicated opponent of those who sought to pervert the message of Islam to justify harsh dogmas, intolerance and terrorism. In Sheikh Zayed's view, however, such an approach was not merely a perversion of the message but is in direct contradiction of it. Extremism, he believed, has no place in Islam. In contrast, he stressed that:

Islam is a civilising religion that gives mankind dignity. A Muslim is he who does not inflict evil upon others. Islam is the religion of tolerance and forgiveness, and not of war, of dialogue and understanding. It is Islamic social justice which has asked every Muslim to respect the other. To treat every person, no matter what his creed or race, as a special soul is a mark of Islam. It is just that point, embodied in the humanitarian tenets of Islam, that makes us so proud of it.

He recognised, however, the necessity not only of eradicating terrorism, but of tackling its fundamental causes. Besides the international campaign against the types of terrorism, there should, he believed, be a strong international alliance that worked, in parallel, to exert real and sincere efforts to bring about a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.

Sheikh Zayed was also an eager advocate of tolerance, discussion and a better understanding between those of different faiths and, in particular, was an ardent advocate of dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

In the realm of the foreign policy of the state, his firmly-held belief in eschewing rhetoric in the search for solutions led the UAE to adopt an approach of seeking to find compromises, and to



Abu Dhabi's 'White Fort' was the seat of regional government and home of previous rulers of the emirate.

Sheikh Zayed recognised the necessity of not only eradicating terrorism but also of tackling its fundamental causes.

avoid, wherever possible, a resort to the use of force, whether in the Arab arena or more widely. Under his leadership, therefore, the country became an important provider of overseas aid, both for the development of infrastructure and for humanitarian relief, whether provided through civilian channels, as in the case of the reconstruction of Iraq following the defeat of the Saddam Hussein government in 2003 or, occasionally, by sending units of the UAE Armed Forces as international peacekeepers, such as to Kosovo in the late 1990s.

At the same time, the UAE, under his leadership, showed its preparedness to fight to defend justice, as was seen by its active participation in the war to liberate Kuwait from occupation in 1990–1991.

ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW

Since the formal study of the archaeology of the UAE began, nearly 50 years ago, there has been one major query about the results from surveys and excavations that have taken place. Substantial evidence of human occupation in the past has been identified, stretching back into the Neolithic, or Late Stone Age, period, which commenced around 5500 BC, or 7500 years ago. Archaeologists have always considered it likely that ancient man was living in the Emirates long before that, but no sites had been found, and it was thought that any traces of earlier occupation must have been buried beneath the dunes, or under gravel and stones washed out by thousands of years of rainfall.

Over the course of the last year, however, evidence of earlier occupation, in the Palaeolithic period, going back many tens of thousands of years, has finally been found. The discoveries were made at Jebel Faiyah, a rocky outcrop in the east of Sharjah, by a team from Sharjah's Directorate of Antiquities and Germany's University of Tübingen, and were first announced at the annual Symposium on Recent Palaeontological and Archaeological Discoveries in the UAE, organised by the Zayed Centre for History and Heritage.

A decorated red jar from the Umm al-Nar period, found at Tell Abraq.



The site was used during several periods, with evidence of Iron Age occupation near the surface, some Bronze Age material just below that, and then artefacts from the Neolithic period at a depth of between 40 and 70 centimetres under the present surface. The joint Sharjah & Tübingen team then excavated to a total depth of over 2 metres beneath the present surface, finding around a metre of deposits below the Neolithic artefacts in which there was no evidence of occupation at all. Around 170 to 180 centimetres beneath the present surface, however, they found several flint tools that had clearly been worked by Man. Efforts to date the site properly are continuing, and further investigation is planned. But the archaeologists have assigned a provisional date in the early part of the Upper Pleistocene, which began around 125,000 years ago, and ended around 10,000 years ago, when today's era of geological time, known as the Holocene, began. Nothing more is yet known about these early inhabitants of the Emirates, but a search is now under way for further sites of the same period.

