

Recognising that the sherds were different from those familiar to me from the late Islamic camp-sites, I collected a representative sample and made it available for study to Dr. Robert Carter, ceramicist of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey. Dr. Carter identified the whole assemblage as being Iron Age in date.

A few weeks later, I was able to re-visit the site with Dr. Walid Yasin al-Tikriti, who noted that the site was several kilometres distant from the falaj he had previously identified in the Jabeeb area (all trace of which has now been obliterated by recent agricultural development). Dr. Al-Tikriti also confirmed that the potsherds were Iron Age in date, and noted that there was evidence of piles of soil at various points in the area, suggesting the possibility of a further falaj or aflaj.

A GPS reading gave a position of 24 deg. 35 mins. 34 secs. N; 55 deg. 35 mins. 57 secs. E., while the site is 12.3 km into the desert from the Al Jabeeb underpass on the main highway.

With Dr. Al-Tikriti, I also visited a number of other pottery scatters I had identified in inter-dunal plains in the vicinity, these all proving to be Late Islamic in date.

Although the Iron Age date of the new Jabeeb site is confirmed from the ceramic evidence, the purpose of the site has yet to be determined. There are no signs of buried structures, such as shadows of walls on the surface, or of collapsed structures. The adjacent flat gravel plain would, presumably, have been suitable either for grazing animals or for agriculture at a time of greater rainfall or if irrigated, although the presence of a falaj is not confirmed. Perhaps the promontory was used over a long period as a camp-site for Iron Age inhabitants bringing animals to pasture.

Further study of the site is clearly necessary if these questions are to be resolved. However, there is extensive development currently taking place in the area, with dunes being levelled to prepare land for farming. The survival of the site is by no means guaranteed, and this preliminary 'Note' has, therefore, been prepared simply to place the existence of the site on record. Many more archaeological sites may lie within the eastern edge of the dunefield running north of Al Ain, although with the current pace of development, many may be destroyed before they are even recognised.

#### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Peter Hellyer, Managing Editor of *Tribulus* and Executive Director of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey, who first insisted that I should show pottery from the Jabeeb site to the appropriate specialists, and arranged for it to be seen by Dr. Robert Carter, and then also encouraged me to place the site on record, albeit in a non-academic format.

I am also grateful to Dr. Robert Carter for examining the pottery, and to Dr. Walid Yasin al-Tikriti for also looking at the pottery and for visiting the site with me, as well as for his insights into the nature of the Iron Age presence north of Al Ain.

**Brien Holmes,  
PO Box 17258,  
AL AIN, UAE**

e-mail: [bocknobby@hotmail.com](mailto:bocknobby@hotmail.com)

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## The damselfly *Pseudagrion decorum* breeding in the U.A.E.

Visiting amateur naturalist Graham Giles published an illustrated checklist of UAE dragonflies and damselflies in *Tribulus* 8.1 (Winter 1998). His work, and his predictions, facilitated the subsequent discovery in the UAE of two additional damselflies known to be resident in Oman. One of these, *Pseudagrion decorum*, a small electric blue species (first reported in *Tribulus* 9.2) was recently found to be abundant at the Wadi Shi dam near Khor Fakkan. This site provided the first records of *P. decorum* females in the UAE. These are dull yellow in colour. A number of pairs were observed mating, both flying in tandem and perched in "wheel" formation.

In one dramatic instance a pair flying in tandem alighted on a tiny sprig of underwater plant projecting above the lake surface. The female began to descend along the stem until she had pulled the male almost entirely underwater. At that point he released her and flew free.

She, however, continued to inch down the stem, tail first, "looping" like a leech, until she was out of sight some 6-8 inches or more below the surface, seeking just the "right" place to lay her eggs. Moments passed while three males circled over the sprig for 30 seconds, 60 seconds, 90 seconds, perhaps more, before she suddenly came up to the surface like a diver in a free ascent, only to be snatched up immediately in tandem once more.

The ladies in question apparently know what they want. Another female, deposited on some near-horizontal branches only an inch or two below the surface, fidgeted almost constantly during more than five minutes underwater, investigating various spots with the tip of her abdomen. It wasn't clear in the end if she had laid her eggs or not, but she, too, was off in tandem again within only a second of regaining the surface.

Despite its name, mating among *P. decorum* is a rather ungentlemanly affair. One pair mating in wheel formation on a twig was repeatedly molested by other males who landed on both the mating male's arched abdomen and the female's wings.

**Gary Feulner**



A mating pair of *P. decorum*