# Bayt Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamdan al-Sharqi, al-Hayl, Fujairah, U.A.E.

*by Michele C. Ziolkowski & Abdullah Suhail al-Sharqi*

Fig 1. Saif Rashid Al Kindi

*This paper is dedicated to Mr Saif bin Rashid al-Kindi (Fig. 1). We admire his passion and his concern for this historical site. We also thank him for the copious amounts of ethnographic information he has provided over the years. He not only helped the authors with this study but he also provided much help for Ms Melissa Riley during her work at the site in the winter of 1997/98.*

## Introduction

The focus of this article is the large fortified courtyard house established by Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamdan al-Sharqi (*Fig. 2*) in the village of al-Hayl, Fujairah, United Arab Emirates. This study is primarily based on ethnographic information. Ethnographic data were recorded during numerous interviews with former inhabitants of the house, undertaken over the past two years. The information obtained from these interviews consists of historical, descriptive and anecdotal details.[1] The archaeological component of this study includes a brief examination of architectural features and construction details. The associated settlement does not form a major component of this study. However, it will be briefly reviewed in order to contextualise the main house.[2]

### Location and Environment

GPS (Datum WGS 84):
N 25° 05.088'
E 56° 13.624'

The site is located in the emirate of Fujairah, on the East Coast of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). The fortified courtyard house is located in the southern mountains of Fujairah at the village of al-Hayl. The terrain consists of mountains, ridges, terraces and *wadi* systems. *Zizyphus spina-christi* (Ar. *Sidr*), Acacia tortilis (Ar. *úamr*), *Euphorbia larica* (Ar. *'Usbuq*) and *Saccharum ravennae* (Ar. *'asal*) constitute part of the natural flora noted at the site,[3] which co-exists with cultivated gardens present throughout the wadi. Various plant species were and still are cultivated in these gardens, including the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), henna (*Lawsonia inermis*), sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare* or *bicolor*), onion (*Allium cepa*), banana (*Musa* x *paradisiaca*), mango (*Mangifera indica*), papaya (*Carica papaya*), tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*), watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*), pomegranate (*Punica granatum*), sweet potato (*Ipomea batatas*), guava (*Psidium guajava*), lime (*Citrus aurantifolia* var. *limetta* & *acidica*), cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*), carrot (*Daucus carota*). There were also naturally occurring plants, which provided food sources, including the jujube fruit (Ar. *Nabq*) from the Zizyphus tree, and salad herbs such as wild sorrel (*Rumex acetosa?*) (Ar. *Hàmàó*). The main cash crop grown by the people of al-Hayl was tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*).[4] This was sold to two buyers from Bahrain, Bin Hashem and Bin Yousef.

The fortified courtyard house of Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamdan is situated on a prominent rise overlooking the surrounding village and wadi *(Fig. 3)*. The house was built within the previously-established village of the Kunud tribe (*sing. al-Kindi*). Two tributar *'awdiah* (sing. *wadi*) provided access to various mountain villages. The Wadi al-'Amdia, situated southwest of the courtyard house, led to villages in the Wadi il-Hilu, while the Wadi al-Safiyah located to the west provided the route to Wadi Saham and Wadi Miduk. The journey through Wadi al-Hayl to the coastal town of Fujairah used to take around three hours by donkey.

Fig 2. Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamdan Al Sharqi.

**Historical Reference**

Lorimer's account of the village in Wadi al-Hayl is brief and lacks detail.

According to Lorimer: Thus, naming the village as 'Hail', his account says its position is "Inside the hills behind Fujairah", being "a village of around 10 houses of Jalajilah and Kunud."[5]

Fig 3. General view of the fortified courtyard house.

**Ethnographic & Archaeological Information**

According to local sources, the fortified courtyard house, mosque, majlis and watchtower were constructed around 1932 (*Fig 4*).[6] Bin Shimal, a local family living in Kalba and Fujairah, constructed houses in the area, including much of the house at al-Hayl (Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005: 104; 2005a: 184). A second builder by the name of bin Shambi also worked on the main house and the watchtower on the hill. Prior to the construction of Sheikh Abdullah's house at al-Hayl, he resided in the large fortified courtyard house of his father, Sheikh Hamdan bin Suroor al-Sharqi, situated below Fujairah fort (Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi: *in press*).

The gabbro/dolerite rocks used in the construction of the courtyard house, mosque, majlis and watchtower at al-Hayl were all locally sourced. *Saruj* was used on buildings at the site as mortar and plaster.[7] *Saruj* plaster on the external walls was placed in layers, each layer ending with a small upward curvature. This was done so that any rain falling on the building would be diverted away from the foundations. A soft mud-based mortar was also used to bind the rocks throughout parts of the construction. This soft mud mortar is also found on various walls, as a layer of plaster below the *saruj* or the gypsum. A fine and smooth gypsum plaster was used on many of the interior walls in the courtyard house.[8] Mangrove (*Avicennia marina*) poles used in the construction were either traded from East Africa (Unwin 1988: 155), and/or locally sourced from the Khor Kalba area (Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005a: 185).[9] Unidentified planks of hardwood were also used throughout the buildings. Date palm trunks, branches, stems and leaves were used extensively throughout all of the buildings in Wadi al-Hayl. Date palm tree fibre was also used to create ropes, which were used in the building construction. Lastly, cement was also added to the construction of certain buildings at the site. The *khaymah* type rooms located within the courtyard house were semi-subterranean in nature. The walls were built with mountain rocks bound with a soft mud mortar and rubble fill. They contained pitched roofs constructed with wooden poles, which were covered with date palm branches (*Fig 5*).[10]