While this discovery is the most significant to have been made over the last year in terms of studying the UAE's past, there have been other important finds as well. Going back beyond the Pleistocene, to the Late Miocene period, around 6 to 8 million years ago, another site with fossil bones has been identified at Umm al-Ishtan, in the far west of the country. The bones were first discovered by animal rangers from the Environmental Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) who reported them to President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan in late 2005. The President promptly ordered an investigation, and a team from the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey (ADIAS) paid a visit to discover that the bones were not from camels, as the rangers had thought, but from the primitive elephant *Stegotetrabeladon syrticus*. Several bones have now been excavated and will eventually go on display in Abu Dhabi.

The presence of this ancient elephant in western Abu Dhabi was already known, but the Umm al-Ishtan site is much further inland than any other Late Miocene site, showing, yet again, that there is still much to discover about the UAE's past.

A hoard of coins from the eleventh century AD. This is one of several such hoards found in the UAE. It is on display at Al Ain Museum.



More work by ADIAS, in association with the Department of Antiquities and Tourism in Al Ain, (now part of the new Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, ADACH), focused on Neolithic sites near Umm az-Zamul, in the south-eastern deserts of Abu Dhabi, where around 3000 individual stone artefacts have now been collected and mapped. One interesting discovery was a possible tomb of a type not previously recorded in the Emirates.

Other work has taken place in Abu Dhabi's eastern city of Al Ain where a team from France's Centre Nationale des Recherches Scientifiques (CNRS), working in association with the Department of Antiquities and Tourism, has undertaken an eighth year of excavations at a pit-grave at Hili that dates to the late Umm al-Nar period, just over 4000 years ago. The many hundreds of skeletons that have been recovered from the grave, as well as other associated material, has provided valuable data on the diet, health and customs of the people.

Although archaeologists have continued to devote attention to particular sites, of varying periods, a major current focus is on trying to understand the landscapes in which they are found, and assessing how these have evolved over thousands of years.

One recent study has been of the bay of Dhayah, in northern Ra's al-Khaimah, which provides a cross-section through the coast, mangroves, palm gardens, gravel fans and mountains. Results show that the area has been occupied since at least the Hafit period (around 3200–2500 BC) onwards, with sites from the Wadi Suq period in the early second millennium BC, the Iron Age and into the Late Islamic period. Further studies of landscapes and their archaeological sites will play a major part in building up a more complete picture of the UAE's history and heritage.

Finally, re-structuring of Abu Dhabi's government during late 2005 and early 2006 saw the creation of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), which is now planning a unified approach to the study of Abu Dhabi's past, including plans for what will be the capital city's first – and long-awaited – museum. The Authority has absorbed the former Department of Antiquities and Tourism.



The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage is planning a unified approach to the study of Abu Dhabi's past.



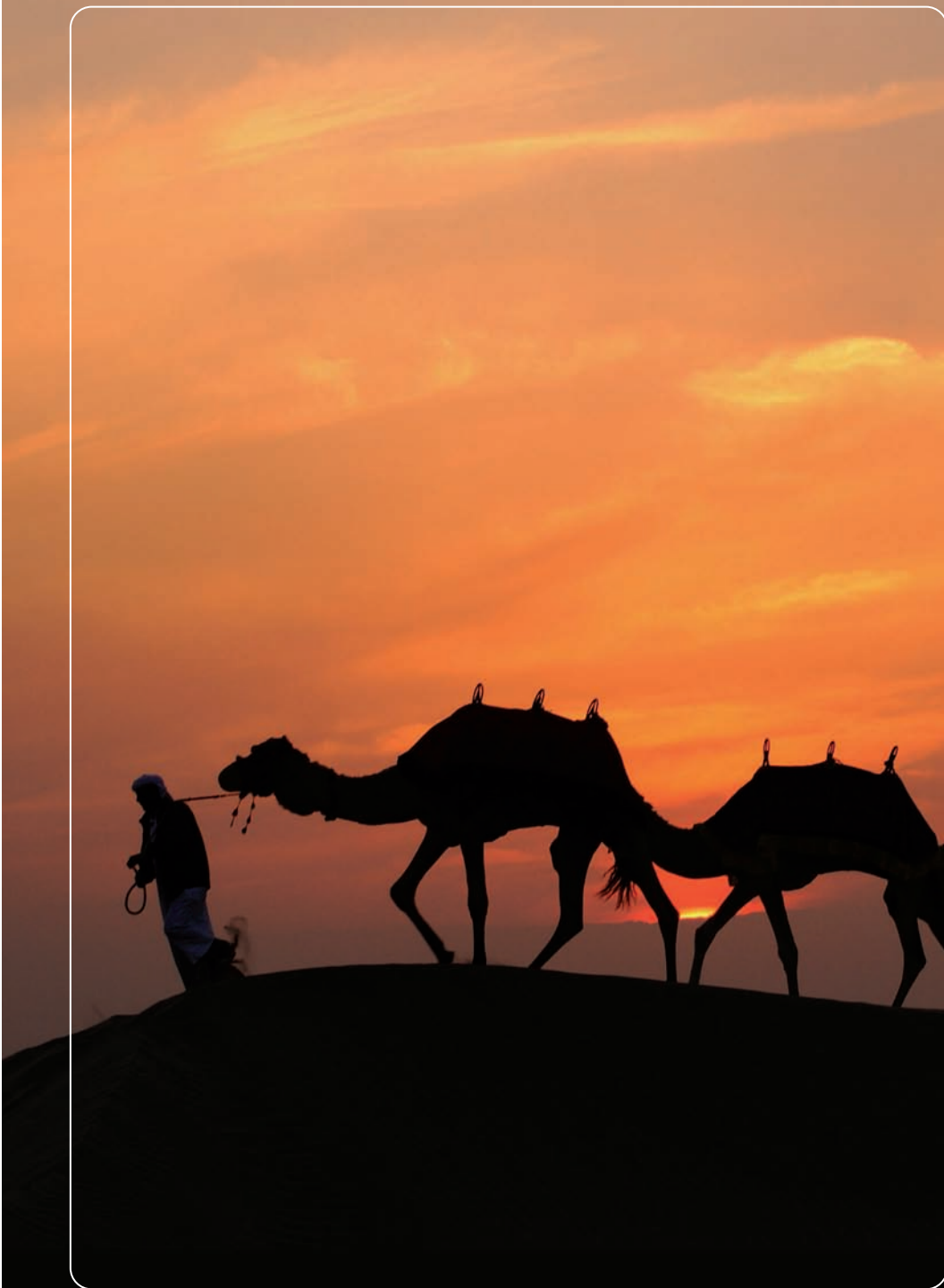
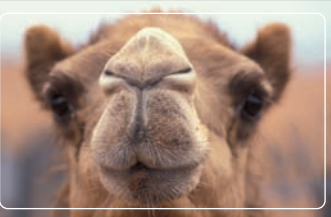
Before the Oil Age life in the UAE was ordered by the seasons. Falcons, salukis, camels and horses were integral elements in daily life of the Emirati people.



THE CAMEL

Uniquely adapted to the desert, the camel was the mainstay of the semi-nomadic lifestyle that was practiced by many of the UAE's inhabitants. The largest tribe in the UAE, the Bani Yas, roamed the vast sandy areas that cover almost all of the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Other tribes, too, such as the Awamir and Manasir, shared this challenging environment for numerous generations, guarding their valuable knowledge of where to obtain water in the harsh terrain. The camel was both the reason for these lengthy excursions and the means by which they were carried out. Long periods were spent wandering great distances in search of winter grazing provided by dormant vegetation brought to life by intermittent rainfall. Once the arid summer approached, almost all the Bani Yas families, with the exception of fishing groups like the Al Rumaithat, returned to a home in one of the oasis settlements, many to tend and harvest their date gardens. Camel owners who had sufficient summer grazing close to their date palms were particularly fortunate as they could harvest whilst watering their livestock at the wells that supplied the local communities.

The camel was not just a useful mount and means of transporting possessions and goods on long treks across inhospitable terrain; it also provided food, clothing, household items and recreation, and at the end of the day was a primary source of wealth. In many cases camel milk and the products derived from it were the only protein available to *bedu* families for months on end. The camels were capable of surviving for long periods without water, but it was camels' milk that quenched the herders' thirst. Young male camels were slaughtered on special occasions to provide meat for feasts and informal camel races were held during the festivities. Camel hide was used to make bags and other useful utensils, while tents, rugs and items such as fine cloaks (*bisht*) were woven from camel hair.