Fig 4. Wadi Al-Hayl, ca 1970s

Fig 5. Wadi Al-Hayl, ca 1970s

**Table 1:** The Fortified Courtyard House, Mosque, and *Majlis* (*Fig 6*):

| No.: | Feature: | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Courtyard house | A fortified courtyard house with private living space for the family.<br><br>The courtyard walls and the internal watchtower all contain firing slots for defensive purposes. These slots are arranged in a manner which would ensure maximum coverage and cross-fire. The internal watchtower also contains hooded firing slots. |
| 2 | Private family room 1 | Private family room 1 was used by the family as a living space and bedroom.[11] This room originally contained a double wooden door in the entryway.<br><br>A room built with *shrbaq* (a lattice of criss-crossed date palm stems bound with date palm fibre rope) was originally attached to the front of this room. The four *in situ* columns present at the site were used to support the walls and flat roof of this room. Wooden poles were also used within the structure. These were primarily used to support the roof, which contained bound date palm branches. This room provided the family with protection from the sun and added extra living space. The room also allowed the mountain breezes to flow through the structure and cool the interior space. |
| 3 | Courtyard watchtower | The ground floor of the courtyard watchtower was used as a storage room. It also contained a small raised platform at the base of the stairs for performing ablutions. This platform (*dkka*) contains three shallow, concave depressions within a raised step. Ceramic water vessels were originally set into these. These pots (*khars*) were constructed with a fine, buff coloured ceramic, and were biconical in shape.[12] A drainage hole is also located in the western wall.<br><br>The first floor was primarily used as a private family living room.<br><br>The top of the tower provided a commanding view of all access routes into the village. The northwest corner of the tower roof also contains a small lookout post.<br><br>Attached to the front of the tower and entered from the *shrbaq* enclosure was a small washroom. This was constructed with tightly bound date palm branches and wooden poles (*'arish*). |
| 4 | Side entrance | This entrance, located along the western courtyard wall was mainly used by the women of the house. From here they would set out with their ceramic vessels (*yahlah*) to collect water from the wadi below.[13] From this entrance they would also tend to the livestock, which were housed in the large rock-built enclosure directly opposite the entrance exterior. This opening originally contained a double wooden door. |
| 5 | Kitchen | The kitchen is a *khaymah* type structure, which once contained a pitched roof. Originally the kitchen door was made of bound date palm stems. A sun-roof (*sablah*) was once attached to the front of this room. This was built with wooden poles and bound date palm branches. During the hot summer months most of the cooking would take place under the shade of the *sablah*.[14] |
| 6 | Private family room 2 | This was a private living and bedroom space. The smaller unit located in the northern portion of the room was used as a washroom. This washroom also contained a *dkka* with three concave depressions for the ceramic *khars*. This room originally contained a double wooden door in the entryway.<br><br>Attached to the exterior of 'private family room 2' was a *shrbaq* enclosure, which extended out to the two columns still present at the site.[15] This structure is comparable to the one located in front of 'private family room 1.'<br><br>Located outside the *shrbaq* room was a raised sleeping platform *(siam)*. This measured around 2 metres in height and contained a ladder for access. Sleeping platforms were used during the hot summer months. |

| No.: | Feature: | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | Wall access | A group of stones set into the northern courtyard wall, which protrude from the surface, were used by the inhabitants of the house. From here, they would climb up the wall in order to pass food or other goods to the neighbours. |
| 8 | Private family room 3 & majlis | Initially this was the private room for Sheikh Abdullah's eldest son, Mubarak. After the death of his son, it was used as a *majlis*. This room originally contained a double wooden door in the entryway. |
| 9 | Main entrance | The original wooden door from the main entrance is now missing. It was originally a set of double wooden doors, with a smaller, arched doorway set into right hand door.[16]<br><br>Located to the right of the main door is a long bench, which was built abutting the main courtyard walls. This bench was used as a gathering place for the people of the village to gather and discuss issues affecting the local inhabitants. Originally the bench was one level and contained an arm rest at either end. Centre front of the bench were two steps.[17]<br><br>Situated atop the main entrance are four upright pillars. Constructed within these pillars was a summer sleeping room. The walls were originally built with *shrbaq* and then lined with woven date palm matting (*simah/ˌaùãr*). Two of the original wooden poles for the frame are visible in *Fig 7*.[18] |
| 10 | Private family room 4 | This *khaymah* type room contained a pitched roof. Attached to the entrance of the *khaymah* was a double wooden door. Originally, the front of the *khaymah* contained an '*arish* type structure. The *'arish* was built with wooden poles and bound date palm branches, containing a flat roof. This provided the inhabitant of the room with added private living space. |
| 11 | Shop | The shop located in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard sold various items including rice, sugar, sorghum, coffee, clothes, perfumes, rose water, and jasmine oil.[19] The shop originally contained a double wooden door in the entryway.<br><br>A *madbasa* (date processing area for the collection of *dibs* or date syrup) was placed at the western end of the room at a later date, after the departure of Sheikh Abdullah. The *madbasa* measures 2.85x1.10 metres, and contain rows of ridges and channels.[20] These ridges were built with small rocks, mud mortar and concrete. A circular-shaped depression used to collect the syrup is visible on the eastern side of the ridges.[21] |
| 12 | Rear entrance | Animal pens were located directly outside the rear entrance. These included rock-built enclosures with flat roofs made of date palm branches and wooden poles. This opening originally contained a double wooden door. |
| 13 | Storeroom | This room provided the main storage facility of the courtyard house.[22] The storeroom originally contained a double wooden door in the entryway. Dates were stored in large ceramic storage containers known as *khars*.[23] Kitchen utensils and cooking pots were also kept in here. Plus various foodstuffs including rice, flour, sugar and coffee. |
| 14 | Mosque | Located at the front of the courtyard house to the east is a mosque. The courtyard of the mosque is enclosed with a low rock-built wall. This area was once covered with a *sablah* type roof. The entrance to the mosque contained a double wooden door. |
| 15 | External *majlis* | This room was used as a reception room for entertaining guests. There is a small corner shelf located in the northeast corner of the room. The courtyard space in front of the room originally contained side walls and a flat roof, which were attached to the three exterior columns present at the site. This structure was primarily built with wooden poles and bound date palm branches.<br><br>The cleared area to the front of the *majlis* in the north was also used for drying dates after the summer harvest. |