THE DATE PALM

Over the centuries, *bedu* families that had spent the winter searching for grazing for their camels returned in the summer to the oasis gardens in the hollows of the dunes to harvest the date crop.

The date palm was traditionally propagated from side shoots that grow out from the base of a mature trunk. Today, tissue culture techniques are also used to propagate plants. In each case, the outer branches sprouting at ground level are trimmed every year and as the tree grows these branches are cut higher up, until eventually the trunk is formed. After three or more years, depending on the amount of available water, the date palm will flower in spring; flowers of the female tree must then be hand-pollinated with the panicles from a male tree, of which only very few are planted. Harvesting takes place during the hottest period of the year, between late June and early October, depending on the type of date tree – there are more than 50 varieties in the UAE alone.

Not so long ago, the harvested dates were essential for survival. Ripe dates were lightly boiled and compressed into a congealed substance called *tamr* that can be kept almost indefinitely because the high sugar content acts as a preservative. The dried palm fronds were plaited into containers in which the nourishing, vitamin-rich staple diet could be taken on journeys through the desert, into the mountains, or out to sea. The dates were also stacked in small storerooms with underlying drainage for collecting valuable date syrup. Palm fronds were used to build the walls and roofs of *'arish* houses and as roof matting for the more sturdy coral-block constructions. Trunks supported the roofs of mudbrick and stone castles and towers. Even boats (canoe-like *shashah*) were made from the midrib of the palm frond. The palm trunk was also hollowed out to form a mortar for crushing wheat with the tree stump shaped into a pestle.



PEARLING

Pearling has been an important economic activity in the region since ancient times, but the trade fluctuated throughout the centuries. At the end of the nineteenth century pearling was flourishing yet again, and an increasing number of able-bodied men participated in diving expeditions (*ghaus*) during four months in the summer, those of the Liwa-based subtribes of the Bani Yas migrating 'home' to tend their date gardens further inland in the winter. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were, according to one calculation, over 1200 pearling boats operating out of the area now known as the UAE, each carrying an average crew of 18 men. The pearling fleet leaving harbour must have been a wonderful sight, but this level of participation meant that during the summer more than 22,000 men were absent on the pearl banks. Long periods away from home placed enormous responsibility on the women of the family, both economically and socially.

For the men, conditions on board the pearling boats were tough and the work was arduous. The profits from a good season's harvest made it all worthwhile, but bad seasons were followed by spiralling debt. Many of the Bani Yas men formed cooperatives, all the crew jointly owning a boat and sharing the proceeds of the sale of the pearls according to an established arrangement: the biggest share to the captain (*nakhuda*), a larger share to the divers than the haulers, and some money left aside to finance preparations for the following year. Over several generations, some tribes involved in pearling became tied to particular locations, and coastal towns such as Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Ra's al-Khaimah thrived. All were badly affected by the collapse of pearl markets in the 1940s.



FALCONRY



Falconry, once an important means of supplementing the diet of the UAE's desert inhabitants, is now enjoyed as a traditional pastime. The most popular hunting birds remain the saker falcon and the peregrine falcon. These were traditionally trapped along the coast during their autumn migration, trained, used for hunting, and then released in the spring.

Once the falconers managed to capture one of the highly prized birds, they had only two to three weeks to train it before the migrating houbara bustards started to arrive. This was done by developing a strong bond of trust between a wild captured bird and its handler, a unique

skill that commands the respect of falconers worldwide. Ideally, the training of the falcon was completed by the day when the first houbara arrived and the bedouin would hunt the bustards with his falcon throughout the winter months. Although houbara were the favoured quarry, falcons were also used in the past to take stone curlews and hares, and sometimes with salukis to hunt gazelle.

Today, many birds are caught abroad and imported. In fact, most falconry now takes place outside the Emirates, and the UAE is a leader in research into conservation of falcons.





INTERNET LINKS

Abu Dhabi Culture and Heritage Authority:	www.uaeinteract.com/adcha
Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey:	www.adias-uae.com/
Al Ain Museum:	www.aam.gov.ae/
Archaeology:	www.uaeinteract.com/archaeology
Arts:	www.uaeinteract.com/arts
Culture:	www.uaeinteract.com/uaeculture
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