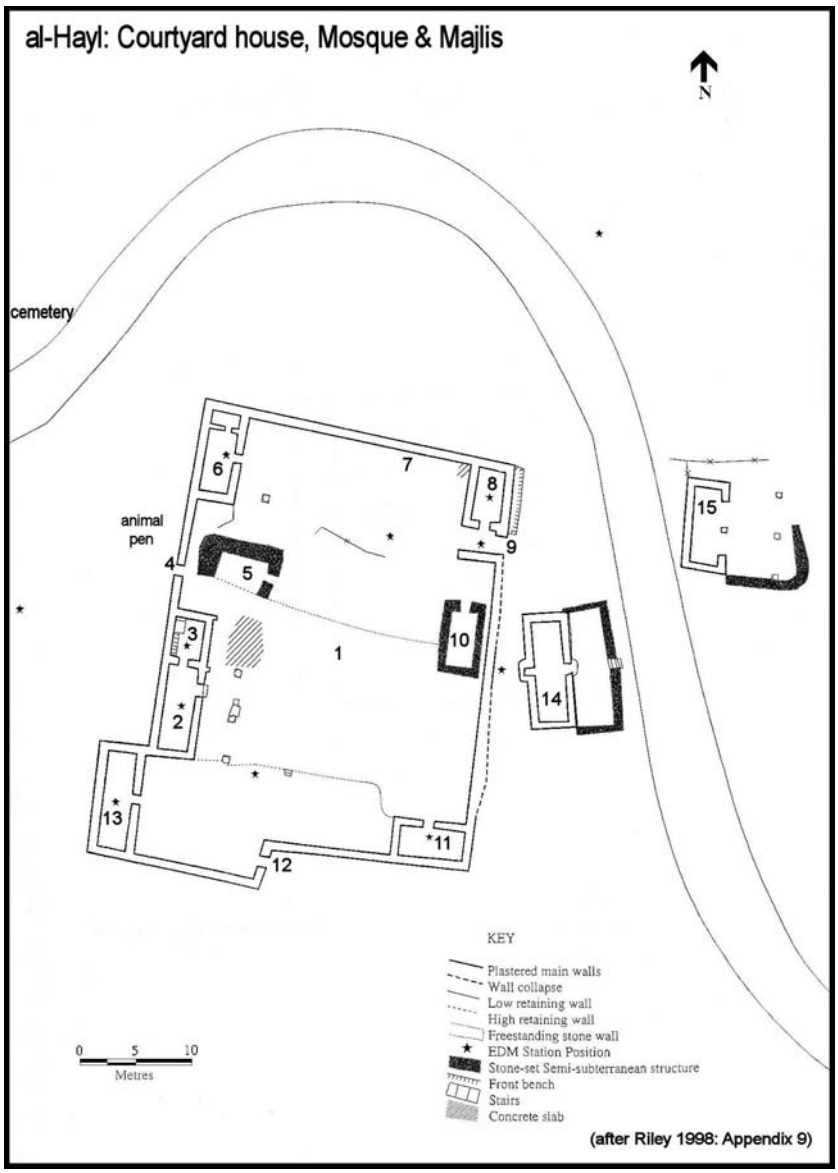


Fig 6. Plan of Courtyard house, Mosque & *Majlis* (after Riley 1998: Appendix 9).

Fig 7. Main entrance, ca 1970s

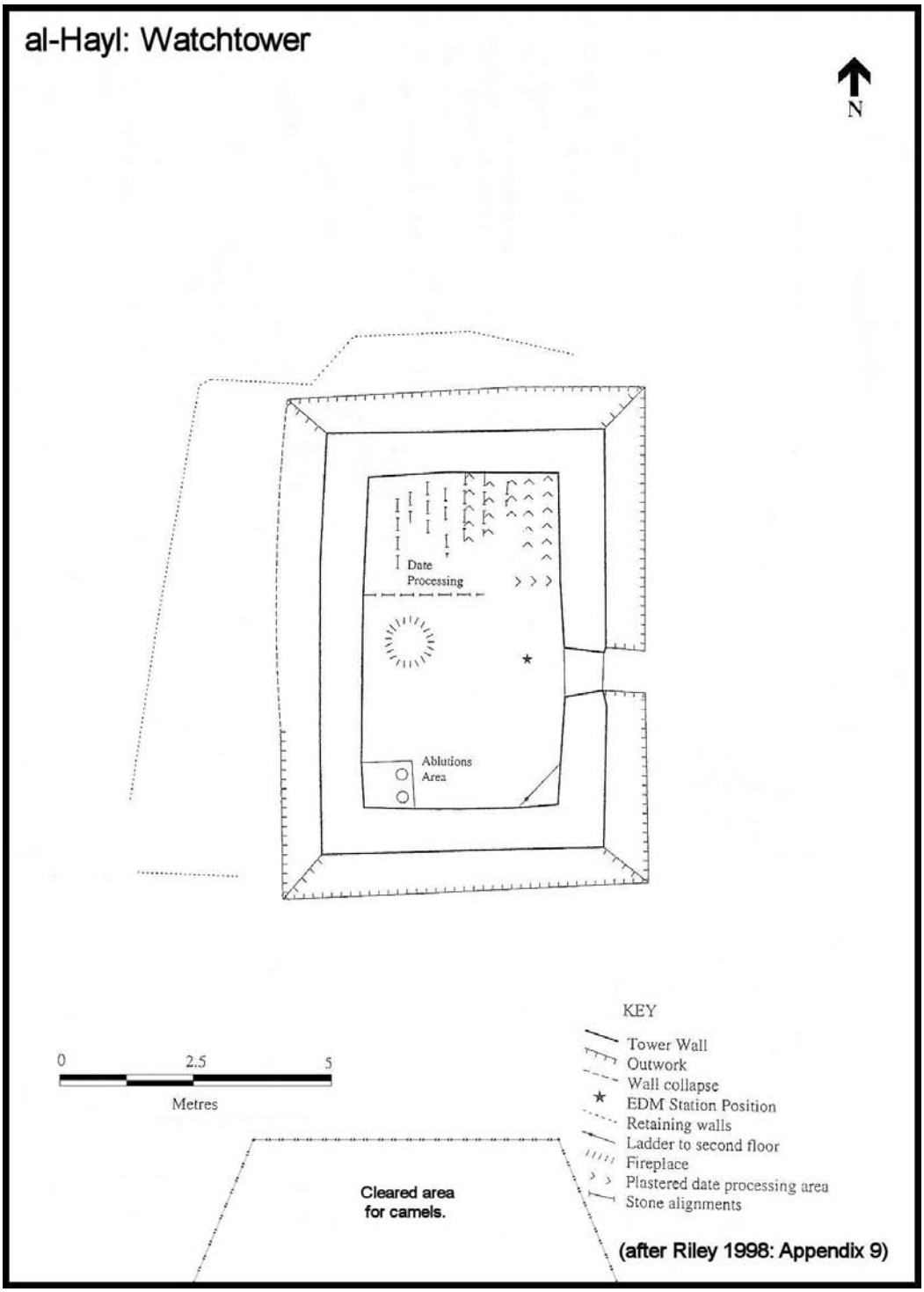


Fig 8. Plan for external watchtower (after Riley 1998: Appendix 9).

**The External Watchtower (*Fig. 8*)**

The watchtower is located on the hill behind the courtyard house, to the south southwest. It was originally built for Sheikh Abdullah's younger brother, Sheikh Suhail. Sheikh Suhail also resided in two *khaymah* type houses positioned directly below the watchtower (Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005: 104; 2005a: 184). It is not clear as to how long the watchtower was used as a residence. Sheikh Suhail eventually moved to al-Fara' at the entrance to Wadi Furfar, and built his own fortified courtyard house, *ca* 1950 (Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005: 104; 2005a: 184). The ground floor of the watchtower contains a *dkka* along the western wall. This washing area has two circular-shaped concave depressions for water vessels, and a drainage hole on the western wall. There is a ladder constructed with mangrove poles set into the walls in the south-eastern corner. The walls of the watchtower contain standard, angled firing slots and hooded examples. The upper (roof) level of the watchtower contains two corner lookouts located in the northeast and southwest corners. The *madbasa* present on the ground floor of the watchtower was constructed after Sheikh Suhail's departure to al-Fara'. The cleared and levelled area supported by a rock-built embankment located directly to the south of the watchtower was used to house camels during the night.

**Table 2:** The Associated Kunud Village

| Feature | Description |
|---|---|
| *Khaymah*<br><br>(*Fig 9*) | A semi-subterranean, rectangular/rectilinear shaped room, built with mountain rocks, bound with mud mortar and rubble, and containing a pitched roof. Roofing materials consisted of wooden poles for support and bound date palm branches. The entrance to a *khaymah* can either be located along a short or long wall.<br><br>The *khaymah* building was used as either a home or an animal shelter.<br><br>Various houses also contained courtyard walls. |
| *Kerin*<br><br>*(Fig 10)* | An above-ground, rectangular shaped room, built with mountain rocks bound with mud mortar and rubble. The end walls extend up to the roof pitch and are pointed. A long wooden beam was placed between the two end walls. Smaller wooden poles completed the frame and bound date palm branches were used as roofing material. The door is located along a long wall.<br><br>The *kerin* building was used as a home.<br><br>Various houses also contained courtyard walls. |
| *Makhzan*<br><br>*(Fig. 11)* | An above-ground, rectangular shaped room, built with mountain rocks, bound with a mud mortar and rubble. The exterior walls slope inwards slightly and the roof is flat. Roofing materials consisted of wooden beams, bound date palm branches and mud mortar with rubble. The entrance is located on a long wall.<br><br>These buildings were either used as homes or storerooms. Often for the storage of dates and *dibs*. |
| Small circular room<br><br>*(Fig.12)* | Above ground, circular shaped room, built with mountain rocks and rubble fill. A small entrance with stone lintels. The roofing was formed with various branches, which created a dome. This was then covered with *'usbuq*.[24]<br><br>These were used as chicken pens. |
| Cow pen | These were the largest animal enclosures. The walls were built with mountain rocks, bound with a mud mortar and rubble. They are either square or rectangular in shape. A cow pen is located directly opposite the side entrance (*Fig. 6*: *see plan*) of the courtyard house. |
| Goat pen | These enclosures consisted of a *khaymah* type room with a large attached courtyard. The courtyard walls were built with wooden poles and date palm branches. The *khaymah* would often be used during the winter months, whilst the courtyard would serve as a summer enclosure. |
| *Mu'arush*<br><br>(*Fig.13*) | Tobacco drying rooms.<br><br>Three tobacco drying rooms are located in close proximity to the courtyard house. Originally three more tobacco drying rooms were located near the main house. A further two rooms are situated in the wadi below, close to the cultivated gardens.[25] |
| *Yanoor*<br><br>*(Fig.14)* | Henna drying and sorghum threshing area. Two of the three threshing areas remain at al-Hayl. The *yanoor* was a cleared, levelled space, cut into the side of the mountain, with walls built up around all sides using locally collected rocks. The base of the *yanoor* contained a packed clay surface.[26] Henna leaves were dried on the *yanoor*, processed into a powder and mixed with water, in order to use as decoration. |
| Cemetery | The village cemetery is located north-west of the house (*Fig. 6*: *see plan*). |

Fig 9. *Khaymah*

Fig 10. *Kerin*

Fig 11. *Makhzan*

Fig 12. Chicken pen.

Fig 13. *Mu'arush* (tobacco drying room walls).

Fig 14. *Yanoor*

**Table 3:** Features at the site, predating the courtyard house and associated Kunud village

| Feature | Description |
|---|---|
| Grave and Umm an/al-Nar pottery sherds *(Fig.15)* | A pre-Islamic, circular-shaped grave (diam, ca 5m), with associated Umm an/al Nar period ceramic sherds (Ziolkowski *in press*). |
| 2nd and 1st millennia pottery sherds | This pottery was recovered by the Swiss archaeological mission (Corboud *et al.* 1991: 14). |
| Soft stone lid | An Iron Age period soft stone lid was recovered from a wadi terrace in close proximity to a number of petroglyphs (Ziolkowski 1998: 17). |
| Rock art | A large corpus of rock art has been studied at the site over the years (Ziolkowski 1998; Ziolkowski *in press*). |
| Hillfort<br><br>*(Figs 16 & 17)* | The hillfort was constructed with mountain rocks, mud mortar and rubble. It contains a large entrance, thick walls, a complex of interconnecting rooms and the base of a circular-shaped tower. The structure also consists of a large open space, which holds a small square cistern (?), plastered with saruj. Located on a lower slope to the north is a walled terraced area. Situated below the hillfort are numerous rock-built ring walls at varying levels.<br><br>Charcoal samples excavated from the hillfort place it within the likely timeframe of cal. AD 1470-1705.[27] |
| Village on lower terrace | This settlement is located on a lower terrace and in the wadi to the south of and below the hillfort. An exact date is unclear. It is plausible that this settlement is contemporary in date with the hillfort. |


Fig 15. Sherds from pre-Islamic grave.

**Comparative Architecture**

Architecturally, Bayt Abdullah bin Hamdan al-Sharqi is comparable to numerous fortified and non-fortified courtyard type houses located throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf. This particular topic has been examined in detail in previous papers by various authors.[28] We have chosen to highlight the fortified courtyard house of Essa bin Saed al-Thabahi, which is located within a comparable settlement context to al-Hayl.[29] Essa al-Thabahi's house was established around 1900 and is situated within the wadi system of Wadi il-Hilu, Sharjah Emirate, at N 24° 59.459', E 56° 13.018'.[30] This large, fortified, multi-courtyard house contains numerous rooms, wells and architectural features (*Fig. 18*). In the centre of the house was a large built-in tower, of which the stairs are still visible today. This house is also surrounded by four watchtowers, three of these are located on the nearby mountains, whilst the fourth is situated in the centre of the wadi on a raised natural terrace.[31] The associated settlement consists of a mosque (*Fig.19*), Islamic cemeteries, houses, animal enclosures, walls, agricultural plots and tobacco drying rooms.[32] A large portion of the associated village has been removed during the past two years for the development of agricultural fields. All the architectural structures at this site were built using comparable building materials and techniques to those incorporated at Wadi al-Hayl.[33]

Interestingly, the people from the village at Wadi al-Hayl would often travel to the gardens in Wadi il-Hilu during the tobacco season to gain employment. The cultivation of tobacco brought in considerable revenue for the residents. The tobacco from Wadi il-Hilu was sold to three businessmen, Bin Yousef, Bin Hashm (Bahrain) and Bin Hamza. The extensive gardens in Wadi il-Hilu and the large-scale tobacco cultivation that took place made it an extremely wealthy region.

**Conclusion**

As noted by Riley, the courtyard house at al-Hayl has often been incorrectly referred to as a "summer palace" (Riley 1998: 7-8). In fact, Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamdan lived in the house permanently for more than twenty years. He later established a house north of Mirbah on the Fujairah coast (ca. 1958). Finally he moved from Mirbah in the early 1960s and established a house at Dibba. According to Riley, most of the inhabitants of al-Hayl village were relocated to a new village by the government during the 1970s. The final inhabitants left as late as 1979 (Riley 1998: 7). Many of the farms at al-Hayl are still under cultivation.

The fortified courtyard house and settlement in Wadi al-Hayl is reflective of a traditional mountain village in this region. The accumulated ethnographic data has provided the authors with an insight into the social dynamic of such a society. Those interviewed for this study have often wistfully reflected on this not-too-distant past, with fond memories. Modern conveniences aside, these glorious mountain villages provided the inhabitants with a dynamic and social environment. *Insha'allah*, villages such as these will be spared from destruction, in order to preserve a part of Emirati history which is otherwise sadly being lost.

Fig 16. Hillfort entrance with courtyard house in the background.

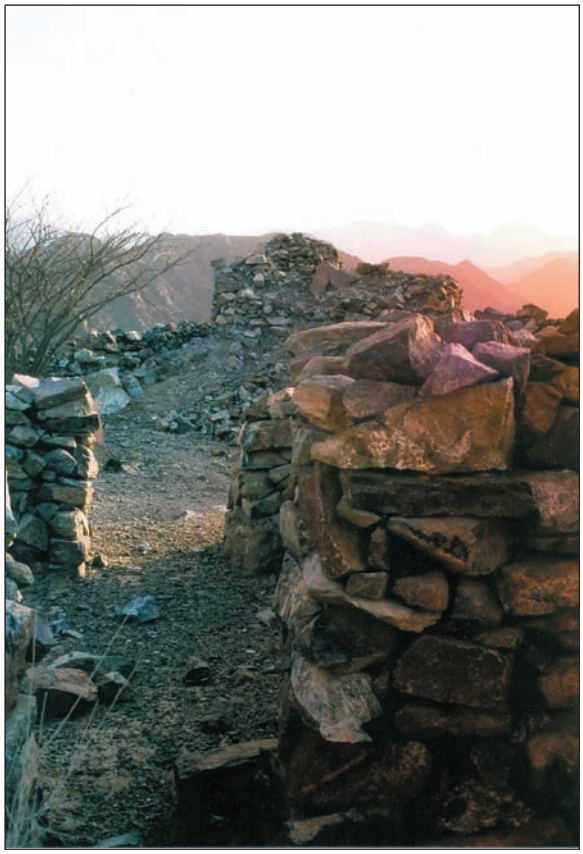

Fig 17. Hillfort circular tower.

Fig 18. General view of Wadi il-Hilu (main house, mosque, watchtower, fields).

Fig 19. Wadi il-Hilu mosque.

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the following people for sharing their knowledge of the courtyard house and the village in Wadi al-Hayl: M. al-Kindi, F. al-Sharqi, F. al-Kindi, and Saif bin Rashid al-Kindi. Special thanks to the Department of Archaeology, Sharjah Emirate, for allowing us to mention various sites in the Wadi il-Hilu. Thank you to Saif al-Thabahi and Ali bin Saif al-Thabahi for providing their time and knowledge concerning the settlement in Wadi il-Hilu. We would also like to thank Val Russell for providing early photographs of the site at al-Hayl (Figs 4, 5 & 7). These photos are of great importance and relevance, considering the fact that the site is currently under restoration. We also thank Sheikh Suhail bin Abdullah al-Sharqi for providing a photo of his father, Sheikh Abdullah (Fig 2: photographer unknown). We must acknowledge the work of Ms Melissa Riley. Her honours thesis is, to this day, the only major study of the courtyard house at al-Hayl. Figs 6 and 8 are based on Riley's original plans. We hope that our ethnographic work will complement her study. All photographs are by the authors, unless otherwise stated.

Arabic words have been transliterated according to those commonly used. Diacritical marks have been removed due to complications with publishing them.

**Bibliography:**

Boucharlat, R., Hesse, A., Dalongeville, R. & Sanlaville, P. (1997) *Archaeological Surveys in Sharjah Emirate (U.A.E.): First Report* (1984). Sharjah: Directorate of Archaeology, Department of Culture & Information.

Corboud, P., Castella, A-C., Hapka, R. & Im-Obersteg, P. (1991) *Archaeological Survey of Fujairah (1987-1990): Inventory of the Sites*. Genève & Neuchâtel: Swiss-Liechtenstein Archaeological Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad.

George, C. (1987) "Rahab: A traditional community on the Wadi Bani 'Umar Al Gharbi" *Journal of Oman Studies* 9: 218-22.

Højlund, F. (1990) "Date honey production in Dilmun in the mid 2nd millennium BC: steps in the technological evolution of the *madbasa*" Paleorient 16/1: 77-86.

Jongbloed, M.V.D. *The Comprehensive Guide to the Wild Flowers of the United Arab Emirates*. Abu Dhabi: ERWDA, 2003.

Kennet, D., Connolly, D. & Baker, F. (1993) "Ras al-Khaimah Tower Survey 1991-2" *PSAS* 23: 9-47.

Kennet, D. (1995) *The Towers of Ras al-Khaimah*. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum (BAR International Series 601).

King, G. (1998) *The Traditional Architecture of Saudi Arabia*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.

Lorimer, J.G. (1995) *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*. Volume 3/Part 2. Reading: Garnet Publishing Limited & Sultan Qaboos University. Original publication 1908-15.

Riley, M (1998) Bayt Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamdan Al Sharqi: A study of the sheikh's palace and its associated buildings, Wadi al-Hayl, Fujairah. Unpublished Honours Thesis. Near Eastern Archaeology, University of Sydney, Australia. (Copy lodged with the Fujairah Museum).

Unwin, S. (1988) "The origins and categories of 'Arab' chests, with particular reference to Oman" *PSAS* 18: 155-61.

Velde, C. (2001) "Falayah: The summer residence of the Qawasim in Ra's al-Khaimah, U.A.E." *Tribulus* 11/1: 5-9.

Velde, C. (2005) "The Residence of Falayah" In P. Hellyer & M. Ziolkowski (eds), *Emirates Heritage (Volume 1): Proceedings of the 1st Annual Symposium on Recent Palaeontological and Archaeological Discoveries in the Emirates Al Ain*, 2003. Al Ain: Zayed Centre for Heritage and History: 89-101.

Ziolkowski, M.C. (1998) "A study of the petroglyphs from Wadi al-Hayl, Fujairah, United Arab Emirates" *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 9: 13-89.

Ziolkowski, M.C. (in press) "Rock on art: petroglyph sites in the United Arab Emirates." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*.

Ziolkowski, M.C. & al-Sharqi, A.S. (2005) "Bayt Sheikh Suhail bin Hamdan al-Sharqi, al-Fara, Fujairah, United Arab Emirates" In P. Hellyer & M. Ziolkowski (*eds*), *Emirates Heritage (Volume 1): Proceedings of the 1st Annual Symposium on Recent Palaeontological and Archaeological Discoveries in the Emirates Al Ain*, 2003. Al Ain: Zayed Centre for Heritage and History: 102-120.

Ziolkowski, M.C. & al-Sharqi, A.S. (2005a) "Bayt Sheikh Suhail bin Hamdan al-Sharqi, al-Fara', Fujairah, United Arab Emirates: An ethnoarchaeological study" *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 16/2: 183-255.

Ziolkowski, M.C. & al-Sharqi, A.S. (in press) "Fujairah Fort and Associated Settlement: A study based on historical, archaeological and ethnographic and information" In P. Hellyer & M. Ziolkowski (**eds**), *Emirates Heritage, Volume 2: Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Symposium on Recent Palaeontological and Archaeological Discoveries in the Emirates*.

Ziolkowski, M.C. & al-Sharqi, A.S. (forthcoming) *"Henna*: an ethnographic approach."

**Michele C. Ziolkowski & Abdullah Suhail al-Sharqi**,
PO Box 432,
Fujairah, UAE.
Email: mcz_ski@hotmail.com

[1] The archaeological component of this study is deliberately brief, due to the fact that the site and material culture has been comprehensively studied by M Riley (1998). For Riley's architectural analysis of the courtyard house at al-Hayl, see: Riley 1998: 48-77. Concerning the smallfinds and ceramics, Riley has studied this material in great detail: Riley 1998: 19-28 & Appendices 3 & 4. A copy of Riley's thesis is lodged with the Fujairah Museum.

[2] A certain amount of information has already been published previously by the authors: Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2003. However, this current paper is an updated and more precise account of the ethno-archaeology at al-Hayl.

[3] Plant identifications were made with the aid of the following reference source: Jongbloed 2003.

[4] Plant identifications were made with reference to: Potts 1994. For a detailed account of the introduction of tobacco into Southeastern Arabia, see: Potts 1994: 258-9.

[5] See: Lorimer 1995: 25. As noted by Riley, Lorimer does not mention the large courtyard house, majlis, mosque or watchtower, see: Riley 1998: 7. Lorimer's study took place during the early twentieth century and therefore his lack of reference to these features correlates with the timeframe purported in this paper. His reference to the "Jalajilah" tribe is curious. Those interviewed for this study could confirm only the presence of the Kunud tribe in the Wadi al-Hayl.

[6] The *majlis* and mosque were built around the same time as the courtyard house. The watchtower was built shortly afterwards.

[7] Regarding the manufacture of *saruj* see: George 1987: 221-2; Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005a: 185.

[8] It is unclear whether or not the gypsum plaster was also mixed with small amounts of *saruj* or mud in some areas. Patches of gypsum plaster are also visible on some external walls, located below a layer of *saruj.*

[9] Roofing material throughout the courtyard house was often comprised of: mangrove wood poles, woven palm matting, soft mud mortar with a few mineral inclusions, rubble and finally an exterior layer of cement. U-shaped wooden drainage spouts were also used to remove excess water from the roofs to the exterior of the courtyard.

[10] The *khaymah* type houses throughout the village were all constructed in a similar manner.

[11] Wall niches located throughout the private family rooms were used for storing personal items, plus lanterns and porcelains bowls/plates. Wooden hanging pegs were also used for storing personal items.

[12] For further detail see Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005a: 196 & Fig. 56.

[13] For further detail see Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005a: 237 & Fig. 57.

[14] See also Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005a: 187.

[15] Note: one of these columns is attached to the top of the courtyard wall.

[16] Unfortunately the new wooden door produced by the restoration team differs from the original.

[17] Unfortunately this bench has not been restored to its original form.

[18] Unfortunately fanciful decorative elements have been added above the entryway. This fanciful restoration work bears no resemblance to the original structure as noted at the site prior to restoration and as seen in old photographs.

[19] Located on the western side of the shop was a small kitchen area constructed with a *sablah* type roof.

[20] The processing of dates requires that the baskets of dates be piled up at the upper end of the madbasa, and their own weight gradually presses out the juice from the fruit, which then runs down the channels to a tank: Højlund 1990: 77. This "tank" was often a sunken ceramic vessel.

[21] There appears to be some type of plaster (?), which was used to coat the interior of this receptacle.

[22] The original interior walls of this room did not contain any niches. However, wall niches have been placed in this room by the restoration team working at the site.

[23] See also Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005a: Fig. 54.

[24] For further details on this type of feature see: Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005: 107; 2005a: 188.

[25] For a detailed description of the construction and use of the tobacco drying rooms see: Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005: 112; 2005a: 211-12.

[26] This information has been extrapolated from: Ziolkowski M.C. & al-Sharqi A.S. (forthcoming).

[27] The small scale excavation which produced the charcoal sample was conducted during the winter of 1994/95 as part of the University of Sydney (Australia) expedition. For full details concerning the calibration of this date see: Ziolkowski MC 1998: 79. According to local sources, this hillfort was considered an historical site during the time Sheikh Abdullah resided at al-Hayl. The residents of al-Hayl would wander over the mountain and collect "old" pottery vessels as curiosities.

[28] An example of comparative compounds on the east coast of the U.A.E. is highlighted in: Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005a: 238-9. Note: The non-fortified courtyard house of Khalfan bin Obaid al-Jalajilah at Miduk (Fujairah) should be added to this table of comparative compounds. For a more detailed discussion of comparative compounds, see: Riley 1998: 35-47. Riley compares the courtyard house at al-Hayl with examples from Bahrain, Kuwait, U.A.E. (Dubai, Ra's al-Khaimah, Fujairah), Sultanate of Oman (including the Omani enclave of Madha, north of Fujairah) and Saudi Arabia. Examples of 'tower houses' in Najran, southwestern Saudi Arabia have been recorded in: King G. 1998: 121-6 & 210. D. Kennet has comprehensively recorded and described the courtyard type houses in the emirate of Ra's al-Khaimah, see: Kennet *et al* 1993: 9-47; Kennet 1995. C. Velde has also published a detailed study of the fortified courtyard house of Falayah (Ra's al-Khaimah), see: Velde 2001: 5-9; Velde 2005: 89-101. For a discussion regarding the architecture of the courtyard type house and the above mentioned references, see: Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005: 116-7; Ziolkowski & al-Sharqi 2005a: 245-50.

[29] As far as the authors are aware, this house has not been commented on or studied in relation to fortified courtyard type houses previously.

[30] The site is located within the mountains between Mleiha and Kalba. The main house, mosque, and four watchtowers were all established around the same time. The local name for the area where the main house is situated is al-Ghur'a.

[31] A further series of watchtowers and lookouts are located throughout the surrounding area. Many of these can be seen from the relatively new road through Wadi il-Hilu. It is however, unclear whether or not these are contemporary with the fortified courtyard house.

[32] Also noted at close proximity to the large multi-courtyard house are two copper slag scatters, hammerstones and one copper ore extraction zone. A pre-Islamic burial cairn is located beside the large watchtower in the wadi. Three petroglyphs have been noted by the authors within close proximity to the courtyard house. Petroglyphs located at another site in Wadi il-Hilu were noted by a French Survey team in 1984. The same team also noted numerous Islamic period settlements and a slag scatter see: Boucharlat et al 1997: 12.

[33] This includes the extensive use of *saruj* on the main buildings at the site. The site is currently undergoing restoration work. Unfortunately, the original *saruj* plaster on the buildings is being removed and replaced with a white, lime-based plaster.